



**B. Reports.**

**1) Retail Recruitment/Retention.** George Ramos reported on a new financial counseling business in the Exchange Building and the New and Used Clothing Store east of Dollar Daze. A discussion ensued over the repeated customer requests for more women's clothing. Talbots was a suggested store for a prime location such as the Fifth Third site if it is vacated.

**2) Focus Owosso.** Bill Gilbert reported on the budget adoption at its next meeting along with a presentation to the DDA at its June meeting. The flower baskets will be installed a few days after Memorial Day and the maintenance plan is established. Bill also discussed other funding mechanisms for the flower baskets.

**3) Lebowsky Center.** The selective demolition to achieve public safety and reopen Park Street will take place on May 8<sup>th</sup> with equipment set-up on May 7<sup>th</sup>. Temporary power will be lost for the block but the traffic signal will be off all day with restrictions for no use of Park Street at Main St.

**C. Field Trip to Review Capital Improvements Plan Areas.** With the use of a SATA bus, members and guests toured downtown sites for a review of the capital improvements plan areas. The tour covered these projects:

1) Voight Loop Trail. The construction at the Great Lakes Central Railway yard is underway with a view of the trail construction method from the excavation to three layers of materials. The DDA is purchasing the material and the DNR/MDEQ is construction the facility after their environmental clean-up work was completed. The Oakwood Bridge was reviewed together with the north side loop trail section.

2) Comstock Center Lot. The rain garden was reviewed and is on hold until the State budget is restored. The tree islands for the lot were described.

3) The Water Street parcel at Washington Street and fronting the Shiawassee River was shown as a potential Chamber Building relocation site. River frontage will be preserved including a ramp to Washington Street. The north side of the lot will be landscaped to green-up this area of town.

4) Members discussed the Park Street parking lot for design ideas. The lighting and landscaping opportunities were mentioned. Parking lot layout options exist especially with the potential relocation of the Farmer's Market. A landscape architect will be hired to design the lot for reconstruction in FY 2008-09.

5) Intersection lights were given a close look and their deteriorated condition was observed. There are four to five key intersections with a need for new lights. The light concept will be addressed in the summer meetings. Three of the intersections are on Washington Street and should await the funding assistance from the State of Michigan when the three block reconstruction takes place.

6) Planter bed opportunities exist everywhere and the downtown needs a master plan for their design and placement. Two key locations are on the south side of Springrove Variety and the north side of Fifth Third Bank. Planter beds can be designed over pavement and avoid the connection of these heavily watered spaces with basements of adjoining buildings.

There was no time to complete the tour of Curwood Castle Park and its Master Plan. The Ball/Mason lot was not toured but the conditions there are well-known. Upon return to the Chamber the median of the 100 Block of east Main Street was discussed for an elongated tree island. The intent of the tree island would be to reduce the endless horizon of the downtown and the gaping highway section bisecting the downtown. The island will also serve as a traffic calming device. Installing this island involves the Michigan Department of Transportation and was not installed when the road was rebuilt because there was no local funding to do so.

There was consent to proceed with the plans and upgrade appearances in the downtown. It was noted that this was the first time in decades that capital improvements will be undertaken without a private sector initiative. Many sections of the downtown appear worn and in disrepair--these investments are necessary.

**Adjournment:** 9:05 a.m.

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Philip B. Hathaway, Secretary-Treasurer and Executive Director