

**Village of Bellaire And
Village of Bellaire Downtown Development Authority
BELLAIRE COMMUNITY UNIFIED ACTION PLAN STEERING
COMMITTEE**

- Louise Wenzel, DDA Member • Joe Short, DDA Member • Mark Irwin, DDA Member •
- Dave Ciganick, Village Council • Trish Drollinger, Village Council • Eldon McPherson, Village Council •
- Nicole Essad, Village Clerk • Terry VanAlstine, District 5 County Commissioner •
- ____ County Commissioner • Robert Joyce, Chamber of Commerce Representative •

**COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
Monday, October 26, 2020
5:00 PM**

I. Call to Order: Chairperson Irwin called the meeting to order at 5:01 PM

II. Roll Call - Attendance:

- Present:** Dave Ciganick, Tricia Drollinger, Nicole Essad, Mark Irwin, Eldon McPherson, Terry VanAlstine, and Louise Wenzel
- Absent:** Robert Joyce, and Joe Short
- Staff Present:** Elise Craft, facilitator and Jennifer Hodges, engineer
- Public Present:** Rachel Krino

III. Approval of Agenda: The agenda was approved as presented.

Motion by Essad, seconded by McPherson to approve the agenda as presented. Motion Passed by unanimous voice vote.

IV. Approval of Minutes – September 28, 2020: Ms. Wenzel asked why the minutes were so detailed, and if they could be shortened. Ms. Essad stated that it is not required to have the minutes this detailed but the Village likes to put as much information into the minutes as possible. Mr. McPherson stated that getting as much detail in the minutes as possible was good because then you had background for the discussion.

Motion by VanAlstine, seconded by Ciganick to approve the minutes of the September 28, 2020 agenda as presented. Motion Passed by unanimous voice vote.

V. Conflict of Interest: None presented.

VI. Public Comment: Rachel Krino stated she wants to keep the skate park on everyone's mind. Mr. Irwin stated that he might need to turn the meeting over in about 45 minutes or 1 hour because he needs to make dinner for his kids.

VII. Old Business

- a. **County Commission Representative:** Mr. Irwin stated that he spoke to Terry VanAlstine last week, and Mr. VanAlstine spoke with Ed Boettcher about getting another County Commissioner involved with this committee. Mr. Boettcher is not inclined to be on this committee. Mr. Irwin asked Mr. VanAlstine if there was any other County Commissioner that he thought would like to be on this committee. Mr. VanAlstine stated that the only other one that would be affected that would be local would be on Josh Watrous. He does Forest Home

Township. He might be hard pressed to make five o'clock meetings, but we could reach out to him. It was the consensus of the Committee to have Mr. VanAlstine reach out and ask Mr. Watrous about joining the committee. Mr. Irwin then asked that if Mr. Watrous declines, does this Committee feel the need to have a second commissioner on the Committee. It was the consensus of the Committee that if Mr. Watrous declines then there would not be a need to keep asking for a second commissioner to join this Committee.

VIII. New Business

- a. **Community Huddle/Partners Survey:** Ms. Craft stated this item is reviewing the proposed 5 questions survey, which will be sent to our community partners. These questions are listed on that document provided in the packets. Ms. Craft stated that at the last meeting, it was discussed that the original proposal for this Committee had contemplated two to three Community huddles which at the time were envisioned as in person events or a zoom conversation. She stated that at the last meeting it was discussed that it would be easier, and there may be better input, if we did a survey with these groups. She stated it would be a short survey to kick things off, and that if that worked well, this Committee would go back to them with another second or third short survey as the plan develops. She asked if there were any community partners that were missed. She then went on to explain the survey, and how she divided up the list of priorities from the last meeting into seven categories. Ms. Craft then went through the questions listed on the survey. She also stated that the survey indicates that the community partners should select how they would like to fill it out, either the board (leadership team), or a designated person. Ms. Craft then asked the Committee if all the partners were included; if the introduction made sense; if the questions get to the information this Committee feels like it needs at this stage in our process; and if the Committee likes the way that the survey be rolled out to the partners and that they get to kind of self-select who's filling this out? Mr. McPherson asked if this was confirming priorities. Ms. Essad stated that Ms. Krino typed a comment stating that Destination Bellaire and the Chamber are the same organization. Ms. Drollinger stated that this is a great start and she thinks it will get everyone talking. Mr. Irwin asked about how would manipulating survey results be prevented. He stated that he would suggest to the DDA to give a copy of this survey to all of the Downtown Businesses. He asked if this Committee should do anything preemptively to make that easy for the community partners. Ms. Essad stated that she did not think the Committee needed to worry too much about manipulation. She stated that the survey spells it out. She stated that the survey says who the partners are, what this is about, and asked them to please fill this out for your organization, whether that be as a group or you designate one person to do it. Ms. Essad stated to keep in mind, that all of these community partners have people that either they represent or people or areas of interest that the community partner is there for. She stated that in Mr. Irwin's example, the DDA board is representing the downtown district because that's what you're supposed to be doing. She stated that going out to them and asking them for their opinions is one way of doing that. Ms. Essad did not know if there's a way where we can streamline that, except we're just trusting each board in each organization to do their due diligence with the group that they're representing. Mr. Ciganick stated the survey requires a lot on verbal/typed comments, and he was not sure if people would respond more to this type of survey or to just questions where they can check the answer box. Mr. Irwin also asked about the format and delivery method of the survey. Ms. Craft stated it would be a survey monkey type format, to the traditional click through survey. Mr. McPherson stated he thinks important to make sure everyone understands where the Committee is coming from. He stated that when you do the survey, it should include specific things about the priorities. Ms. Craft stated that the first survey is more about what the priorities are and later on in this meeting it will be discussed how to enacted those priorities. She also stated that she is open to putting a question

