

City of Northville
Board and Commission Selection Committee
March 9, 2018

Call to Order

The meeting of the Board and Commission Selection Committee was called to order at 8:15 a.m. at the City of Northville Municipal Building – Council Chambers, 215 W. Main Street, Northville, Michigan, 48167.

It was noted that Councilmembers Marilyn Price and Patrick Giesa were present. Also present were City Clerk Dianne Massa, and applicant Tom Gudritz (the other applicants arrived throughout the meeting). No citizens were present.

Public Comments

None

Review Minutes

The 1/19/18 minutes were reviewed and no changes were requested.

Board and Commission Applicant Interviews

Applicants were interviewed to fill vacancies on the Arts Commission and Downtown Development Authority (DDA) Board of Directors. Interviews times were scheduled as follows:

Gudritz: 8:15am	Ferrara: 9:15am	Burke: 10:15am
Schon: 8:30am	Hwang: 9:30am	
Russell: 8:45am	Johnson: 9:45am	
O'Brien: 9:00am	Allen: 10:00am	

Prior to beginning each DDA applicant's interview, the Committee explained eight applications were received. The Committee is interviewing all applicants and will make an appointment recommendation for the current vacancy on the DDA. There is a potential for one or two additional vacancies in September, depending on the desire of current DDA members to renew their expiring terms. The Committee will keep these applications on file for use in filling these vacancies.

Downtown Development Authority – Tom Gudritz. Discussion focused on:

- 32 year resident of Northville.
- Current member of the Historic District Commission. He is dedicated to preserving how Northville is viewed historically.
- Previous Northville School District board member.
- Very interested in helping to find ways to enhance the strength and success of the downtown area. Area competition requires constant effort and attention by store owners and the community at large to assure Northville is a shopping and event destination.
- Noted the City has an aging population. There is a need to get the next generation involved.
- Challenges include how the City keeps the millennial generation here for their entertaining, dining, and shopping experiences.
- Views the expansion of affordable housing in the downtown as exciting and essential to the vitality of the downtown.
- The DDA Strategic Plan update notes that people want to see expanded dining, entertainment, and shopping opportunities.

- The Cady Corridor development and a possible sale of Northville Downs will impact the downtown. Supports expanding the DDA boundaries to include these areas.
- Review of the DDA meeting schedule and City Council’s expectation of 75% attendance at regularly scheduled meetings for board/commission members.
- Schedule can accommodate the DDA meeting time. Noted he spends the month of February in Florida.

Manfred Schon arrived during Gudritz’s interview. Being no further questions, Gudritz thanked the Committee and left the meeting.

Downtown Development Authority – Manfred Schon. Discussion focused on:

- 3 year resident of Northville.
- Owns an international business, and its headquarters have been located in downtown Northville since 2012. All of the international offices are also located in downtowns. The trend is to have “social offices.” His employees work from home and do not need to go into the office to work.
- Spoke of his background in geo-technology.
- Would eventually like to build a sustainable downtown. Currently, he is working on making his house sustainable.
- Believes communities need to look at technology as part of its planning and future development strategy. Cities would benefit in many areas with technology improvements and technology based programs. Electric vehicle charging stations were cited as an example.
- Worked with the DDA Director to bring the electric vehicle charging stations to the downtown. His company partnered with Tesla to sponsor the stations.
- People are attracted to working and living in a city that keeps up with current technology. He would like to work with the City as either a DDA Board member or in another capacity to promote technological innovation, and sustainable architecture and infrastructure (mainly energy related).
- Review of the DDA meeting schedule and City Council’s expectation of 75% attendance at regularly scheduled meetings for board/commission members.
- Sets his own travel schedule and know weeks in advance if he would not be available.

Jeff Russell arrived during Schon’s interview. Being no further questions, Schon thanked the Committee and left the meeting.

Downtown Development Authority – Jeff Russell. Discussion focused on:

- 21 year resident of Northville.
- Background is in engineering. Also has a background in real estate development. He has more than 25 years of project experience in industry, an educational background in engineering and business, and his personal experience in designing and building a home in Northville.
- Has enjoyed watching the transformation and growth of the downtown and the surrounding community.
- Spoke of the issues and challenges facing the downtown, which include parking, festivals and events, and the development of Cady Town.
- Would like to see the DDA district expand to include Cady Town and more of N. Center Street.
- He has a broad view of the community as a whole, and would be able to see both sides (business/residential) and find balance.
- Discussion on how to encourage businesses to remain open in the evening and on weekends.

