

**DOWNRIVER COMMUNITY CONFERENCE
REGULAR MEETING – March 5, 2009**

Item #3

Present:

Allen Park	Mayor Gary Burtka
Brownstown Twp.	Trustee Barbara Warren
Dearborn	Alternate Bill Irving, Asst. Corporation Counsel
Dearborn Heights	Mayor Dan Paletko
Ecorse	
Flat Rock	Councilman Jonathan Dropiewski
Gibraltar	Councilman Scott Ross
Grosse Ile Twp.	Alternate William Krauss
Huron Twp.	Supervisor Elke Doom
Lincoln Park	Mayor Frank Vaslo
Melvindale	Mayor Valerie Cadez
River Rouge	
Riverview	Mayor Tim Durand
Rockwood	Mayor Daniel Guzzi
Romulus	Delegate Tim Keyes, Economic Development Director
Southgate	Alternate Levon King, City Administrator
Taylor	Alternate Laurie Trueblood, Director of Administration
Trenton	Councilman Terry Teifer
Woodhaven	Councilman Edward Smith
Wyandotte	Councilman Joe Peterson

The meeting was opened by the Chair Terry Teifer, at 6:15 p.m. with community roll call and introductions.

Agenda: Motion by Mayor Durand, supported by Councilman Peterson, to accept the agenda as presented with one addition – Resolution supporting Congressman Dingell. The motion passed unanimously.

Minutes: Motion by Mayor Vaslo, supported by Mayor Guzzi, to accept the minutes of 2/5/09 as written. The motion passed unanimously.

Presentations:

Wayne County Nuisance Abatement Program: Eric Sebree and Mike Russell, Wayne County Community Liaison Attorneys, provided background about the program that initially started in 1999 to deal with drug houses and now includes many other houses due to the increasing volume of abandoned and foreclosed homes. They work with communities to get nuisance property cleaned up. The Nuisance Abatement Team follows up by going to the address and conducting an investigation. The property must be a blighting influence and abandoned. The investigators complete a Visual Inspection Form, which details the property's location, condition and construction and identifies any other activity on the property. After determining ownership of the property through a title search and by investigating public records, the Nuisance Abatement Team files a nuisance abatement suit against the last identifiable owner(s) seeking renovation or demolition of the property. If no one responds to the lawsuit or if a defendant unsuccessfully challenges the law suit, Wayne County asks for the court for title to the property as a remedy to "abate the nuisance". Mayor Paletko of Dearborn Heights said his community has entered into an agreement with Wayne County's Nuisance Abatement Program and has heard good things about their results. Brochures were distributed.

Finance Committee Report: Treasurer Tim Keyes reported.

Finance Minutes & Audit: Motion by Delegate Keyes, supported by Mayor Cadez, to accept the Finance Committee minutes of 2/23/09 as written. The motion passed unanimously.

Audit Presentation:

2008 DMA Audit: Beth Bialy, Audit Partner and Kristen Hunt, Audit Manager of Plante & Moran distributed a summary overview of the DMA audit for the FY 2007-2008, with a full report included in the board packet for further information. DMA was given an 'Unqualified Opinion' which is the highest opinion. Due to the Accounting Rule Standards, the Highway Safety Fund and the COPS fund show a significant deficit, but in reality, it's only a timing issue. No findings this year on the Federal and Single audits. Motion by Mayor Guzzi, supported by Councilman Peterson, to accept the DMA audit as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

2008 DCC Audit: Beth Bialy and Kristen Hunt of Plante & Moran gave an overview of the 2008 DCC Audit. Special points of review:

- 1) Unqualified Opinion – highest possible audit opinion.
- 2) DCC's General Fund had a \$1,108 net decrease in fund balance, bringing the fund balance to \$155,401.
- 3) Each special revenue fund - Employment Programs, Economic Development, and Transportation special revenue funds each had a fund deficit at year-end; mainly due to GASB 33 timing differences. The Weatherization special revenue fund had a fund balance of \$0.
- 4) The Building Fund had a net loss of \$19,132.
- 5) There was one item related to an adjusting journal entry for Brownfield activity that is being reported in conjunction with a new auditing standard (SAS 112).
- 6) The federal program audit had findings related to Work First and Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC).

