

**The Village of Lexington Common Council, DDA, Planning Commission, ZBA, held a Special Joint Meeting on Thursday, August 15, 2024 in the Council Chambers at 7227 Huron Ave., Lexington, MI 48450**

**Call to order the Special Joint Meeting at** 7:00 p.m. by President Kristen Kaatz

**Pledge of Allegiance** led by President Kristen Kaatz

**Roll call taken by** Deputy Clerk Beth Grohman

**Council Present:** Gresock, Adams, Muoio, Morris, Dost, DeCoster, Kaatz

**Absent:** – None

**DDA Present** – Adams, Bender, Bales, Kaatz, Westbrook, McGovern, Zysk, Diener

**Absent** – Drouillard

**Planning Commission** – Ziegler, Stencel, Morris, Roehl, Huepenbecker, Kaatz

**Absent-** Regan

**ZBA-** Constantineau. Timmerman

**Absent** - Havel

**Others present:** L. Fisher

**PUBLIC COMMENT** – None

## **BUSINESS**

### **ADMINISTRATION**

**1. PRESENTATION ON HEADLEE OVERRIDE MILLAGE- Lori Fisher** – Village Manger Lori

Fisher did a presentation on the Headlee Override Millage Proposal. Fisher explained the reasoning or presenting a millage on the November Ballot. Current millage rate is 7.0824 operations, 2.8325 for streets and .5660 Cemetery, totaling 10.4809. With the Headlee override the proposed millage would 11.9809. Village is authorized to levy up to 12.5 mills. If approved and levied in full this would raise estimated revenues of \$103,803 in the year levied. This will fund Maintenance, Public Safety and Public Safety. Village will hold more public meetings on the proposal in September and October.

**2. CHAIRPERSON UPDATE ON EACH COMMITTEE**

a) **Council – Kaatz** - President Kaatz introduced the newest member of the Council Robert Dost who lives at 7356 Lester Street. Council is now a full board. Council has been working with Manager Lori Fisher on the budget and spending. Lots of work going on in the Village with the water and sewer. Kaatz recommended Council share their knowledge of the Headlee Override Proposal with their neighbors.

**b) Planning- Ziegler** – I believe this is the final piece needed for our Village to become certified RRC. Everyone in this room has played a part in this goal. Collective effort is what has brought us here. Give yourselves a hand. The start for the RRC began in 2017, headed up by Dave Picot, Mike Fulton and Jackie Huepenbecker worked diligently on it, facing numerous challenges along the way. They lacked the authority to complete several sections, but with Kristen’s help, Council made it a priority for Lori Fisher, and she took the reins and did it. Our Zoning Administrator, Denny Klaas, updated forms to make them more user

friendly. The DDA and ZBA completed the necessary documents.

The RRC program help communities become more competitive and development ready.

Certified communities can benefit in many ways:

- Attracting and retaining businesses by streamlining development approval process
- Getting outside validation that them meet statutory requirements and are open to investment.
- Improving the use of staff time by streamlining internal processes and procedures.
- Opportunity to receive technical assistance and support to implement their development vision.

Of course it does not end here. Several documents need to be updated every year and others every few years.

By state law, a community's Master Plan must be reviewed and updated at the least every five years. Ours was adopted in November 2020, so that will be a priority in 2025. Since the last plan was a major change, this update should not be ab extensive one.

This fall, we will be recommending amendments to some sections of our zoning ordinance. Lori wrote a grant so we can get some technical assistance on this.

The Capital Improvement Plan needs to be updated every year. Doug Roehl is the Planning Commission's representative on that committee.

With the stability and support of a very good Village Manager and zoning administrator, the Commission is working well.

**c) ZBA- Constantineau** – Lori Fisher looking into on line courses for the ZBA Members per recommendation of Jackie Huepenbecker.

**d) DDA- McGovern** – We have nine members. Having an odd number is a good thing for a quorum. The board can have up to twelve members. Our entire board is excellent, well balanced, supportive, considerate, professional and more.

We have funds to deploy. Our current balance is approximately \$395,000. \$11,000 is Eastern Michigan Bank, \$384,000 in pooled investment accounts of government securities. We received about \$15,000 in interest last year.

Lexington's DDA receives most of our funds through TIF (tax increment financing) and always has to my knowledge. We receive about \$185,000 annually through TIF.

Per the State of Michigan, DDA's should target 70% of their revenues from TIF and 30% from other sources, (like fundraising, events property sales, rents, etc.). That said, most DDA's have a paid director so they need to raise funds for that position too. The average DDA Director salary in Michigan is \$66,000 per year (2023). Of course, Lexington, like many smaller municipalities has a fully volunteer DDA.

Our work & investments must be within the DDA Boundary. In November 2022 the DDA boundary increased in size. Our current boundary goes from the A & W at the North End to Scoops at the South end along M25 from the house the Village purchased just west of the Fire Station all the way to the water at eh East end along Huron Avenue, including Tierney Park.

We are active members of the Michigan Downtown Development Association, (MDA). The MDA and MEDC work closely together. I know all the MDA officer and more importantly they know Lexington. I attend their Spring workshop and their annual Fall Conference, where hundreds of DDA's throughout the state attend. It is a wonderful way to collaborate with everyone and learn tons of stuff. We have a lot online training modules from MDA that are available to all Village Boards.

We handle all the seasonal streetscape details within the DDA Boundary. Summer flowers for one. This year we will have mums planning in the pots when the summer flowers come out. I hope you all noticed this year the colors are more vibrant and brighter. We handle all seasonal banners and decorations, like corn stalk in the fall (which we get free from Mickey Bender's family farm, which started last year) lights and garland in Winter, etc.

We are doing the Winter/ Christmas RFP and planning now. We just discussed in last night's meeting and have action items we are working on.

We own and maintain the decorative poles. They were painted last Spring and the sound system public speakers.

We also update wayfinding signs.

A large portion of our budget goes toward DPW cost within the DDA Boundary, from watering flowers, installing banners, cleaning up from events within the DDA Boundary.

We have pushed hard to beautify the building facades throughout the Village with our updated Façade Grant Program. Grants are 50% matching funds up to \$10,000, but most have been for less. We have done 10 grants since our new process was implemented a year and a half ago. We actively walk the Village and make businesses aware of the grant program, particularly focusing on buildings needing repairs.

We provide advertising, work with bluewater.org. with connections to Pure Michigan. We work with other sources too, chambers of commerce. Recently we contracted with the Keel, publication but we didn't renew for 2025. We are doing a ribbon cutting Thumb Bank & Trust on August 29<sup>th</sup> and will have the Sanilac County News there.

We have worked closely with and supported the LBA; being super involved in the past couple years. The LBA manages many events in town.

We support the Arts Council through sponsorship & DPW, etc. We work closely with other event organizers like the Blue Water Folk Society with the Thumbfest.

We recently took over the Christmas Tree Lighting and 4<sup>th</sup> of July fireworks and parade. We also ran the Ice Cream Social and maintain & operate the Social District, the only one in the County.

We got the \$8M harbor grant. That is a big update in itself.

Currently we are now trying to finalize a very reasonable lease of the Village Green which we believe is a strategic parcel in the Village. We have many ideas for its use and for fixing up to beautify that relative eyesore in the middle of town.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT** –

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Kaatz adjourned the meeting at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted  
Beth Grohman, Deputy Clerk

I, Beth Grohman, (Village Deputy Clerk), do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and original copy of the draft minutes of the Village of Lexington Village Council at a regular meeting held on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of August 2024

Clerk: \_\_\_\_\_

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_