- Discussion on what is the Northville “niche” for businesses and people to want to come to Northville.
- Questioned the purpose of the DDA debt service payment in the DDA budget.
- Discussion of his past civic involvement.
- Review of the DDA meeting schedule and City Council’s expectation of 75% attendance at regularly scheduled meetings for board/commission members.
- Has flexibility in his work schedule and can accommodate the DDA meeting schedule.

O’Brien arrived during Russell’s interview. Being no further questions, Russell thanked the Committee and left the meeting.

Downtown Development Authority – Terri O’Brien. Discussion focused on.

- 9 year resident of Northville.
- Has an extensive background in marketing and advertising, and recently sold her marketing business. She has worked with marketing events in other communities such as Plymouth’s Art in the Park and their Fall Festival.
- Has done a lot of marketing work with the DDA. Her marketing skill set could help the DDA and the business owners. Has been successful in finding creative ways to get media support of businesses and downtown events without spending money.
- Spoke of the need to create synergy between businesses that complement each other to use as a marketing tool (i.e. fitness business partnering with a shoe store).
- Challenges in the downtown include how to recruit businesses that have a commitment to the downtown to stay open beyond “banker’s hours.” Sees retail as the key to downtown viability. It is important for the City to attract consumers and new businesses to the downtown.
- Sees the DDA as a board where she can make a difference. Her marketing and advertising skills, along with her ability to “rally the troops” would make her a valuable DDA board member.
- Discussion of civic involvement with Bridgepointe, Main Street League, and many other organizations.
- Review of the DDA meeting schedule and City Council’s expectation of 75% attendance at regularly scheduled meetings for board/commission members.
- Schedule can accommodate the DDA meeting schedule. If making a commitment, she will make the time to be present and participate.
- While the DDA is her first choice, she is open to serving on another Commission that suits her skill set.

Ferrara arrived during O’Brien’s interview. Being no further questions, O’Brien thanked the Committee and left the meeting.

Downtown Development Authority – Dan Ferrara. Discussion focused on:

- Business owner since 2011.
- Experience as a downtown business owner.
- Degree in Communication Arts and Sciences. Previously owned a marketing firm. He now runs the business side of Tipping Point Theatre.
- Is active on the Chamber of Commerce, Tipping Point Theatre, and Northville Kiwanis Club boards.

- Spoke of the need to implement the recommendations in the Strategic Plan update before focusing on new ideas.
- Discussion of ways to bring the DDA and Chamber of Commerce together, which might include having a second City member serve on the Chamber Board, and aligning the goals of the City, downtown, and Chamber of Commerce.
- Approximately 16,000 people annually patronize Tipping Point Theatre, which has a large economic impact on the downtown. Spoke of the Tipping Point Theatre's grant for cooperative advertising.
- Review of the DDA meeting schedule and City Council's expectation of 75% attendance at regularly scheduled meetings for board/commission members.
- While he serves on many boards, he has time to be an effective member of the DDA.

Hwang and Johnson arrived during Ferrara's interview. Being no further questions, Ferrara thanked the Committee and left the meeting.

Arts Commission – Roland Hwang. Discussion focused on:

- Also serves on the Northville School Board.
- The Arts Commission connection with the schools is growing. His connection with the school district would bridge the gap between the schools and the Arts Commission. Currently, the Arts Commission does not have a school board liaison.
- Finds the board to be pleasant and engaging.
- Would like to assist the Arts Commission with public relations.
- Voiced concern with the Arts Commission budget. The budget needs to include expanding program development, and exploring other revenue opportunities. The Arts Commission should learn about the successful funding efforts achieved by other self-funded Arts Commissions.
- Is aware that Arts and Acts is being moved to the Township. Noted it is a risk to move Arts and Acts, which furthers the Arts Commission disconnect with the downtown. Is concerned with the decision, but not a board member that has a voice or say in the matter.
- Has attended Arts Commission meetings. Has an understanding of the Arts Commission and its challenges.
- Review of the Arts Commission meeting schedule and City Council's expectation of 75% attendance at regularly scheduled meetings for board/commission members.
- Is available to attend the meetings.
- It was noted the Arts Commission voted to support Hwang's appointment to the Arts Commission.

