

**CALUMET VILLAGE COUNCIL HEARING PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES FOR
MICHIGAN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG) FUNDING
FOR THE DOWNTOWN CALUMET GREEN SPACE PROJECT
CALUMET VILLAGE TOWNHALL
340 SIXTH STREET
CALUMET, MICHIGAN 49913
TUESDAY, APRIL 12, 2022 AT 5:30 PM**

Present: President Rob Tarvis; Trustees: Ken Olkkonen (*Interim/Temporary Clerk*), Pam Que, Andrew Ranville

Absent: Treasurer Debbie Aubin, Clerk David Geisler, Trustee Tim Bies

Vacancies: Two Council Seats

Also Present from Village: Manager Amber Goodman, DDA Chair Leah Polzien, Village Attorney James Tercha, HDC Chair Chris Green – Arrival at 5:52pm

Public: four members of the public from various time periods

I. Call to Order

President Tarvis called the meeting to order at 5:30pm.

All in attendance stood and recited the pledge of allegiance - *I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.*

II. Acceptance of Agenda

Motion made by Trustee Que and seconded by Trustee Olkkonen to accept the agenda, with correction of spelling of downtown on subject header and pledge of allegiance words to be added to the agenda and the minutes.

Motion Passed-4/0

III. Petitions from the Public

President Tarvis spoke about the meeting, and why it was called. The public hearing is for the application of the CDBG grant for the green spaces alongside the Theatre and the former Sax building lot. The DDA wants to contribute their match to leverage about \$300,000 of CDBG funds.

Trustee Olkkonen clarified with assistance of Village Attorney Tercha that the two lots are owned by the Village, but the one lot is subject to a revert clause if the DDA doesn't fulfil certain conditions. Discussion on the individual that donated the lot, for public usage.

Also provided on the agenda for both the Public Hearing and Special Meeting:

Information on the Project: The Village of Calumet proposes to use \$280,384.38 CDBG funds, and \$31,538.20 Village of Calumet Downtown Development Authority (DDA) funds, to create an attractive, compatible, public green space suited for flexible use, public events and social opportunities at 340 6th Street and 323-325 5th Street in

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downtown Calumet and benefit at least 51% low to moderate income persons. Zero (0) persons will be displaced as a result of the proposed activities.

Pam Que read written comments that were turned in prior to 5pm on that day. No additional comments were received after this time in written format.

1. Email from Lorri Oikarinen read aloud, also attached to the minutes. Brief summary of email: expressing benefits of the community garden on the 400 block of fifth street and added that the sculpture park next to Bucko's on the 300 block is just one example of the successful committee pocket park. Noted increase of traffic at their business when people are coming downtown to the farmers market. All of the buildings downtown are noted as being irreplaceable to downtown and greenspaces, pocket parks are a way to fill these gaps as a result of loss of buildings due to fire or demolition by neglect.
2. Email from Rachael Pressley, Regional Planner for Western U.P. Planning & Development, read aloud, and attached to the minutes. Brief summary of email: expressing support of the development of more greenspace in Calumet Downtown District. An accessible public park supported by the Calumet DDA, adding accessibility to the Farmers Market, overall quality of life for resident and visitors.
3. Letter from Peggy Germain, a Village Resident, read aloud, also attached to the minutes. Brief summary of the letter: expressing the need to direct attention to the current Agassiz Park, wrote about the history of Agassiz Park, (included photos of the store located on Calumet Fifth Street, and statue in Agassiz Park), and the neglected state of this area. Rather than starting a new park recommended that funds be applied to the original village owned park. Several concerns listed with proposed park which should bear closer scrutiny: defunct green space committee, limited space with little room for expansion, limited parking, lack of restroom facilities, close proximity of tenants in apartments being disturbed by stage performances, conditional ownership of the site until 2029, location of gas and sewer lines, additional annual maintenance cost, i.e. water, electricity, snow fencing, grounds upkeep, etc., congestion. Noted that with the special meeting immediately following the public hearing, this will not allow for enough time to consider any input from the public, written or oral, and ask that you do nothing to move this plan forward at this time.
4. Email from Amy Knight, owner of Calumet Floral & Gifts, read aloud, also attached to the minutes. Brief summary of the email: email in support of the improvements within the community. What do improvements motivate? They motivate others improvements and additional business and increase revenue across the board.

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5. Email from Dean Kangas, State Farm Insurance Agency, read aloud, also attached to the minutes. Brief summary of the email: Email in support of the direction that Calumet is heading and the important grant opportunity for the area. Please consider this green space improvement project.
6. Email from Rev. Bob Langseth read aloud, also attached to the minutes. Brief summary of the email in support of the investment of the grant and encouraging business in the district.
7. Email from Nathan McParlan read aloud, also attached to the minutes. Brief summary of the email: the improvements would make the 3rd block of Calumet more attractive. Encouraging improvements in the area.

President Robert Tarvis spoke about not being able to rewrite the grant for Agassiz Park due to the limited turnaround time of the application which is due April 15, 2022.

