

PROPOSED MINUTES  
LAKETOWN TOWNSHIP  
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY  
4338 BEELINE ROAD  
HOLLAND, MI 49423  
(616) 335-3050

January 23, 2008

ARTICLE I. CALL TO ORDER

The regular monthly meeting of the Laketown Township Downtown Development Authority was called to order by Township Manager Al Meshkin at 7:00 P.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Marcia Perry, John Lamb, Peter Ta, Bob Schaftenaar,  
Ken Draisma, Steve Schilling, Dick Darby, and Al Meshkin

MEMBERS ABSENT: Al Dogger

ARTICLE II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

**A motion was made by Ken Draisma and seconded by Steve Schilling to approve the minutes of the November 27, 2007 meeting. UNANIMOUS DECISION – MOTION APPROVED.**

ARTICLE III. OLD BUSINESS – None

ARTICLE IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. DISCUSSION ON LIQUOR SALES IN LAKETOWN TOWNSHIP

Al Meshkin stated that he received three emails from Elaine Buck, Dick Darby and Peter Ta in regards to the allowance of liquor sales in the Township.

Al gave an overview of the Laketown ordinance: A law was passed in 1991 stating that any community in Michigan that does not currently have liquor licensing can pass an ordinance to repeal that law or the residents may approve to maintain a dry township. The law does not explain on how to appeal that ordinance. Typically it would take an action by the Township Board to repeal the ordinance and then the citizens have to approve that. The next option to put this on a ballot would be in August of 2008. Several inquiries have been made to appeal this ordinance. Al stated it may not be in the Board's best interest to raise

the issue, however the DDA could pass a resolution to the Township Board that they consider repealing the ordinance.

Dick Darby stated that he had spoken to each of the Board members after the December meeting and there was no opposition to the consideration. Al stated that another option would be to generate a petition in the Township, which would force it on the ballot. Dick stated that interested businesses are requiring the allowance of alcohol sales. Peter Ta stated it would benefit his business as well. Steve Schilling agreed that it would benefit other current businesses as well.

Al Meshkin stated that the Township Board would still have authority over the issuance of the liquor licenses. Bob Schaftenaar asked if the licenses are based on population. Al stated that it is one license per 2,000 residents but additional licenses could be granted in a DDA. The current estimate of Laketown Township population is 6,003. Ken Draisma asked what other considerations are taken. Al Meshkin stated the Township Board holds a lot of discretion taking into the consideration of the demographics of the Township. Ken asked if it goes on the ballot does the Board decide after the vote. Al stated that the vote can pass but the Board still has authority over to whom it issues a license. Ken Draisma confirmed that the Board does have the final say and Al agreed. Steve Schilling commented on the ability for the Laketown Conference Center to obtain a license. Al stated that it would also allow for a 24 hour license for private events.

Marcia Perry stated that it is a logical step that Laketown Township would eventually have liquor license but this discussion seems a bit premature before the DDA has a vision in place for the area. Perhaps a petition would be more politically correct, however we are charged to first come up with a vision and this seems like something the Planning Commission could recommend to the Board. Al Meshkin responded that he agrees but in order to attract favorable businesses, we might want to have this in place as he had received three emails on the topic. This is an election year wherein the voter turnout is a typically higher. I have been asked to bring it up and if we want this on the August ballot a decision must be made by the Township Board by May and if we want it on the November election, the decision must be made by July.

Steve Schilling respectfully asked that we act on this as soon as possible as this would be an asset for the current two businesses and others would benefit. Al Meshkin stated that the proper way would be for a motion to be made to draft a resolution to consider at the next DDA meeting.

Bob Schaftenaar confirmed that there are actually four inquiries including Steve Schilling's conversation with Al Meshkin. Dick Darby stated that he cannot go forward on the planning of his project without knowing if a liquor license may be available. He has interested developers who will not consider the project without that commitment.

John Lamb stated that this option must be known before any vision or project planning can move forward. Dick Darby reiterated that we cannot put this on the back burner.