Downtown Development Authority – Jeri Johnson. Discussion focused on:

- 28 year resident of Northville.
- Also works part-time for the Chamber of Commerce (17 years) as the membership staff.
- Sees herself as a passionate advocate for the Northville community and the downtown. The heart and soul of Northville is its beautiful downtown.
- Spoke of the importance of keeping the downtown viable. Belief that the downtown would benefit from more retail and "niche" businesses. The importance of the retail businesses understanding the community demographics, and staying open in the evenings and on weekends is key to the downtown's success.
- Spoke of retail stores that have done well in the downtown, and what they offer to remain fresh and unique.
- Very supportive of outdoor dining opportunities.
- Spoke of the importance of downtown special events that bring people to the downtown to see what it has to offer.

- Is passionate about Ford Field, which she sees as a community gem. She would like to see an amphitheater at Ford Field.
- Discussion of civic involvement with Bridgepoint and as a Mott volunteer.
- Review of the DDA meeting schedule and City Council's expectation of 75% attendance at regularly scheduled meetings for board/commission members.
- Schedule is able to accommodate the DDA meeting schedule.
- She is open to serving on another Commission that suits her skill set.

Allen arrived during Johnson's interview. Being no further questions, Johnson thanked the Committee and left the meeting.

Downtown Development Authority – Ethan Allen. Discussion focused on:

- Resident of Northville Township. Plans to move to downtown Northville when the opportunity arises.
- He is a managing partner at Navigant Oak LLC, which is located in the downtown. His brother-in-law is Aaron Cozart. They have a good working relationship, and would bring varied views and unique ideas to the DDA.
- Would enjoy the opportunity to serve the community and assist with strategies to grow downtown Northville. The downtown currently has much to offer as well as a great deal of potential. It has great traditions that need to continue to grow, while adapting to attract young people and young families.
- Downtown challenges include attracting families to live, shop, and eat in the downtown; and protecting the older part of the downtown while welcoming expansion in the Cady Town area.
- Sees value is talking to other downtowns about what steps they took to become more viable, and how they merged an older downtown with newer development.
- Would like to serve the community and assist with the strategy to grow downtown Northville.
- Review of the DDA meeting schedule and City Council's expectation of 75% attendance at regularly scheduled meetings for board/commission members.
- Schedule is able to accommodate the DDA meeting schedule.
- Wants to serve the community and is interested in other board/commission service opportunities.

Burke arrived during Allen's interview. Being no further questions, Allen thanked the Committee and left the meeting.

Downtown Development Authority – Gerry Burke. Discussion focused on:

- 25 year resident of Northville Township.
- New to downtown Northville. Works in downtown Northville at Towne Mortgage Company. Is also involved in Northville Rotary and would like to be more involved in the community.
- Spoke of the need to bring millennials to the downtown Northville. Millennials are leaving and moving to downtown Detroit.
- Challenges the downtown is facing include finding ways to bring younger people back to the City and finding ways to breathe new life into the downtown.
- The need for the downtown to offer affordable condominiums and other cost efficient housing.
- Discussion of the development opportunities should Northville Downs close and sell its property.
- Sees value in renovating older buildings and factories to create loft apartments.
- Review of the DDA meeting schedule and City Council's expectation of 75% attendance at regularly scheduled meetings for board/commission members.
- Schedule is able to accommodate the DDA meeting schedule.

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Discussion and Recommendation

The Committee concurred that Roland Hwang should be recommended for an appointment to the Arts Commission.

The Committee comments noted that the City was fortunate to receive eight applications for service on the DDA Board. The applicants have varied backgrounds and unique skill sets. The Committee members each voiced the need for additional time to review the applications, and their interview notes. The Committee tabled the discussion and set a meeting date of March 13, 2018 at 9:00a.m. to continue their discussion to reach consensus for an appointment recommendation to City Council.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:37a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dianne Massa
City Clerk

Approved as submitted: 3/13/18