Beth and Kristen thanked Kim Donahey, Nicole Chavez and the Fiscal staff for helping with the audit.

Discussion followed of "condo-izing" the Montessori School portion of the building. Motion by Mayor Paletko, supported by Mayor Guzzi, to approve the 2008 DCC audit as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Cancel April Board Meeting: Motion by Mayor Guzzi, supported by Mayor Cadez, to cancel the DCC Board meeting for April 2nd due to a conflict with the Chamber's Black Tie party. The motion passed unanimously.

DABC Membership for Environmental Protection Agency Revolving Loan Program: Paula Boase gave an update of recent activity with the Downriver Area Brownfield Consortium (DABC) program. The Brownfield group is currently working on the old Masonic Temple in Wyandotte doing asbestos abatement; and providing funding to support the Wayne County International Wildlife Rescue. The EPA asked DCC to consider adding Washtenaw County to our brownfield group. DCC's revolving loan fund for brownfield redevelopment is very detailed and we have it down pat. Discussion and board concerns followed regarding the possibility of our area losing funding. Paula Boase explained that since our program encompasses such a large area, it makes us more marketable when applying for grants from the EPA. Jim Perry added that DCC's brownfield program is ranked number one nationally. Motion by Mayor Vaslo, supported by Delegate Keyes, to authorize adding Washtenaw County Brownfield Redevelopment Program to the membership of the DABC. Councilman Joe Peterson voiced his concerns on the affects of adding them to our area. The motion passed.

Resolution supporting Congressman John D. Dingell: Motion by Delegate Keyes, supported by Mayor Burtka, to support Congressman John D. Dingell and commend him for his continued efforts and support for the Downriver communities, his superb representation of the State of Michigan and the significant and positive impact he has had on the United States of America, as the longest serving member in the U.S. House of Representatives. All twenty member communities are to sign this special resolution for Congressman Dingell. The motion passed unanimously.

Informational Items:

Weatherization and Energy Program: Chairman Teifer referenced the complimentary note included in the board packet from one of DCC's customers.

Remarks from the Audience:

- Home Foreclosure Prevention Office: Jim Perry announced that Wayne County's Home Foreclosure Prevention Program has one counselor working in our building now, Gloria Wiley, with another one to start soon. Sue Pilon introduced Gloria to the board. Gloria shared that her background is in banking. Their hours of operation are 9:00 – 5:00, by appointment only at this time. She also added that there are 33 mortgage foreclosure prevention counselors accessible through the program via telephone. There is no fee for counseling assistance. Mayor Paletko mentioned that it is helpful to get this information out to residents since there is so much fraudulent advertising out recently from companies who claim they can help people with foreclosure (for a fee). Mayor Burtka asked if brochures were available. Gloria gave her contact information and offered to meet with any of the communities if needed.
- Electrical Fire: Jim Perry reported that there was an electrical fire at the DCC building, no one was hurt and that the problem is being repaired.
- Michael Mendez, Regional Director, Governor's Southeast Michigan Office: Gave an update that Governor Granholm unveiled a Michigan Business One Stop Service (on-line service) to expand business information sharing across departments. This provides information to start, operate or expand a business in Michigan. Business owners will be able to apply for or renew permits and licenses, file annual reports and pay unemployment taxes or any other fees per the State law. That web site is www.michigan.gov/business. Communities may apply for drinking water/sewage project grants – deadline is May 1st and July 1st for the 2010 priority project list. Stimulus package daily updates are provided on www.michigan.gov/recovery. No real details have been issued on the release of these funds. Councilman Joe Peterson asked for a list of communities who applied for and are receiving stimulus funds.

Motion by Councilman Peterson, supported by Delegate Keyes, to adjourn at 7:18 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.