

City of Hillsdale



Tax Increment Finance Authority
Dawn Theater Governance Board
Minutes: October 26, 2017

Members Present: Rob Socha (chair), Mary Bertakis, Peter Merritt, Ron Scholl, Peggy Youngs
Also present: Mary Wolfram, Economic Development, Dennis Wainscott, Council candidate.
Meeting call to order: 7:00 pm.

Mr. Scholl move to accept the minutes of 10.5.17 Mr. Merritt seconds. All in favor.

The meeting began with discussion regarding the contract with DLR Group for architectural services for the rehabilitation of the Dawn. Some of the issues that came up include ADA compliance. Members questioned who is responsible for environmental remediation for lead, asbestos, etc. Mr. Merritt wants to make sure that structural issues are addressed, that a structural analysis of the building is done and that the foundation is solid. Ms. Bertakis mentioned that mold might be a concern. Ms. Wolfram, Alan Beeker, City Planning and Zoning Administrator and Mr. Lovinger, TIFA attorney, have a conference call scheduled with DLR Group to finalize details of the contract.

Ms. Wolfram mentioned that she had attended the Board meeting of the Sauk Theater this month. She wanted to let them know that the future vision for the Dawn Theater did not include its use as a community theater and so should not be viewed as a competitor to the Sauk. Both historic theaters should encourage the success of the other.

Discussion then centered on the original Dawn theater Wurlitzer organ. The organ still exists, in parts, and is being stored in the Keefer House. It is one of only a handful of these historic organs first produced for use with Silent movies that still exists. Mr. Socha and the Governance Board have been approached about efforts to restore and preserve the organ. The current owner is Dr. Jeffrey Horton, who has suggested that he would donate the organ if the Board made a commitment to raise the necessary funds to restore the organ. Mr. John Ourensma, Music Director of the Hillsdale First United Methodist Church, has introduced the Board to an organ restoration company in Chicago that is interested in this project. Mr. Scholl and Mr. Socha are very interested in pursuing the idea as it could become a unique draw for visitors to the area.

Discussion followed around developing a Mission Statement for the Dawn Theater Governance Board, and then working on the vision for the future use of the Dawn. Mr. Socha started the discussion with a suggested Mission Statement. Members added thoughts. Ms. Youngs added that the role of the Governance Board should be to renew, preserve and set a path for the future of the Dawn theater through a partnership between the municipality and the community. Mr. Scholl emphasized that the Dawn will be a huge asset to the community. The Board wants it to be used for film, as a dinner theater, and generally as a venue for the arts and other entertainment. Future discussion needs to address the organ, sound system, historic and new projector and seating. Ms. Youngs and Mr. Socha will work on developing a Mission Statement to bring back to the full Board.

Next meeting: November 13, 2017, 7:00 pm