on this first survey to include what was talked about at this meeting. Ms. Essad stated that her understanding was that this first survey was trying to introduce everything and find out what their priorities are, how their goals would fit in with the Committee's goals and everything else, and how we can work together. She stated that she thought the next survey that this Committee is going to talk about next on the agenda is going to be a little bit more specific to where we can start implementing those priorities with projects and stuff like that. Ms. Craft that understanding is correct. Mr. Irwin stated that included in this first survey should be some language that states there are more surveys coming and this Committee wants all of your ideas.

Motion by Essad, seconded by VanAlstine to send out this survey that was included in the packet, with the stipulation that there is added language stating there is a follow up survey coming. Motion Passed by unanimous voice vote.

Mr. Irwin asked when the results were to be back. Ms. Craft stated that the results should be available for this Committee's November meeting.

- b. Priority Project Discussion:** Mr. Irwin stated that this is the time to get all of the ideas on the table, no idea too crazy. He stated that we should talk about each idea but try not to get too far into the weeds. Ms. Craft stated that her goals for tonight were to confirm what was discussed at last meeting, to make sure we did not miss anything as she reorganized those 12 priorities into the 7 categories. She stated that she wanted to list specific projects within each category and then identify action steps for the top two or three projects. She also stated that she hopes to start the draft action plan after this discussion. Ms. Craft recapped what was discussed last meeting pertaining to the 11 priorities that came out of the common goals, and added a 12th related to development, zoning, and RRC. She then stated that she took the similar ones and grouped them together into the 7 categories seen on the worksheet in the packets. Ms. Craft then went on to ask each of the Committee members what their ideas were for each category and what kind of impact those ideas would have. Ms. Essad stated that she had downtown public bathrooms, and downtown wi-fi for tourism. Mr. VanAlstine stated that he would add motorized connection for ORVs and snowmobiles. Mr. VanAlstine asked Jennifer Hodges to speak a little about the financing for the downtown public restrooms. Ms. Essad stated that there was a grant opportunity that was getting worked on, that could be used for public restrooms. Ms. Hodges stated that this is a grant that she sent to this Committee, it is through MDARD. Mr. Ciganick stated that the project as of last September 1st presented by Gourdie-Fraser, and Jennifer that projects of \$266,000 bathroom so that everybody knows. He also stated that this was two basic bathrooms with enough space for two picnic tables to be in a covered area. He asked what the range of the grant money that was potentially available to us? Ms. Hodges stated Up to \$100,000, and it would be a 30% match. Ms. Wenzel asked if the \$266,000 was just to build it, not the operating cost. Mr. Ciganick stated that was correct. Ms. Wenzel then stated that she was contacted by an individual named Maggie Mall, who is forming a stakeholders committee, which Ms. Wenzel was asked to be a part of, about forming a nonmotorized trail between Central Lake and Bellaire. Mr. Ciganick stated that he had comments about the nonmotorized connection between downtown and Glacial Hills. He stated that it would only take one individual, privately owned properties, to get us from Glacial Hills to the Village. He also stated that the best and closest one is straight up past the elementary school because then you are on a motorized road, but you can then get on the school property and come down to town through the terrace. He also stated that it only takes one person, but in reality, the roads to and from Glacial Hills at that part is not heavily traveled, and a lot of bikers use it. He stated that while this sounds good in theory, he would push it down the priority list. Mr. Irwin stated that he agrees with Mr. Ciganick in the short-term, but he looks at a connection to Glacial Hills as more of a trail head downtown. He stated that it would be a

