



CITY OF IONIA
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
8:00 AM, Wednesday, May 21, 2025
IONIA THEATRE - MAIN FOYER

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson John Krueger called the meeting of the Ionia Downtown Development Authority to order at 8:00 AM.

II. ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS

Roll call revealed a Quorum with Board Members Tricia Meyers, Heather Poland-Sizemore, Benjamin Weller, Ryan Wilson, Zachary Sheehan, Dustin Sommer and John Krueger present. Guests included Mayor Milewski, Assistant City Manager J. Bowman and resident C. Husted.

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

(IV.1.) To approve the May 21, 2025 meeting agenda.

With no changes or additions, Member Wilson made a motion, seconded by Member Poland-Sizemore, to approve the agenda as presented.

MOTION BY VOICE VOTE.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

(V.1.) To approve the minutes from April 16, 2025 meeting.

Minutes from the regular meeting on April 16, 2025, were reviewed. Member Wilson made a motion, seconded by Member Weller, to approve the April 16, 2025 meeting minutes as presented.

MOTION BY VOICE VOTE.

VI. FINANCIAL REPORT

(VI.1.) To accept the Accounts Payables for the DDA: March 26, 2025 – April 25, 2025 in the amount of \$1,355.07

To accept the Accounts Payables for the Theatre: March 26, 2025 – April 25, 2025 in the amount of \$13,299.29

Discussion revolved around gaining more details for future payables and including a three to four year financial look back. Director Rice will provide those details at a future meeting.

Board Member Weller made a motion, seconded by Board Member Sheehan, to accept Account Payables for the DDA and Theatre for the time period of March 26 to April 25, 2025.

MOTION BY VOICE VOTE.

VII. DDA DIRECTOR REPORT

(VII.1.) Report included in Board meeting document packet.

Director Rice highlighted activities for the month and noted increased hours for the Theatre due to events. For the Wayfinding Map, key landmarks were identified, photographed, and paired with historical context to support the development of a landmark and wayfinding map. Outreach efforts continued with introductions to businesses within the DDA district, alongside ongoing development of various marketing projects. Community engagement remained a priority, with the successful hosting of the Ionia Area Chamber of Commerce Coffee & Connect, as well as co-hosting the Mega Mixer at Olde Stone Porch. A number of event applications were received and reviewed. An in-depth analysis of a potential Social District was conducted, exploring its feasibility and impact.

VIII. THEATRE REPORT

(VIII.1.) Report included in Board meeting document packet.

Assistant Director Rice provided the monthly showing, attendance and YTD breakdown of those items. Movies shown and upcoming were also highlighted. The theater ad hoc group will continue on and meet again at the end of June. Upcoming Theatre events include: IHS Class Night, a variety of popcorn sale days, DDA educational event, June 16th Free Movie, as well as the July and August live performances.

IX. BOARD DECISIONS AND ACTION ITEMS

(IX.1.) Downtown Rock Snake

Director Rice presented information on a rock snake to be started by a business in downtown. Discussion revolved around what authority the group holds, as it could be a right of way impediment. It was noted that it would activate downtown, which is a goal of the DDA. The board had more questions regarding the rock snake and requested the business owner to attend next month to talk more about it.

Member Sommer made a motion, seconded by Member Wilson, to table the item until the next meeting following the business owner's presentation.

MOTION BY VOICE VOTE.

(IX.2.) Discover Ionia Social District

Over the past few months, Director Rice has engaged with various communities that have implemented social districts and conducted research on the requirements for establishing one in downtown Ionia. Director Rice presented "Understanding Social Districts in Michigan", which covered key topics such as the definition of social districts, how they differ from to-go alcohol, associated benefits, and the legal and logistical requirements for municipalities, participating establishments, and customers. The presentation also included proposed district boundaries and common areas, establishment fees, examples from other Michigan communities, and an introduction to the Discover Ionia Social District logo and required marketing materials.

Following the presentation, the board held an open discussion on several related topics, including funding for cup stickers, the need for expanded outdoor seating and sidewalk cafés, safety and environmental considerations of single-use cups, and the potential benefits of a social district for local businesses and future development opportunities.

Member Wilson made a motion, seconded by Poland-Sizemore, to approve the social district concept as presented.

MOTION BY VOICE VOTE.

(IX.3.) Marketing Committee Update

Director Rice provided an update on the progress of the DDA’s marketing initiatives. Images have been collected for various marketing materials, with several pieces already completed and additional materials currently in production, expected to be finalized by the end of the fiscal year. The Bulldogs Unleashed project is nearing launch, with several dog sculptures completed by IHS students and the remaining ones scheduled for completion by June. The sculptures will be placed throughout the community beginning the Monday after the last day of school and will be rotated periodically over the summer. The DDA is grateful for the strong support and collaboration from IHS students, staff, and administration. Additionally, it was emphasized that the Discover Ionia webpage should serve as a tool for the DDA Marketing Committee and maintain consistent branding aligned with the City’s overall identity.

X. DISCUSSION ITEMS

XI. OTHER

XII. ADJOURNMENT

Member Wilson made a motion, seconded by Member Sommer, to adjourn.

MOTION BY VOICE VOTE.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:12 am.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cassie Rice, Recording Secretary
for Heather Poland-Sizemore, Secretary