

City of Iron Mountain  
Downtown Development Authority  
Thursday, March 6, 2025  
Special Strategy Meeting  
12:00pm

**I. Meeting Called to Order:** at 12:05 pm. Megan Blomquist, Lucas Davidson, David Hendrickson, Anthony Miller, Kim Webb, Jordan Stanchina, Sonja Matzke, Katherine Mentel, and Tim McCauley present

**II. Approval of Agenda:** The agenda was approved on a motion by Miller/Webb and carried unanimously.

**III. Background Information and Meeting Structure -** The staff provided a brief summary of DDA goals and strategies from years past and a consensus was achieved regarding the topics to be addressed at the current meeting.

**IV. Discussion and Development of Actionable Goals (Strategies) by Topic -** Each of the following topic areas was discussed. A set of goals and actions are set forth based upon that discussion:

**A. Downtown planning / economic development**

*Goal: Attain RRC Essentials status in 2025-2026*

Action: Complete Trello dashboard actions in fall 2025

Action: Determine benefits, steps to attaining RRC Certified status, whether or not that would be a desirable course of action in the future

*Goal: Complete a Downtown/TIF plan in 2025-2026*

Action: Form 9-member "development area citizens council" (DACC) in spring 2025

Action: Complete the background / information section of the plan document by June 2025

Action: Conduct meetings with the DACC and 2 public visioning sessions in July and late fall 2025

Action: Complete goals/policies and TIF projects sections of the plan document by December 2025

Action: Conduct a public hearing on the plan, make final revisions, and transmit to the City Council for adoption in early 2026.

**B. Events**

*Goal: Continuous improvement of event management from DDA Organizational perspective*

Action: Develop procedures to proactively address potential risks (weather, injuries, violence, equipment failure, etc.) and contingencies for unforeseen problems with vendors, suppliers, etc.

Action: Collect metrics for events to enable better decision making with regard to marketing, sponsorship levels, vendor choices, dates. For example, home location and age for attendees. Also conduct feedback surveys of attendees.

Action: Maintain positive relationships with vendors, sponsors, entertainers, and others we rely on to make events a success.

Action: Formalize an Events Strategy, with the understanding that this will take longer than one year.

### **C. Beautification and public art:**

*Goal: Carefully consider all streetscape elements and art as a cohesive whole and avoid taking a piecemeal / default approach*

Action: Conduct a further Board discussion regarding streetscape elements.

Action: Purchase and place new trash receptacles for use within the festival space and social district at a minimum as soon as possible in 2025.

*Goal: Replace or re-cover the DDA greenhouse to make it durable and resistant to weather damage before winter 2025-2026*

Action: Perform necessary short-term repairs to enable flexibility in timing for more extensive repairs or renovation.

Action: Measure the current greenhouse, then determine material amounts and costs from various sources.

Action: Consider replacing the greenhouse entirely, as that may be the most efficient way to upgrade in terms of time and money.

Action: Based on the foregoing, determine who, how, and when renovation can happen. Summer or fall 2025 is preferable.

### **D. In-house organizational development**

*Goal: Improve / optimize interaction between DDA staff and DDA Board to facilitate best possible programs, planning, and event management. This will enable all to utilize public resources to maximum benefit in revitalizing Downtown Iron Mountain.*

Action: Provide professional development opportunities to DDA staff to provide them with “best practices” for working with the Board. This should enable Board members to make their best contribution and enjoy participating in DDA activities.

Action: Provide information to the Board to facilitate effective interaction with staff and help to prevent burnout, turnover, poor communication, and other problems.

Action: Staff will provide the Board with annotated agendas before meetings to facilitate best communication and forethought regarding items being discussed. This should lead to more efficient and effective discussion and decision-making at meetings.

Action: Communicate progress of strategic goals at all Board Meetings.

