



**2020 Downtown Development Authority Board**

Sandra Katje, Vice Chair  
Jon Koets, Vice Chair  
Jeffrey Townsend, Treasurer  
Randy Thompson, Township Supervisor  
Roger Tuinier, County Commissioner  
Ryan Davis, Member  
Bill Howson, Member  
Amy Dyer Taylor, Member

## **2021 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 2021 tax increment capture, the DDA has now collected revenues for three years. There are no investments by the DDA to report for 2021.

Unofficially serving as the Director of the Comstock Center Downtown Development Authority (DDA) since establishment of the DDA, the Community Development Director's responsibilities work toward implementation of the Downtown Development Plan adopted by the Township Board in 2019 and the Comstock Center Place Plan for Prosperity and Redevelopment.

The DDA is a large board with 8 members in 2021, to be more efficient, the DDA formed committees to work on specific areas such as Beautification, Marketing & Outreach, Events and an Executive Committee. The Executive Committee, among other tasks, serves as the sounding board for initiatives the Director may undertake or encourage the DDA to pursue toward making Comstock Center a more vital area for investors, businesses and the residents. In 2022, the DDA will formally select a Director and fix compensation, subject to Township Board approval.

## ***Projects and Activities of the DDA***

The Downtown Development Plan spans 30 years. The year 2021 was year three 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 as the ***Beautify Comstock Center*** initiative. These projects make progress toward the Downtown Development Plan which calls for improvement of the streetscape in Comstock center.

- ❖ 2021 was the second year that banners have hung on poles in Comstock Center. Thirty of the banners are seasonally themed and swapped out for fall, winter and spring/summer. Positive feedback has been received from members of the community.
- ❖ An interim Beautification Plan – being referred to as the ***Beautify Comstock Center*** initiative has been created. It identifies 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.
- ❖ Landscape Forms has participated in the ***Beautify Comstock Center*** initiative. Thirty planters were donated. They arrived in June and were filled with plants donated by Ouding Greenhouses and placed around Comstock Center the following week.
- ❖ The DDA hired Wightman Associates to prepare five gateway designs with common landscaping treatments at each gateway and attractive signs welcoming people to the area. Two of the gateways are in Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) right of way of Michigan Avenue/M-96; two are on private property and one is on Township land. The Director will work with the private property owners to obtain easements. Permits from MDOT have been secured for the two gateways in M-96 right of way.
- ❖ Grants have been awarded from the Irving S. Gilmore Foundation (\$10,000), the Consumers Energy Foundation (\$10,000), and the Harold and Grace Upjohn Foundation (\$5,000) toward the ***Beautify Comstock Center*** initiative. The grant funds will be used in 2022 toward construction of the gateways.
- ❖ The DDA partnered with the Township and hired the firm of Community Image Builders (CIB) to prepare an economic development strategy and a marketing strategy for the Township. It should be completed by end of 2021. The scope was written to look at the entire Township, however, Comstock Center is given specific attention and its own strategies in recognition of the area's unique attributes. The economic development and marketing strategies include broad stakeholder participation via a Steering Committee.