8. Todd Brassard, Vice President Corporate Operations Officer, from Calumet Electronics Corporation spoke and read the Calumet Electronics Corporation letter of support, (also attached in the minutes) and added personal comments. Brief summary of letter: Calumet Electronics expressed support of the grant application and improvements to the Village of Calumet Downtown. Mr. Brassard included projections of growth as a major employer in the Calumet area based on a successful downtown. Decrepit downtown can lead to the reverse effects, and bringing in outside funding is vital to this area (state and federal funding). The Village of Calumet must lead in the rebuilding of the area, and several benefits were listed in having a safe and clean greenspace, and improve accessibility. Calumet Electronics Corporation supports this application, revitalization of this site, and working together with the Village.
9. Rebecca Glotfelty, Executive Director of Real People Media, spoke about the grant application. Summary of verbal report: Would prefer that the individuals would have attended in person to the public meeting to be more effective. Spoke about her history in moving into her current location on 5th Street. The building was on the verge of collapsing, due to the Village Council not being able to address blight due to funding and legal representation. Finds this application fiscally irresponsible, because of ongoing Village blight and maintenance issues. Concerned that the Village does not have funds for snow removal, and Real People Media had seven events in which they were shoveling snow due to the lack of snow removal. Recommendation of better parking and bathrooms at Agassiz Park to hold the Farmer's Market. Concerns about the committee that was putting this together due to the resignation status of many members.

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The design does not leave any room for parking at the entrance of the Theatre which is needed for events. Opposed to this for fiscal reasons, and ongoing blight/maintenance issues within the Village. Expressed concern that it is a snow space for 6 months out of the year. The current Farmers Market exists on lots the Village does not own.

10. Todd Brassard added public comments; spoke about their history of selling their product which developed into selling the area and the community. The downtown 5th and 6th street areas are the most viewable by guests. His recommendation to the Village Council is to invest, work hard, and make the most of the property that was donated. The application is very strong and the Village should stay with it.
11. Chris Green, Chairman of the Historic District Committee, spoke; The Historic District Committee fully supports this project. This greenspace is in the downtown historic district, this project fits their criteria and render an official comment that Historic District Committee supports this application.
12. Al Ayotte, a Village Resident spoke, and shared images of Agassiz Park. He has worked in this town for nine years and noted that the pigeons in the area need to be addressed because they are killing the buildings. Nothing will matter if we do not get rid of the pigeons.
13. A question was asked about the Green Space Committee formation and first and last meetings.

Leah Polizen, Chair of the DDA, addressed this question:

- Initial discussions began in late 2018 with the DDA after initial experiences with the farmer's market. It was noted that during the operation of the Farmers Market on 6th Street they were looking at a partially collapsed building.
- John Mueller, an investor, acquired the property and wished to see it turned into a community greenspace.
- In order to acquire the property, the Village Council asked for a committee to guide this acquisition. This committee moved forward with an initial landscaping and design of the area.
- Meetings started with Steve Delong in 2019, National Park Landscape Architect. Design of that space came up with what our goals were, creating a cross between the spaces. A

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concept design was created and public comments were accepted at an outdoor meeting in the August of 2020. The public comments were considered, it was determined that the plan met the goals and no additional changes were made. However, they did not have funds to address the project from 2019 to late 2020 along with COVID-19 related obstacles. During the intervening time several members left the Village Council or Greenspace Committee.

14. Rebecca Glotfelty had a follow-up question about forming a committee if the grant was received. Would there be a grant administrator, and if it was thru MEDC?

DDA Chair Leah Polizen confirmed that the forming of the committee would be a DDA decision; the next step would be a final design. In terms of a grant administrator there would be one, funded by the MEDC if the grant was accepted.

15. Rebecca Glotfelty spoke about the Calumet Theatre needs not being met by the application design and parking not being addressed. She confirmed her commitment to the community by bringing in over \$100,000 to the area. She spoke about the extra \$30,000 match, alternative areas this could be used, and disagreement with the grant application.

Trustee Ranville spoke about the concern with many of the same items that have been brought up during this meeting. He has worked on the budget, and reminded the members of the public that this is the DDA funds, and they need to use these funds in alignment with the DDA purview.

President Tarvis spoke about the DDA deciding how funds are allocated within their budget, and the blight work that is ongoing.

DDA Chair, Leah Polizen spoke that the DDA has set aside at least \$5000.00 to address blight in the downtown within the last five years. They are attempting to address the blight issue. The DDA did pass a resolution on addressing blight in 2020 and are working together on the blight enforcement issue.

Trustee Ranville recognized the concerns that were brought forward and understanding of this topic, but asked that the President move this meeting forward due to the overwhelming support of the members of the community.

16. Rebecca Glotfelty asked why aren't we using the park?

President Tarvis spoke about the history of the park and the farmers market. It was noted that progress in the park would be welcome, but this will take time.

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17. Rebecca Glotfelty asked can there be a committee outside of this, for friends of Agassiz Park?

Discussion by several members of council on possible fund raising and other opinions to encourage growth in Agassiz Park, but also bearing in mind that this opportunity will help to snow ball the effect in the community. Discussion ensued on fundraising and other related topics.

Pam Que encouraged comments from the Village Attorney Tercha about the ownership of the property. The Village Attorney spoke about 330 5th Street. There is a deed that was recorded on August 30, 2019 to DDA, the DDA have certain obligations for a period of ten years, they can not convey or transfer the property to any other party without the consent of the party that made the gift, and they have to keep the property neat and clean for a period of ten years, of which almost three years have already expired. There are some considerable hurdles if the party would like to use the revert clause; they would have to give notice to the DDA first, what it is that is a concern for them, they could only move on the revert clause if there was 24 consecutive months during which the DDA has not kept the property neat, clean and tidy.

IV. Adjourn

Motion from Trustee Ranville, and seconded by Trustee Que to adjourn the meeting at 6:28pm.

Motion Passed 4/0

Respectfully Submitted,



Amber Goodman
Manager



Ken Olkkonen
Interim/Temporary Clerk