

08-26-26 DDA Meeting Minutes

Date: August 26, 2026

Location: Village of Lawrence; 157 N Paw Paw St; Lawrence, M 4964

Participants: Dale Gribler, Rachel Ferrell, Steve Petersen, Mike Chappell, Phil Glennie, Kim Thompson

Meeting Open

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m.

Minutes from Prior Month

The minutes from July 22, 2026, were presented. Motion by Glennie, supported by Petersen to approve as presented. All ayes. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report

The treasurer's report was not presented.

Façade Program and Murals Status

- Rachel will drop off a façade application to the new owner of the Lawrence Laundromat. She also gave one to 'Jim' owner of the new arcade/golf simulator business.
- A local business owner at an address around 610 is frustrated with delays in getting gas service from Consumers Energy. Dale Gribler will email the MEDC for assistance. The business owner was also encouraged to apply for funds to fix the building's front. Mike will contact market one.
- An update was given on a mural project, with a butterfly design from Paw Paw being well-received. The proposed location is the East wall of the park bathroom. A suggestion was made to create a county-wide mural tour with QR codes. Everyone liked that idea. Jeff Heaton will contact the owner of the old mill by the post office.

Community Development

- **"Music in the Park" Relocation:** The group agreed to move the "Music in the Park" event from Wednesday evenings to Saturdays at noon during the summer, coordinating with the farmer's market at the new pavilion, to boost low attendance.

- **"Music in the Park" Performer Payment:** Dale Gribler asked Phil why there are different amounts for performers. Phil explained that performer payments vary (\$150 – 450) based on the size of the act. He will prepare the event's budget details for December.
- **"Christmas in the Village" Date:** The event will be held on Saturday, December 5, 2026. It will not be held on the same day as the semi-lighted parade (December 12, 2026) to avoid scheduling conflicts.
- **Ox Roast:** The DDA was asked if we could cover the additional cost for police protection in the park during Ox Roast. Estimated cost is less than \$1,000. Motion by Thompson, supported by Chappell, to cover costs up to \$1,000. All ayes. Motion carried.

Business and Economic Development

- **DDA Website & Social Media:** Ferrell presented information to engage Sherry Bales of Hannibal Communications for up to \$1,000 to set up a Google Business page and a Facebook page. The plan is to build subpages within the existing village website, not create a new one. Content will include a business directory, grant info, and project updates. Rachel and Phil will be primary Facebook admins, with Kim Thompson as an alternate. Motion by Ferrell, supported by Thompson to approve the cost and plan. All ayes. Motion carried.
- **DDA Logo:** The DDA will use the Village logo with "Downtown Development Authority" added on top, dropping the proposed "Come Grow With Us" tagline.
- **Orr Building Assessment:** Midtown Craftsman, a Grand Rapids-based company, will conduct an initial inspection of the old Orr building's roof, walls, and foundation, with concerns noted about the separating west wall. They specialize in older building restorations.

Park and Public Property Projects

- **Park Bathroom Renovations:** The men's bathroom painting is complete for \$1,600. Field Plumbing and Heating quoted \$7,495 to replace fixtures in both bathrooms. Motion by Thompson, supported by Ferrell, to approve the cost, which includes a \$2,400 sponsorship discount in exchange for displaying two small signs, pending Village Council approval for the signage. All ayes. Motion carried.
- **Bathroom Pipe Backups:** Dale Gribler clarified that tree roots, not vandalism, are causing pipe backups. He suggested having the pipes professionally cleaned in the spring and fall.

- **Basketball Court Renovation:** Motion by Gribler, supported by Chappell, to approve a \$32,300 project to remove the old half-court and build a new full-size basketball court east of the bathrooms. The two existing backboards will be repurposed. Line painting will be bid on separately. All ayes. Motion carried.
- **Park Tree Management:**
 - o **Crab Apple Tree Removal/Christmas Tree:** Phil proposed removing a crab apple tree in the park fountain for placement of the park Christmas tree. Kim Thompson suggested offering it to Linda Pleyer for transplanting, since she placed it there. The suggested plan is to remove the bush and plant a donated Christmas tree in the old fountain. There was a discussion on whether to break the concrete base to allow root growth or let it naturally stunt the tree's size. Badger Christmas Trees will be contacted for input.
 - o **Tree Inventory Study:** Due to safety concerns about diseased pine trees near the planned \$600,000 playground, a motion was made by Ferrell, supported by Thompson to donate \$8,300 to Parks and Rec for a tree inventory and health study by Davey Resource Group. This donation will be part of the park's 50/50 DNR matching grant, allowing for partial reimbursement for the playground project. All ayes. Motion carried.
- **Industrial Park Pond:** Motion by Ferrell, supported by Petersen, to approve a \$4,000 expenditure with Total Tree Care to remove trees shading the fountain's solar panel and clear a large brush pile. All ayes. Motion carried.
- **Park Trash Containers:** Brian Johnson will research new trash container options for the park, as the current ones are inefficient. This is a potential project for the next year.
- **Damaged Light Pole:** A light pole in the park was bent by a vendor's vehicle during the Artisan/Farmer's Market. Video footage exists, and a report will be filed with the police department to hold the vendor responsible for repair costs.
- **Pavilion Rental Fees:** Motion by Gribler, supported by Petersen to recommend to the Village Council a \$50 rental fee for non-residents for up to four hours of pavilion use. All ayes. Motion carried.
- **Park Bench Sponsorship:** A discussion clarified the policy for honorary plaques. For Mary Webster, a long-serving

council member, the Village can cover the minimal cost of the plaque itself, but the Village cannot make a \$500 "sponsorship" payment for the bench to the DDA.

Village Operations and Infrastructure

- **Tax Disbursement:** Kim Thompson announced the next tax disbursement will be around the 15th of next month.
- **Electrical Upgrade at Old Town Hall:** The plan is to consolidate three separate electrical meters into one 400-amp service. Tino provided a ballpark estimate of \$15,000-\$20,000. This upgrade is a prerequisite for a new HVAC system. A formal quote will be provided.
- **EV Charging Unit:** Dale Gribler reported that Consumers has no more grants. He is waiting for a follow-up from the Southwest Michigan Commission.
- **Baker Street Drainage:** Three low spots on Baker Street on the north side of the park are causing water to pool. A quote of \$23,500 was received to install new basins. The project is being considered for the next budget year.

Adjournment

Motion by Chappell, supported by Ferrell, to adjourn the meeting at 7:25 p.m. All aye. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted:

Kim Thompson