Downtown Management Board & Downtown Development Authority Regular Meeting

Wednesday, January 14th, 2026

301 Washington Ave. Bay City, MI 48708 Room 317 8:00 AM

1. **Call to Order/Roll Call 8:05 AM**

DMB	DDA
Jeff Hildebrant ✓	John Neeb ✓
Scott Nemode **ex.**	Jesse Kendall **ex.**
Howie Diefenbach ✓	Paul Wiese **ex.**
Avram Golden **(online)**	Chris Girard ✓
Jennifer Stasser ✓	Nick Schwall **ab.**
Cassidy Bouchard ✓	Daniel Dimitroff ✓
Tricia Coonan ✓	Sheila Turbett ✓
Alex Weiss ✓	Jean Ann DeShano ✓
Sara Dimitroff **ex.**	Terry Moultane ✓

Also in attendance:

Dana Muscott, Sara Parker, Magen Samyn, Shelby Munsey, Craig Kokaly, Jamie Ralph, Laura Kubit, Christian Velasquez, Jason Tunney, Chedrick Greene, Tyler Vanderhaag.

2. Approval of the Agenda

DDA:
Motion to approve the agenda made by C. Girard and supported by J. DeShano. Motion carried.

DMB:
Motion to approve the agenda with the DMB vote tabled to the February meeting made by C. Bouchard and supported by T. Coonan. Motion carried.

3. Review and Approval of Minutes

DDA:
Motion to approve the October 2025, November 2025, and December 2025 minutes made by J. DeShano and supported by S. Turbett. Motion carried.

DMB:
Motion to approve the December 2025 minutes made by C. Bouchard and supported by A. Weiss. Motion carried.

Financials

DDA:
Motion to receive financials made by J. DeShano and supported by S. Turbett. Motion carried.

DMB:
Motion to receive financials made by C. Bouchard and supported by T. Coonan. Motion carried.

4. Public Input

Jason Tunney, Christian Velasquez, and Chedrick Greene, all candidates for the 35th Senate seat, each provided a five minute introduction of themselves.

5. Presentation

Jamie Ralph, Director of Strategic Sales and Community Engagement for Go Great Lakes Bay, provided an update on position.

6. Director and Committee Reports

Motion to approve reports for DDA made by J. DeShano and supported by S. Turbett. Motion carried.

Motion to approve reports for DMB made by A. Weiss and supported by C. Bouchard. Motion carried.

Reports included:

- Rupp Report
- Events Committee Report
- Parking Committee Report
- Marketing Committee Report
- Beautification Committee Report
- Michigan Main Street Update

7. Action Items

Letter of Support for Michigan Main Street:
DDA motion made by C. Girard and supported by J. DeShano. Motion carried.

DMB Executive Committee Election:
Tabled to the February 2026 meeting.

Friday at the Falls Coordinator Payment:
Motion made by J. Stasser and supported by T. Coonan. Motion carried.

8. City District Updates
9. Roundtable
10. Adjournment

a.) Rupp Report

- The holiday season went really well with Sundays in the City. This year we moved the carriage rides from Washington Avenue to in front of the Christmas tree on Center Avenue, and that change was very well received. Kennedy from Mid-Michigan Carriage Company shared that this was their busiest season yet in the seven years she has been working with us.
- I am meeting this week with Nolan Mizner from the Bay-Arenac ISD to talk about bringing on a work based learning student. More details to come, but my hope is that this student could help with social media content while also being a resource for downtown merchants. This would include setting up appointments, visiting businesses, and helping merchants create marketing content across social media and other media platforms.
- The Chili Cook Off is scheduled for January 24 from 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM. That same day, I have been working with Chris Pappas from DRI on a Freeze Fest event at Drift. This will be an all day event featuring food trucks, entertainment, breweries, fire performers, and more, and should be a great addition to the winter lineup.
- I also recently spent a week in Tucson, Arizona attending the Institute for Organizational Management through the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. This is a four year professional development program designed for leaders in chambers, downtown organizations, and economic development. This first year covered a wide range of topics including effective use of AI in the workplace, hiring and termination best practices, sponsorship solicitation, communication and persuasion, financial fitness, board governance, audience engagement, and understanding generational differences in the workplace. While some of the courses don't necessarily apply to where I am at right now, I think that I will be able to use them in the future.
- One idea I would like to implement soon is a simple monthly, one question check in with merchants. This would allow them to share things like new hours, new products, or anything else that would be helpful for us to know and promote.I am looking forward to continuing with the Institute over the next few years and want to sincerely thank the board for the opportunity!

b.) Events Committee Report

Next Events Meeting: January 20th, 9:00 AM, DMB Office

In Attendance: Kellie Rupp, Tara Knipp (First Look Bridal), Kathy LaLonde (Little House), Jeff Hildebrant, Jen Stasser, Gabe Windt (Area 13 Tattoo), Traelynne DuRussel

First Thursdays – 2026 Event Themes

- **January (1 or 8):** After Inventory Event & Soup Specials
- **February 5:** Sweetheart Shopping & Chocolate at Checkout
- **March 5:** Lucky Leprechaun Hunt
- **April 2:** Spring Break Madness
- **May 7:** Launch for Mother's Shopping Weekend
- **June 4:** Apps & Ales Sip & Shop
- **July 2:** Shop Before the Fireworks Show
- **August 6:** Family Night
- **September 3:** Downtown History Walk
- **October 1:** Sip & Cider
- **November 5:** Art Walk & Hidden Harvest Boxes
- **December 3:** Extended Holiday Shopping & Wish List Launch

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Bay City WinterFest – Concept Discussion

- **Proposed Name/Theme:** Bay City WinterFest
- **Location:** Drift
- **Date:** January 24, 2026

Potential Activities & Features:

- Ice and snow carving
- Igloos
- Food trucks
- Hot cocoa stand
- Live band
- Art stands in partnership with Studio 23
- Outdoor, family-friendly games
- Live painting of snowmen
- Downtown merchants participation:
    - Handing out coupons
    - Hosting individual stands
    - Contributing items for swag bags

c.) Parking Committee Report

Next Parking Meeting: February 3rd, 2026

The parking report is available on the next page.

d.) Marketing Committee Report

Next Marketing Meeting: February 4th

e.) Beautification Committee Report

Next Beautification Meeting: December 18th

In Attendance: Jeff Hildebrant, Alex Weiss, John Neeb, Sara Parker, Jean Ann DeShano

The committee discussed the process for Christmas lights moving forward and noted that a permit through the Electric Department will need to be processed. There are currently 104 lampposts with wreaths and garlands that require lighting. While the committee truly enjoys the current lighting, there was discussion about whether it would make sense in the future to reach out to Paul's Florals or Garpiel Group to assist with decorating lampposts and downtown areas with holiday lighting.

Snow removal is currently in motion with C.R. Howell. The committee also discussed the possibility of parking ambassadors working in coordination with Code Enforcement. Building owners are responsible for clearing the sidewalks in front of their buildings, and parking ambassadors could report any areas that are not being maintained to Code Enforcement. Kellie will reach out to Deb to determine if there is an existing process in place or if one could be established.

Regarding holiday pots, the committee agreed to keep the greens in place until mid-March and to replace the holiday decorations with hearts or other Valentine's Day themed elements.