Marcia Perry asked that we slow down and consider other options. Steve Schilling stated that he agreed with John that this needs to be dealt with now. Ken Draisma stated that we need to know what options we must consider. Bob Schaftenaar agreed that we do need to know these options for current business owners. Marcia Perry stated that the DDA should be reviewing the Planning Commission's proposal. Bob Schaftenaar proposed making a motion to get this item on the table.

**A motion was made by Steve Schilling and seconded by Dick Darby to draft resolution language to be reviewed at the February meeting to recommend that the Township Board repeal the liquor ban. UNANIMOUS DECISION – MOTION APPROVED**

Peter Ta stated that there are already two existing businesses that are part of the DDA that would benefit from this approval.

Bob Schaftenaar asked if this action could be construed by the Board that the DDA is acting in personal interest. Al Meshkin stated that the law requires the majority of the DDA Board members be property owners with vested interest. Al stated that it is no different than the Township Board members voting on behalf of the interest of the township residents. One third of the parcels are owned by the DDA members.

Marcia Perry expressed concern over expending time on this effort without taking away from the true tasks at hand.

Dick Darby asked for clarification of the timing. Al Meshkin stated that the Township Board could act on it at the March meeting to make the May deadline for the August election.

Al Meshkin stated that the Planning Commission is not completely satisfied with the current planning document that has been forwarded to the DDA.

Dick Darby asked that the Planning Commission allow for the DDA to spend time being creative in designing the development.

Al Meshkin stated that the sewer agreement has been passed by Saugatuck Township, the City of Saugatuck and the KLSWA.

Bob Schaftenaar confirmed that the Township Board would make the final legal decision about the liquor license. Would this be viewed negatively by the Township residents? Al Meshkin stated that it is possible as is the case in any decision making process. Al stated that a public hearing could be held at the February meeting allowing residents to attend and share comments.

Following discussion, **a motion was made by Bob Schaftenaar and seconded by Marcia Perry to schedule a public hearing at the February DDA meeting. UNANIMOUS DECISION – MOTION APPROVED**

## B. FY 2008-09 BUDGET

Al Meshkin reviewed the proposed budget. Marcia Perry commented that we might want more money for training. Bob Schaftenaar suggested increasing the budget to \$15,000. Al agreed that he would revise the proposed budget. Dick Darby asked if any taxes paid prior to February go into this budget. Al Meshkin stated that no taxes would be contributed until a plan is established. Al also noted that the commercial property values are decreasing in Laketown Township. Once developments are in place, the tax revenue can be captured. Bob Schaftenaar asked if there has been any local comment made in regards to the DDA. Steve Schilling stated that he has received inquiries on his property. Bob asked for clarification on the sewer line. Al stated that the agreement allows service to Darby's property and the Belvedere Inn and also a resolution to consider further extension down the corridor. Realistically, the lines might be in place spring of 2009 based on the developmental need.

**A motion was made by John Lamb and seconded by Bob Schaftenaar to recommend this amended proposed budget to the Township Board. UNANIMOUS DECISION – MOTION APPROVED**

Steve Schilling asked if the DDA would get to the point of drawing out exclusive living areas and other proposed plans. Al Meshkin stated that the DDA must work with the Planning Commission on the vision. Al shared some of the proposed ideas the Planning Commission has of commercial, highway commercial, industrial commercial and residential plans. Al envisions having a plan in place by the end of 2008. Dick Darby asked if Al inquires with other Townships that might refer preferred consultants.

Steve Schilling asked if State of Michigan tax incentives would be available to potential developers. Al responded that there is nothing at the Township level other than for industrial developments. The State has economic development monies available for infrastructure. The Township per capita income is too high to qualify for many grant monies. There are grants and tax credits available for senior or low-income citizen developments.

Dick Darby shared literature from the SCT organization that he will share with others but would like the issues returned to him.

ARTICLE V. CITIZEN COMMENTS - None

ARTICLE VI. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:25 pm. The next meeting will be at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, February 27, 2008 at the Laketown Township Hall.