



2020 Downtown Development Authority Board

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2020 Annual Synopsis

This annual synopsis of the projects and activities of the Downtown Development Authority is prepared to satisfy the reporting requirements of the Tax Increment Financing Act, Public Act 57 of 2018.

As the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) was formed in 2019, there are no revenues that have been accumulated for five or more years at this point to address as to when they will be expended. With 2020 tax increment capture, the DDA has now collected revenues for two years. There are no investments by the DDA to report for 2020.

Projects and Activities of the DDA

The Downtown Development Plan spans 30 years. The year 2020 was year two of this 30-year plan. First steps toward improving the overall appearance of and reminding the community that Comstock Center matters and is worth revitalizing got underway in 2020. These projects make progress toward the Downtown Development Plan which calls for improvement of the streetscape in Comstock center.

- ❖ In early 2020, the DDA hired a design consultant to prepare a logo for Comstock Center. The end product is now used on letter head, banners, the web page and more.
- ❖ Through the Beautification Committee led by the Township Supervisor, banners were erected on 30 poles in the Comstock Center area. Thirty of the banners are seasonally themed and swapped out. Positive feedback has been received from members of the community.

- ❖ An interim Beautification Plan has been prepared identifying immediate and short-term projects working toward improving the appearance of the area. A more formal Beautification Plan will come in future years as revenues allow for significant projects to be considered.
- ❖ The Executive Director made a presentation to the Kalamazoo Valley Plant Growers during their annual meeting about the activities of the DDA and the Beautification Plan. The presentation was followed up with an invitation outlining the different levels of participation.
- ❖ A formal letter was sent to Landscape Forms describing the initiatives of the Township and DDA and inviting participation. A positive response was received, follow up to the response is planned once sites for the placement of flower pots are identified and agreements with the owners secured.
- ❖ Agreements are being prepared for execution between plant growers and the DDA and also between property owners and the DDA to allow for the creation of flower beds or the placement of pots of flowers and their maintenance during the 2021 growing season. Agreements will be secured in early 2021.
- ❖ The DDA met with a marketing consultant to discuss how to undertake marketing and branding of Comstock Center as an economic development initiative. This meeting led to a conversation with the Michigan Economic Development Corporation as to the Township's significant progress toward Redevelopment Ready Community certification as a result of the Community Development Director's efforts. Given the progress toward certification, the Township/DDA is eligible for grant funding for hiring a consultant to prepare an economic development strategy and a marketing strategy for the Township. The scope is being written to look at the entire Township, however, it will contain tasks that allow Comstock Center to be given specific attention and its own strategies in recognition of the area's unique attributes. The economic development and marketing strategies will get underway in 2021 with broad stakeholder participation.
- ❖ The DDA met with a landscape architect to obtain initial feedback about preparing gateway designs such as landscaping treatments and attractive signs welcoming people to the area. Several potential gateway locations were discussed at the meeting. A subcommittee of the DDA will identify locations where a gateway design is desired while the Executive Director works with property owners and the road agencies about what type of improvements might be allowed.