*Goal: Improve / optimize ability of DDA staff and Board to write effective grant proposals.*

Action: Develop a list of projects that can be made “shovel ready” or for which detailed information can be transferred to grant proposals. This will likely require preparation with such as engineering services, vendor and price information, location, and other information leading to ready implementation of a project.

Action: Complete the Downtown/TIF plan, as this should be instrumental in identifying a number of specific projects that can be made ready to implement.

Action: Locate instructional resources (online, printed, live) to assist staff in developing effective language and approaches for submitting grant requests to fund and/or enhance the aforementioned projects..

## **E. Marketing**

*Goal: Strive for the most efficient and effective use of marketing funds to promote DDA programs and events, and communicate DDA goals for Downtown Iron Mountain.*

Action: Staff will compile a list of current marketing activities, channels, and costs, then discuss with the Board to determine best use of marketing funds, activities.

Action: Staff and volunteers will collect data on festival attendees, including opinion surveys during and after events, to inform marketing decision-making. Staff will also look into gathering attendee data from other major local events such as the local ski jumping event in late February.

Action: Consider the use of marketing channels not previously utilized by the DDA, including billboards locally, radio and other advertising in Green Bay-Appleton areas.

*Goal: Determine what forms DDA merchandise should take in the future.*

Action: Determine costs of sourcing various types of merchandise online and locally, including T-shirts, water cups, coffee mugs, bottle openers, and other items. Also determine sales prices and margins.

Action: Consider selling merchandise on the DDA website that is automatically fulfilled (known as “drop-ship”) and determine staff time, profit margins involved. Also consider local outlets for DDA merch in addition to DDA events, pop-up shops.

Action: Based on the foregoing, determine and discuss if the DDA should be involved, or to what degree, in selling merchandise.

## **F. Use of DDA net proceeds**

*Goal: Determine the best use of DDA funds and net proceeds from events for FY 25-26 and beyond.*

Action: Discuss and determine the future of building improvement grants.

Action: Discuss other options for utilizing funds, such as streetscape elements, tree replacement, and other possible projects. Some of these will emerge from the downtown/TIF plan.

Action: Discuss and determine an appropriate minimum fund balance (financial buffer, operating capital).

## **G. Partnerships**

*Goal: Identify key partnerships and be proactive about regular contact, working relationships,*

*mutual benefit situations with all of them.*

Action: Staff will create a list of important DDA partnerships and how DDA has interacted with them in the past. This can be a resource for future goal setting and strategy work.

Action: Discuss and determine a general course of action - opportunities, mutual benefits, setbacks - of interacting with the partners on the aforementioned list. Possibly assign priorities (A, B, C or 1, 2, 3) to various partners.

Note: Partners mentioned at the strategy special meeting included DPW, Braumart, City Council, Dickinson County, high school students, County work van, DAEDA, local arts committee (Sarah Rice), Iron Mountain Tree Board, MEDC. A few more might be Iron Mountain Planning Commission, City of Norway, City of Kingsford, Breitung Township, major employers.

### **Items for further discussion at future Board meetings**

- Revisit DDA goals and strategy more frequently than once per year - make it an item on every meeting agenda perhaps.
- Comprehensively evaluate DDA marketing activities, spending to determine a consensus for FY 25-26.
- DDA/TIF plan process, steps, timetable
- Road Commission property - discuss a more desirable future for that property and any possibilities for persuading the County to relocate the operation outside of the City of Iron Mountain.
- Discuss the Events/Sponsorship strategy as presented by Anthony Miller
- What to do with the Building Improvement Grant (BIG) program

**V. Public Comment** - There was no public comment

**VI. Member Privilege** - It was noted that the discussion and goals resulting from the current meeting would be given consideration in draft DDA fiscal year 2025-2026 budget to be discussed at an upcoming meeting. There was no further discussion.

**VII. Adjournment** - at 1:20 on a motion by Stanchina/Blomquist and carried unanimously. Next regular DDA Board meeting: Monday, March 10, 2025.