Downtown Management Board & Downtown Development Authority Regular Meeting

Wednesday, August 12th, 2026

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

1. Call to Order/Roll Call - 8:09 AM

DMB

Jeff Hildebrant ✓

Scott Nemode **ex.**

Howie Diefenbach ✓

Jennifer Stasser ✓

Cassidy Bouchard ✓

Tricia Coonan ✓

Alex Weiss ✓

Ruben Rivera ✓

Rob Clark ✓

Clarissa Lange ✓

Lori Beaver ✓

Sara Dimitroff ✓

DDA

John Neeb ✓

Jesse Kendall ✓

Paul Wiese ✓

Chris Girard ✓

Nick Schwall **x**

Also in attendance: Gina Anayana, Craig Kokaly, Jean Ann DeShano, Christiana Malacara, Scott Rittenberry, Jess Faulman, Shelby Munsey, Rik Hayman, Magen Samyn, Sara Parker, Kellie Rupp

**2. Approval of the Agenda**

A. DDA: Motion to approve the agenda by J. Kendall, supported by C. Girard.
B. DMB: Motion to approve the agenda by J. Stasser, supported by T. Coonan.

**3. Review and Approval of Minutes**

A. DDA approval of the July 2026 minutes: C. Girard/J. Kendall.
B. DMB approval of the July 2026 minutes: C. Bouchard/A. Weiss.
C. DDA received the financial statements: J. Kendall/C. Girard.
D. DMB received the financial statements: C. Bouchard/H. Diefenbach.

**4. Public Input**

Gina Anayana shared that her organization, United We Go, has completed 15 murals throughout Bay City over the past four years. For this year's festival, Legacy Coffee, the Historic Masonic Temple, and Wenonah Park will each be receiving murals.

Magen Samyn shared that the September Eye Opener Breakfast will take place Friday, September 11, at the DoubleTree, with Rik Hayman serving as the featured presenter.

**5. Director & Committee Reports**

1. Rupp Report
2. Parker Report
3. Events Committee Report
4. Parking Committee Report
5. Marketing Committee Report
6. Beautification Committee Report
7. Michigan Main Street Report

**6. Action Items**

**i. DDA Accounts Payable**

Motion to approve DDA Accounts Payable by C. Girard, supported by J. Kendall. All in favor. Motion carried.

**ii. DMB Elections, Chair**

Kellie Rupp opened nominations for the position of Board Chair. Alex Weiss nominated current Board Chair Jeff Hildebrant for another two-year term. Rupp called for additional nominations two more times and, hearing none, closed nominations.

The Downtown Management Board voted unanimously in favor of Jeff Hildebrant serving another two-year term as Board Chair, with his term ending in June 2028.

**7. City District Updates**

Sara Dimitroff shared that the City's new zoning ordinance was approved on August 10. The City is also working toward completing the next level of Redevelopment Ready Communities certification by October 2026.

Christiana Malacara noted that students from Bay City's sister city, Ansbach, Germany, will be visiting September 12 through September 19.

8. Roundtable
9. Adjournment - 8:59 AM.

### *a.) Rupp Report*

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Pass the Bucket

- July 8: $2,163.00 collected during Jedi Mind Trip.
- July 15: $955.00 collected during the Garth Brooks & Shania Twain tribute. Attendance was lower than usual due to heavy smoke in the air that evening. Conditions were manageable during setup but became noticeably worse by the start of the concert. The State Theatre was unavailable that evening due to a scheduling conflict. For the remainder of the concert season, the State Theatre has kept Wednesdays open to accommodate a potential indoor concert if needed.
- July 22: $2,302.00 collected during the Toby Keith tribute.
- July 29: $2,242.00 collected during JOVI.
- Completed orientation with two new board members, Clarissa Lange, Director of Sales at the DoubleTree, and Lori Dole, owner of Beaver's Pub, Castaways and Washington Street Pub.
- Joined Studio 23's Chalk Walk Committee for 2027. Although the event will not take place this year, planning is underway to revamp the event for 2027. The committee is considering changing the event location, closing different streets, and partnering with downtown merchants and existing events, such as Fridays at the Falls and live music on Third Street.
- Met with Hairball John (John Bellsmith) regarding his interest in becoming more involved with the Wednesday in the Park concerts. We are working on an idea for an Angus Young look-alike costume contest during the AC/DC tribute concert on September 9. I am also looking into securing gift cards and other prizes for attendees or pets! dressed as the band's lead singer.
- The new addition to the Wenonah Park playground is officially open. The new area is designed for children ages 0-3 and supports United Way's efforts related to its planned downtown daycare addition.
- Joined the Bay Metro Local Advisory Committee. Bay Metro is currently working on installing Wi-Fi on all transportation vehicles and is also preparing to introduce a cashless payment option for riders.
- Due to the smoke conditions on July 15, Friday at the Falls was canceled, and the musician was offered the first Friday in September as a rescheduled date. The free health and wellness classes in the park were also canceled that weekend due to the air quality.

