

Sparta Downtown Development Authority  
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES  
APRIL 9, 2024  
SPARTA CIVIC CENTER

Meeting called to order at 7:46 am by Cheslek

Members present: Whalen, Freeland, Cheslek, Lamb, Shangle, Baker, Knauf, Potes, Baker

Members Absent: Benham, Stoner, Driscoll

Also Present: Elizabeth Morse, DDA Director; Jim Lower, Village Manager

Motion to accept the DDA meeting minutes of December 12, 2023 by Freeland, second by Baker. All approved.

Approval of DDA Finance Report. Motion by Freeland, second by Baker. All approved.

**Public Comment – None**

**Unfinished Business**

**New Business**

- A. Personnel Committee Recommendations were presented. Motion by Whalen, second by Potes to accept the committee recommendations as presented for part time staff members Beth Baltruczak and Amy Falk. All approved.
- B. Personnel Committee Recommendations were presented for 5 year Employment contract for Elizabeth Morse. Motion by Whalen, second by Baker to approve the contract for Elizabeth Morse. All Approved.
- C. Discussions with Travis Alden from The Right Place on the “buckets” of work from our organizations and the opportunity to refine/prioritize DDA current objectives. Notes will be compiled into the next joint meeting

Notes from the conversation included:

**DDA Priorities that MUST CONTINUE AS-IS**

Organizational management: board meetings, agendas, minutes, yearly reporting, etc.

Downtown Management: parking concerns, snow plowing concerns, litter clean up, mowing if needed etc.

problem-solving facilitation (?) DDA as the conduit

Beautification mgmt: Flowers / irrigation / fertilization (\$ and coordination)

Downtown décor: Seasonal, planting bulbs, snowmen/penguins/gnomes/etc. , district banners

Grant funding pursuit for strategic projects

Public art investments (murals, sculptures) as opportunities arise

Represent Sparta at networking/organizational events

Capitalizing on larger (state) opportunities & resources: Social District, redevelopment liquor licenses, MEDC CRP, etc

Property (re)development facilitation (CRD as a new resource)

Building Facilities of the office space

**DDA Priorities that should KEEP GOING WITH TWEAKS / EXPLAIN**

Downtown Capital Items: Flowers, pots, benches, wayfinding signage (discuss expansion of some items into commercial districts)

Christmas décor/lights: – “being noticed” (discuss expansion of some items into commercial districts)

Façade Grants – would love to increase pending funding – (Discuss if DDA should prioritize this line item to potentially leverage along with commercial rehab district via the Village)  
Personnel (fund compensation, professional development, etc.) ((clarification conversations between boards and evaluate the as part of MOU / operational agreement ))  
Town Square – phase 2 implementation & management  
Business retention & recruitment / vacancy infill / incoming inquiries (formalize opportunities / priorities)

**Public Comment - None.**

Meeting adjourned by executive privilege at 9:00 am.