place for people to congregate, do a quick change of clothes, then go get a beer or meal in town. He also stated that he could see it as a finishing line of a major bike race that brings lots of people to Bellaire. Mr. Ciganick stated that that already occurs, but it needs to be identified better. He stated that people are already meeting in Richardi Park to bike. He also stated that there needs to be signs that people can park at Richardi Park to do that. Ms. Craft stated that there could be two different projects: trailhead downtown and nonmotorized connection between Bellaire and Glacial Hills. She then asked if Mr. Ciganick had anything else to add to tourism. Mr. Ciganick stated that he thinks that public restrooms are number 1 priority, and identifying the parking area for bikers should be easy. Mr. McPherson stated that the skate park should be added but did not know if it should be in tourism or parks. He also stated that he agrees about the bathrooms. Ms. Drollinger stated she did not have anything to add to the tourism category, and she agreed that the public bathrooms should be at the top and that the downtown Wi-fi would be good. Mr. Irwin stated he would like to see an outdoor amphitheater in downtown Bellaire. He stated this would fit under tourism and parks. Ms. Craft stated it could be used for the farmers market, music, and other things. Mr. Irwin gave information about getting Wi-fi downtown and what company can be used. He stated that the cost would be \$60,000 to \$100,000. Ms. Wenzel stated that she was talking Dan Leonard from NLEA and he stated that once communities finalize the RRC certificate there are a number of dollars from the MEDC. Ms. Wenzel stated she thought that this would fall under one of those. Ms. Essad stated that under Parks category she would add a splash pad. Mr. VanAlstine stated that the Village already has an ice-skating rink, and did not know if that should be added. Ms. Wenzel stated that there could be a survey or study of the parks in the Village to see what the residents want done. Ms. Drollinger stated that she did not believe there has been a study done for the parks. She also stated that it would be a great idea. Mr. McPherson stated that the only thing he wanted to add was stormwater control. Mr. McPherson also stated that Rachel Krino could talk more about the skate park. Ms. Krino stated about three years ago she came to the Parks Committee about the skate park, with the ice rink, and possibly a splash pad. She stated that it was about \$150,000 to have it. She also stated that there is a temporary park right now. She stated that it has had a good response. Ms. Krino stated that the Tony Hawk Foundation has a \$25,000 grant that can be applied for. She also stated that she pulled some of the funding this spring due to COVID. Ms. Drollinger stated that she has several projects for parks. She stated that the Village has been saving to replace the wooden transportation station. She also stated that the Parks Committee has been approached to totally restructure the baseball fields at Craven Park: to change the three fields that are there now, into four fields. She further explained that there was a study done to give us an idea of what the cost is going to be, and there are some people that are interested in helping us raise money for that. Ms. Drollinger also explained that a universal kayak launch is going in at Richardi Park, which would be helpful to tourism. She had splashpad on her list with skate park, and a boardwalk next to the river. Ms. Drollinger explained that the Village has been saving money to replace the transportation station. Ms. Essad explained that there is the permit for the kayak launch, and the next step is to put in the seawall. She stated that the dock itself is expensive and right now we are looking for funding. Mr. Ciganick stated that pickleball courts may be a good idea as that is a buzz thing. He also stated that the kayak launch will take you up river but we have nothing to take you down river. Mr. Irwin stated a boardwalk, the trailhead, and pickleball are great. He also stated a kayak skill park. Ms. Wenzel stated that Mr. Short sent her an email with some of his responses, which include stormwater, burying utilities, and the boardwalk. Ms. Wenzel stated that inventorying parking, and any real estate available to put parking. She stated that there is not enough, and there needs to be better identification for parking. Mr. McPherson stated that he thought there was someone already working on that. Mr. Ciganick stated he thought it was not the issue of there is no parking but it truly is signage. He stated that signage is key. Ms. Craft stated she would send a list of projects to the DPW Supervisor to get his input. Mr.

