

**MEETING MINUTES
BERKLEY DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Wednesday, April 8, 2026, 8:15 AM
Berkley Public Safety, 2nd Floor, Conference Room**



- I. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 8:22 AM with Chair Matteo Passalacqua presiding.

A. Roll Call Taken and Quorum Determined

Present: Desiree Dutcher
Katie Forte
Scott Francis
Anna Grace
Chris Gross
Matteo Passalacqua
Ashley Poirier
Todd Schaefer
Crystal VanVleck

Absent: Lucas Gonzalez – *excused*
Katie Goodwin – *excused*
Shawn Heath-Lee – *excused*
Uli Laczkovich
Brian Zifkin – *excused*

Also present: Steve Baker, City Council Liaison
Jennifer Finney, Chamber of Commerce Liaison
Nate Mack, DDA Executive Director
Adam Wozniak, DPW Liaison

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Gross moved to approve the Agenda, Grace seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Regular Meeting Minutes of March 11, 2026

Penelope Morris reported she found two errors needing correction as she was preparing the minutes. The first page header listed the wrong location (the March meeting was held at Council Chambers); and the Treasurer Report listed monthly expenditures at @\$7,300,000 instead of @\$7,300. Grace moved to approve the amended minutes of the regular meeting of March 11, 2026, Gross seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

IV. TREASURER REPORT

Financial Reports for March 2026

Gross reported March revenues of @\$0 and expenditures of @\$17,000, with year-to-date revenues of @\$464,000 and expenses of @\$245,000. The ending fund balance after March 2026 was @\$470,000. Gross noted that health care expenses have still not been allocated.

Poirier moved to receive and approve the Treasurer's Report for March 2026, Schaefer seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

V. ACTION ITEMS – None.

VI. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. DDA TIF/Development Plan & Strategic Plan Discussion

Mack reported that the DDA's 5-year Strategic Plan expired in 2022. He outlined the differences between the Development Plan and the Strategic Plan. The TIF/Development Plan provides the financial and legal foundation and the Strategic Plan provides the operational roadmap to organize, execute, and prioritize the objectives outlined in the TIF/Development Plan (how to use the available funds).

Five strategic goals were listed in the prior Strategic Plan.

1. Maintain and improve downtown Berkley's physical environment, enhancing streets, public spaces, streetscapes, promoting walkability, pedestrian activity, and overall visual appearance of the district.
2. Develop new special events, retail activities and marketing efforts to promote the district in a distinctive, compelling identity.
3. Diversify the business and land use base through development, create new incentives and remove barriers to new investment.
4. Build the DDA identity and expand the number of stakeholders and volunteers who participate in the revitalization program.
5. Plan for the mid- and long-term organization structure and funding of the revitalization program (DDA).

Mack asked the Board to assess how successful the DDA has been in achieving those and which ones are still relevant moving forward for the next five years

Prior to the meeting, he had sent to the Board three questions to consider as the Strategic Plan is being updated:

1. As you look ahead four to five years, what should Downtown Berkley become more known for, and where should the DDA have the greatest influence?
2. Given limited time and resources, which two or three priorities should the DDA elevate above the rest in the next strategic plan?
3. What decisions should the updated plan help the Board make more clearly and confidently in the years ahead?

He then opened up roundtable discussion of the three questions

As you look ahead ...

Some observations from the Board were that this was a really solid plan, a good starting point.

The DDA should encourage downtown businesses to have more open hours.

I don't know what Berkley is known for ... we need better buzzwords that pop up when people do web searches, maybe approachability. Market the organization better: "Brought to you by the Berkley DDA."

When the question was put to AI, it answered: neighborly, small town feel, small, local shops, community.

Several Board members noted the word “community” drives the feel of the city.

Given limited time and resources, which two or three priorities should the DDA elevate ...

A little more brick and mortar projects; continue coordinating with the City and Chamber and pool resources.

Support more residential in the downtown. Residential right now is the surefire thing and a high priority for developers.

Assure that developers and new businesses are met with open arms and a “we can do that” response when they approach city government. The DDA can assist them with the process.

What decisions can the updated plan help the DDA make ...

How does this (or any) activity fit within our defined goals.

Identify areas we should be focusing on (Community Development and the efforts of Better City).

Identify sources of revenue (and challenges to securing funding).

Mack noted that the City will soon be deciding on a firm to prepare their strategic plan and that could be the same firm the DDA hires. He expects to coordinate closely with the City on finalizing the DDA’s plan, probably in mid-to late summer.

VII. LIAISON REPORTS

A. City Council – Steve Baker

Baker reported that at their meeting Council dealt with procedural issues approving dates for the Art Bash and Berkley Pride events. As liaison for Berkley Days (Sept. 11 and 12) he reported that there’s still space to purchase on the Berkleyopoly board and Berkleyopoly money and cards where your logo can be displayed. Purchase deadline is May 1. Anyone interested should get in touch with him for contact information to purchase space.

Passalacqua noted engaging with neighboring communities Huntington Woods and Oak Park going forward should be pursued.

B. Community Development – Kristen Kapelanski

Absent – no report.

C. Planning Commission – Lisa Kempner

Absent – no report.

D. Public Works – Adam Wozniak

Wozniak reported the sprinkler system for the beds on 12 Mile are being tested before they’re turned on. The DDA can connect with Frank’s about summer flowers. Wozniak also reported that the DPW is planning to “blow out” the sidewalks as soon as weather permits.

E. Chamber of Commerce – Jennifer Finney

Finney reported the Chamber is upgrading the “experience” for members and recruiting new members as they plan the year’s events. There’s a new podcast and their next Chamber Chat is scheduled for April 17. There will be a joint committee meeting with representatives from the City, Oak Park, the Berkley DDA and Berkley Chamber on April 16. A networking lunch with other local Chambers is scheduled for May 1 at Bark and Brews.

VIII. STUDENT BOARD MEMBER UPDATES

Absent – no report. Students are taking exams.

IX. BOARD COMMITTEE UPDATES

A. Art & Design Committee

The Robina planning group plans to meet after the Board meeting. Passalacqua suggested including Public Safety in their planning for bollards (ways to block vehicle access). Regarding the \$2,200.00 façade grant award for Buns and Patties (approved in July 2025), the DDA needs to follow up about their delay.

1. Subcommittee West 12 Mile

Absent – no report.

B. Business Development Committee

No report.

C. Events Committee

Pride applications are open and the event is being promoted on social media. Sponsorships would be appreciated.

Marketing Committee

The committee is assisting Poirier with the June Pride event. There's been discussion about potential tie-ins with BHS DECA.

D. Organization Committee

The committee is working on Board vacancies and tracking Mack's progress.

X. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATES

Mack reported that he will be attending the Main Street National Conference in Tulsa April 13-15. The Chop Shop, Folio, and the businesses at 3020 Coolidge have contacted him about the façade grant program. Nineteen Berkley businesses made *Hour Magazine's* "best of" list, so he's buying an ad (@\$6,100) in their June issue. He and Kapelanski met with four restaurants interested in joining the Social District program (Little Lou's, Republica, Casa Amado, and Green Lantern). He noted the Beverly has also expressed interest.

XI. BOARD OF DIRECTORS' COMMENTS

None.

XII. PUBLIC COMMENTS

The opportunity for public comment was offered. No requests to comment were made at the meeting. Anyone with comments or questions is asked to e-mail them to the DDA to be answered within five business days.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:48 AM on motion by Grace and second by Schaefer.