### *b.) Parker Report*

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- A recent meeting with the Saginaw DDA and Saginaw Future provided an opportunity to identify downtown development best practices and explore strategies that could be adapted to strengthen Downtown Bay City.
- In coordination with the DDA Board Chair, priority areas for improvement are being identified to support a more strategic approach to downtown enhancement. One emerging focus is alley activation and improved use of underutilized downtown spaces to strengthen connectivity, appearance and the overall downtown experience.
- Work is also underway to explore the potential for an upgraded EV charging station downtown. The goal is to evaluate options that improve reliability, better serve residents and visitors, and support Downtown Bay City's long-term infrastructure and accessibility needs.

### *c.) Events Committee Report*

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*Next Events Meeting: August 18th, 9:00 AM, DMB Office*

In Attendance: Jeff Hildebrant, Rob Clark, Alex Weiss, Cassidy Bouchard, Tara Knipp, Kym Kram, Tricia Coonan

## Upcoming Events & Planning Updates

- **Sidewalk Days:** July 23-25. Event took place throughout downtown with participating businesses offering sales, specials and activities.
- **Fall Open House:** Originally scheduled for September 4-5, but has been moved to **September 11-12** to coincide with the Great Lakes Market in Uptown.
- **Wine Walk:** September 17.
- **Hop Riot:** October 3.
- **Restaurant Week:** Planned for January 2027. Kellie is working to schedule a call with Bandwango to begin planning and discuss the event structure.
- **Treats & Treasures:** October 24.
- **Freaky Friday:** October 30. Previously known as Thriller Thursday.

### *d.) Parking/Finance Committee Report*

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*Next Parking Meeting: September 1, 2026*

In attendance: John Neeb, Jean Ann DeShano, Paul Weise, Chris Girard, Jeff Hildebrant, Jesse Kendall, Sara Parker and Kellie Rupp

- The Parking & Finance Committee reviewed the June 2026 year-end financials and July 2026 financials, with discussion focused on current revenues, expenses, parking operations and overall DDA financial performance.
- The Committee also finalized responses to vendor questions related to the Comprehensive Downtown Parking Study and Electronic Parking System Assessment RFP. Clarifications addressed parking utilization counts, stakeholder engagement, communications expectations, project budget, website content and implementation support. These responses will be issued through a formal addendum to ensure all prospective bidders receive consistent information.
- The parking study remains a key priority as the DDA works toward a data-driven, financially sustainable and more efficient downtown parking system. Proposals are due August 26, 2026.

### *e.) Marketing Committee Report*

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*Next Marketing Meeting: August 6th, 2026*

In Attendance: Alex Weiss, Jeff Hildebrant, Rob Clark, Alex Alexandrou, Clarissa Lange, Tiffany Stachowiak

| | **January 2026** | **Februar y 2026** | **March 2026** | **April 2026** | **May 2026** | **June 2026** | **July 2025** | **July 2026** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Facebook Content Interactions | 2,400 | 1,700 | 9,800 | 1,600 | 3,500 | 7,200 | 6,510 | 5,600 | |
| Facebook Followers | 32,549 | 32,591 | 33,101 | 33,182 | 33,390 | 33,740 | 31,659 | 34,016 | |
| Facebook Post Reach | 260,500 | 236,000 | 803,300 | 99,860 | 280,537 | 504,336 | 280,626 | 439,267 | |
| Facebook Video Watch Time | 2h 34m | 2h 7m | 1d 13h | 2h 48m | 1hr 39 m | 2h 1m | 2d 7h | 4d 23 hr | |
| Meta Earnings | $38.66 | $36.58 | $125.77 | $18.84 | $46.44 | $136.50 | | $104.29 | $507.08 |
| Instagram Followers | 9,227 | 9,234 | 9,266 | 9,316 | 9,262 | 9,335 | 9,039 | 9,428 | |
| Newsletter Open Rate | 35% | 37% | 36% | 34% | 35% | 38% | 38% | 35% | |
| Constant Contact Subscribers | 9,730 | 9,709 | 9,695 | 9,688 | 9,686 | 9,696 | 9,862 | 9,731 | |

1. Video & Social Media Schedule

My Downtown video series:

- Alex Alexandrou Alex Weiss. Cassidy Bouchard

2. Website

- Had an in-depth discussion with Digital Design regarding the downtown website.
- Continue discussions regarding website improvements, content, functionality, and overall presentation.