VanAlstine stated that the County has a housing commission but there are not people investing in it. He stated that people need to go out and find investors and find property to build on. Ms. Wenzel stated that this Committee should partner with Housing North. Mr. Ciganick stated that housing seems like a private sector item. He stated that the only thing could be done is a tax break to developers. Ms. Drollinger stated that tiny houses are not allowed under zoning in the Village. Ms. Essad stated that tiny house can be allowed under the zoning ordinance. She went on to explain that there are no minimum square footage set for houses, and the Planning Commission can reduce the minimum width requirements for houses in Planned Unit Developments. Ms. Essad stated having one website is good in theory but may be difficult to enact. Mr. McPherson stated keeping clear links on the website to community partners would be a good idea. Ms. Wenzel stated that attending meetings, getting the word out, trying to get people to attend meetings, and giving people the broad overview is helpful. Mr. Ciganick stated he agreed with Ms. Wenzel. He also stated that a part-time webmaster is needed. Mr. Irwin stated that the one website for everything is a good idea, and wayfinding signs. Ms. Drollinger stated that going to meetings and easy links on websites. Mr. VanAlstine stated having some kind of tax breaks to get businesses into our area right, but we could not fit another business in downtown. He also stated that getting business into other areas in Bellaire, not just downtown, like the M-88 corridor by Family Fare, or at the end of Broad Street. Ms. Wenzel stated that getting an inventory or a study and identifying where businesses can go. She also mentioned that the DDA can expand their boundaries. She also stated that the Foundation has partnered with Venture North to give money for start-ups. Mr. McPherson stated that the DDA could host a business expo, to get people interested in the area. Ms. Drollinger stated that tax abatement to attract businesses but we need tax dollars to get projects done. Mr. Irwin stated that there should be a “sell sheet” – a sheet of facts about the area with properties, residents for rent or sale, make-up of the school. Ms. Craft stated that it was almost 7:00PM. She wanted to round out the Development portion of the discussion and have the step three ideas emailed to her, so she can then draft the action plan. Ms. Essad stated that she would prefer not to that because she did not want to have a discussion over email in violation of the Open Meetings Act. Mr. Irwin suggested that submit ideas on part three for discussion at the November meeting. It was the consensus of the Committee to do that. Ms. Craft asked for everyone’s input on development. Ms. Essad stated she has concerns about the RRC certification because she does not know if the mean income for the Village would qualify for grants, but she stated she is working on it. She stated that it is a long process but she is making headway on it. Mr. VanAlstine stated that he agreed with Ms. Essad’s concerns. Ms. Craft asked if anyone has reached out to Dan Leonard. Ms. Essad stated she is working with someone from RRC to get it done. Ms. Wenzel stated she thinks this is critical and needs to be done and that Dan Leonard is a wealth of knowledge. She offered to help with this as well. Mr. Irwin stated that cohesive look to the downtown as people renovate. Ms. Craft stated that this could be in a code or some kind of zoning regulation. Mr. Ciganick stated that he does not think that our area is not conducive to industrial development any more. Ms. Craft stated that there is a good start to the brainstorm project. She stated she will come back with a cleaned-up list in order of priority. She stated that this Committee will discuss the action steps next month. She will also send the survey to the community partners.

Correspondence/Reports: Ms. Essad stated that there was correspondence in the packet from attorney Peter Wendling. She stated that this is about the discussion that happened last meeting regarding donations and where that money can be spent. She stated that at last meeting there was a question that came up last time about where the money can be spent. She wanted more clarification on that because she was not of the same understanding as other people on this Committee, so she reached out to the village attorney. She stated that his email regarding his opinion on that and part of the

Recodified tax Increment Financing Act was included for everyone to look at. No one had any questions or concerns.

IX. Member/Public Comment: Mr. Irwin asked if anyone had member or public comment. Rachel Krino stated she will share this at the next EDC meeting. She also suggested including Bellaire Youth Initiative and Rotary. She stated for funding to contact TAAR (Traverse Area Association of Realtors). She stated that the senior housing was supposed to do a second portion and that may be a group to reach out to. Ms. Krino stated she would stick to links and not having a clearinghouse. She also stated to try to attract tech companies. She also stated to promote the Eastside down Broad Street.

Jennifer Hodges stated that there are grant funds available through the state of Michigan through their Clean Water Act Initiative. She stated that applications are due January 1. She stated that she would be working with Bradley and Nicole on submitting a grant application for updating their asset management plan and inventory of their water infrastructure. She stated there is no match for this one. She also stated that there are funds available through SAW. She stated that was a 10% match.

X. Adjourn: Meeting was adjourned at 7:15 PM to the call of the chair.

Minutes compiled by:
Nicole E. Essad, Secretary

Minutes are subject to approval.

Approved: _____

Date: _____