MEETING MINUTES
BERKLEY DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Wednesday, March 11, 2026, 8:30 AM
Berkley City Council Chambers, City Hall

I. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 8:30 AM with Chair Matteo Passalacqua presiding.

A. Roll Call Taken and Quorum Determined

Present: Desiree Dutcher
Scott Francis
Lucas Gonzalez
Katie Goodwin
Anna Grace
Chris Gross
Shawn Heath-Lee
Uli Laczkovich
Matteo Passalacqua
Todd Schaefer
Crystal VanVleck
Brian Zifkin

Absent: Katie Forte – *excused*
Ashley Poirier – *excused*

Also present: Steve Baker, City Council Liaison
Kristen Kapelanski, Community Development Director
Adam Wozniak, DPW Liaison

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Regular Meeting Minutes of February 11, 2026

Dutcher moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of February 11, 2026, Laczkovich seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

IV. TREASURER REPORT

Financial Reports for February 2026

Gross reported the February revenues of @$0 and expenditures of @$7,300, with year-to-date revenues of @$464,000. The ending fund balance after February 2026 was @$523,000. Gross noted that pension and health care expenses haven't been allocated yet

Grace moved to receive and approve the Treasurer's Report for February 2026, Laczkovich seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

V. PRESENTATION: Community Development Director Kristen Kapelanski to discuss DDA alignment with City of Berkley Master Plan Goals and Objectives

Passalacqua reported he had been working with Mack and Kapelanski in discussions about updating the DDA Strategic Plan along with, at some point, portions of the DDA Development Plan.

Alignment with City and Chamber goals is essential, especially when pursuing grant funding. To that end, Passalacqua had invited Kapelanski to give a presentation on how Berkley's Master Plan relates to the DDA District (12 Mile and Coolidge) and how the DDA can build off that in formulating their Strategic Plan and goals going forward.

Questions for the Board are what has been accomplished since the last Strategic Plan update and what are the DDA goals moving forward.

The Master Plan divides the DDA District into three corridors: West 12 Mile, South Coolidge, and Downtown. For the West 12 Mile corridor, the Plan encourages development bringing buildings to the sidewalk with mostly two-story or two-story with a third stepped back, a mix of commercial and residential, and a variety of building material. South Coolidge focuses on a residential component with more traditional building materials. The Plan encourages upgraded landscaping for existing buildings that are set back from the sidewalk and possibly adding outdoor seating.

One focus of the Master Plan, bringing new development up front, next to the sidewalk, as opposed to placing parking in front (not pedestrian-friendly) was illustrated by Kapelanski's slide of the 12 Mile Burger King multi-use development. This should be a consideration when the DDA is reviewing applications for façade improvement grants.

Downtown is divided into three areas in the Master Plan: Dining and retail, civic functions (the theatre development may alter that), and the third area (Earlmont to Catalpa) designated as specialty retail and office. The streetscape should appear unified.

Coolidge crosswalks were an impactful DDA improvement. Promoting public art is another focus in the Master Plan (murals). Another goal in the Master Plan is better buffers between residential and commercial.

The Master Plan also talks about consolidating parcels, such as the Alco block from Greenfield to Edgewood, where all the properties are for sale except the D&D Bicycle building. Plazas, such as the DDA Robina North project, are also encouraged in the City Master Plan. The DDA can also support diversified housing (two completed projects in the district, and another which was abandoned at this point).

In developing the revised Master Plan, public engagement revealed that the small-town atmosphere is extremely important to preserve for the community.

Lighting, landscaping, and sidewalks figure prominently in the Coolidge roadway reconstruction. The DDA's mural and façade improvement programs already align with the Master Plan's goals of increasing the taxable value of existing property.

Passalacqua noted that height caps on mixed use buildings could discourage developers from constructing such projects in Berkley.

VI. ACTION ITEMS

A. Bistro Table Policy

Mack had met with DPW and Kapelanski about formulating a Bistro Table policy and included in the Board Packet a draft of the proposed policy to be followed in determining distribution of the DDA owned bistro tables and chairs that have been placed randomly around downtown the previous year. In the draft he proposed allotting two table sets to businesses that request them. Passalacqua was in favor of tracking demand from downtown businesses and how much downtown shoppers use them.

Gross moved to approve the Bistro Table Policy, as presented, Schaefer seconded, and the motion was approved by all present other than Laczkovich, who voted in opposition.

B. Social District Expansion
Mack reported that some in City government and as well as some restaurants on Coolidge have favored expanding Berkley's Downtown Social District to cover both major roads, 12 Mile from Greenfield to Coolidge and Coolidge from 12 Mile to Republica (just north of 11 Mile). There are currently six or seven establishments on Coolidge that have expressed interest.