3. Bollard Advertising

- Looking to add advertising to the downtown bollards to promote upcoming events.
- Include a QR code directing visitors to the downtown website.
- Develop a consistent design that can be updated for future events.

4. Freaky Friday – Halloween Event

Planning is underway for Freaky Friday, the downtown Halloween event.

- Alex is working on building out Posters/flyers.
- Tiffany from Timeless Trading will reach out to potential vendors to encourage participation.
- Vendor fees:
- Outside vendors: $40
- Vendors within the DMB district: $10

5. Downtown Merchant Newsletter / Weekly Email

Discussed creating a regular merchant newsletter or weekly email to keep downtown businesses informed about upcoming events and activities, the goal isto provide merchants with a six-month snapshot of downtown activity to give businesses enough advance notice to plan and participate.

- Recap
- What's Happening This Month
- On the Horizon

6. Hop Riot Marketing Plan

Reviewed/discussed the Hop Riot Marketing Plan.

Continue working through the marketing schedule, promotional opportunities, sponsorship visibility, social media, and event communications.

## *f.) Beautification Committee Report*

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*Next Beautification Meeting: August 27th, 2026*

In Attendance: Kellie Rupp, Sara Parker, Rob Clark, Jeff Hildebrant, Jesse Kendall, Cassidy Bouchard, Jean Ann DeShano, John Neeb

Downtown Promotion: The “My Downtown” video series is already showing impact, with one business reporting a new customer who visited after seeing a recent video. The Committee plans to continue expanding the series and encouraging more downtown businesses and supporters to participate.

Gateway Improvements: Work is underway at the Downtown Bay City gateway area. The existing sign and rocks have been removed, mulch has been installed and the decorative sails are being prepared for repainting. Engineering work is also underway for a replacement Downtown Bay City sign, along with discussion of improvements to the nearby Veterans Memorial.

Center Avenue Street Mural: The Committee is evaluating restoration options for the Leadership Bay County street mural near Wenonah Park. Quotes currently range from approximately $5,000 to $9,500, with another local quote pending. Potential funding sources include Leadership Bay County alumni, community donations, foundation resources and a possible DDA match.

Annie Edson Taylor Project: Bay Veterans Foundation is exploring construction of an interactive replica barrel for Waterfall Park in recognition of the 125th anniversary of Annie Edson Taylor’s historic Niagara Falls trip. The project could create a new downtown attraction and photo opportunity, with interpretive signage and a possible October dedication event.

Streetscape Maintenance: Brick repairs are underway on Saginaw Street, and additional locations are being documented and prioritized. Tree replacement, planter improvements, weed control and other visible maintenance needs are also being addressed.

Maintenance Tracking: Staff is developing a centralized system to track beautification and maintenance needs, including photos, locations, responsible parties and completion status. This will improve coordination, follow-up and future planning.

Overall, the Committee remains focused on protecting downtown investments, improving visual appeal and creating projects that encourage people to visit, engage with and support Downtown Bay City.

### *g.) Michigan Main Street Report*

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The MI Main Street initiative continues to make steady progress toward advancing through the Michigan Main Street program. The attached bi-annual report provides a detailed overview of recent programming, downtown improvements, district changes and current priorities.

Work on the **building and business inventory** is progressing well. A significant portion of the downtown properties and business uses have been reviewed and categorized, but additional information is still needed to complete the inventory accurately. Director will continue filling the gaps so the final inventory provides a reliable picture of downtown uses, vacancies, business mix and redevelopment opportunities.

Board education and training will also be part of the next phase so the DDA is prepared for the expectations, roles and responsibilities associated with moving forward in the program.

The primary focus over the next several months will be to continue completing the inventory, address remaining Engaged Level work plan items and prepare for advancement to the **Select Level** of Michigan Main Street.

A partnership with Bay Future and local real estate agents is moving forward to help market available Downtown Bay City properties and reduce vacancies.