Mack reported that with the proposed expansion, current businesses taking part in the program would receive 100 cups and stickers rather than an unlimited number, and new businesses taking part would also receive an initial 100 cups and stickers. The State maintenance plan for the program would remain unchanged.

Signage for the expanded district will be the biggest DDA expense, marking the district boundaries and where alcohol is and is not allowed. Both student Board members favored prohibiting alcohol at Art Space, the gathering spot adjacent to Berkley High School.

Signs may not have to be in-ground, and Mack says he doesn't have a firm quote yet on signage.

Passalacqua moved to approve expanding the Social District Expansion as outlined and amended his motion to accept the cost of signage not to exceed $20,000.00, Dutcher seconded, and Passalacqua asked for a roll call on the motion.

Dutcher, Grace, Gross, Heath-Lee, Laczkovich, Passalacqua, and VanVleck voted in favor, Francis, Schaefer, and Zifkin voted against, and the motion was approved on a 7 to 3 vote.

C. Recommend City Council Approve DDA Draft Budget for FY 2026-2027
Mack included in the Board's packet a draft of the proposed 2026-27 budget, and he outlined the major changes from previous years. The Budget, if approved by the Board, will be presented to City Council with the DDA's recommendation that it be approved by that body, and for final approval it will be sent back to the DDA Board.

Revenue projected for fiscal year 2026/27 is @$527,000.00.

Changes/additions to the budget are $25,000.00 for the DDA Plan Update, increases to @$30,000.00 for the Façade Improvement Program, @$15,000.00 for the Mural Program, part-time support staff (new) @$20,000.00, and with an opportunity to partner with the City of Oak Park, @$10,000.00 for the trolley during shopping season.

The part-time support staff will be especially engaged with helping Mack coordinate and run DDA events over the year.

Not included yet in the overall budget is a quote from Frank's for $22,000.00 to power wash and seal the stamped concrete downtown.

If the DDA stays on budget for the year it will come out $30,000 on top.

Passalacqua moved to recommend City Council approve the DDA Draft Budget for FY 2026-27, Zifkin seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

VII. DISCUSSION ITEMS
None.

VIII. LIAISON REPORTS

A. City Council – Steve Baker

Baker had to leave early. In his absence, VanVleck reported that at Council's special meeting, there was discussion about the crumbling wall at DPW, an RFP for a real estate proposal about public/private partnerships (combining lots) and signage upgrades.

B. Community Development – Kristen Kapelanski

Kapelanski had no additional report.

C. Planning Commission – Lisa Kempner

Absent – no report.

D. Public Works – Adam Wozniak

No report.

E. Chamber of Commerce – Jennifer Finney

Absent – no report.

IX. STUDENT BOARD MEMBER UPDATES

Gonzalez reported the swim team won medals (he is a member), and the track and field team is starting the season, fifth grade camp, DECA was recognized, and Women's History Month is being celebrated.

Goodwin reported Spring Break, SATs, and an Encore production are coming up.

X. BOARD COMMITTEE UPDATES

A. Art & Design Committee

The committee is working on the budget for concrete and getting additional quotes for other improvements in support of the Robina project.

1. Subcommittee West 12 Mile

Zifkin reported the traffic pole at Greenfield and 12 Mile has been damaged again and will need to be repaired/replaced. He will not be able to attend the April Board meeting.

B. Business Development Committee

No report.

C. Events Committee

The committee is working on the schedule for the upcoming Pride event, and the application will need to be approved by City Council in April. The committee is also working on the event schedule for the whole year.

Marketing Committee

No report.

D. Organization Committee

There is one opening to be filled on the Board.

XI. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATES

Mack included his update in the supporting packet sent to the Board prior to the meeting. He attended the Michigan Downtown Assoc. Advocacy Day and Spring Workshop in Lansing and spoke with legislators about proposed amendments to the Michigan Downtown Development Authority Act. A $10,000.00 technical assistance request was made to Main Street Oakland County (a benefit of Select Community status with MSOC).

He will be attending the National Main Street Conference in Tulsa from April 12-14.

The Beverly, the new restaurant on Coolidge near 12 Mile, has completed its Façade Improvement project and has requested its reimbursement award.

There is a new overnight parking policy for businesses adjacent to municipal lots.

The Robina Project team engaged with a sculptor from Detroit Design Center to discuss a focal point sculpture for the location.

XII. BOARD OF DIRECTORS' COMMENTS

None.

XIII. 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.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:28 AM on motion by Zifkin and second by Gross.