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Bridge Street Smiles, Inc.  
Dr. Renée L.J. Owen



## 2026, Adjustments Ahead

### Downtown Priorities & Community Vision

Our community has shared a clear and encouraging message: people want a downtown that feels open, active, beautiful, and welcoming every day of the year. After receiving information from residents, businesses, property owners, and visitors, several priorities rose to the top that will guide our work moving forward.

#### What We Heard People want:

- Consistent business hours so downtown feels open and reliable
- More shopping and dining variety with fewer empty storefronts
- Faster progress on building improvements, façade upgrades, and long-term construction
- A clean, attractive, and well-maintained community with lighting, cleared sidewalks, inviting entries, seating, flowers, and riverwalk activity
- Clear communication and strong collaboration among the City, DDA, and local businesses
- Fewer but higher-quality events that truly support local shops and restaurants

These themes came through again and again—from surveys and listening sessions to business visits and resident comments.

**Our Commitment Will Reflect:** We are committed to building a downtown that:

- Supports reliable and professional business operations
- Encourages active storefronts and diversified retail
- Invests in redevelopment, beautification, and public spaces
- Strengthens communication, transparency, and partnerships
- Creates a place where people want to visit, linger, and support local businesses

### The Big Picture

A vibrant downtown is more than buildings and events—it's the sense of connection, pride, and possibility we create together. By focusing on consistency, revitalization, and collaboration, we can continue building a downtown that reflects the energy and creativity of our entire community.



### DDA BOARD

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### VOLUNTEERS

#### Shirley Teachout

#### Sheryl VanGoor

#### Tim Fuller \* Morgan Allen

#### Kiley Hilligan

#### Katrina Freeman

#### Cena & Roy Schneider

#### Marlena Cory O'Connell

#### Melissa Collins \* Rene Davis

#### Marcia Roeser

#### Maryann Pianosi

#### Ashlee Campbell



## Featuring: Scrappy Divas adds Queens Quarters

Writer: Kurt Fedewa

Mary Teachout, Erin Hoard, and Laurie Reeves are three friends who have teamed up to create two fine Portland businesses, named Scrappy Divas and Queens' Quarters, respectively. "We met through our association with the Portland Civic Players," said Mary. "We became fast friends and partnered to form these businesses." Scrappy Divas is a specialty scrapbooking shop that features scrapbook paper, paper craft supplies, and school supplies.

"We stock many high quality scrapbook papers that the big box stores don't carry," said Erin. "These include papers that feature themes like Michigan and Hawaii, places that people visit and want to include in their scrapbook. The specialty papers make their album look special and that's exactly why we're in business." Scrapbooking is a hobby that is popular with many women, even with men. Scrappy Divas includes an area above the shop for people to rent while they are doing the hobby.

"Our second business, Queens' Quarters, involves a space above the shop," said Laurie. "This space is available to rent for a weekend. It allows people to hold weekend retreats where they can do scrapbooking, can socialize, or do other activities that interest them. It sleeps six people and it can even accommodate groups like bridal parties who need a place in which to celebrate their special occasions."

Because of the recent pandemic, many people have lost social contact with many of their friends. "Scrapbooking is an excellent way for people to socialize," said Mary. "It is an activity that creates a feeling of community."

The papers that the shop offers include many different sizes, weights, and designs. It can be used not only for scrapbooking but also for creating greeting cards, shadow boxes, and lanterns. "We offer classes that teach these aspects of the hobby," said Erin. "We offer about one class a month to help people form and improve their skills. These classes are a great opportunity for people to learn new things and to make new friends. Next month we are offering a class on the skill of photography and how it can be used in scrapbooking. Photography is an important facet of scrapbooking. We make these classes available to the public and we think that they afford people a great opportunity to enter the hobby and to learn something new."

Future plans of the three owners involve expanding its services in order to meet the demands of its customers. "We would like to expand Queens' Quarters and make it available to groups seven days a week," said Laurie. "We would also like to include mail order services for our customers."

In the meantime, Mary, Erin, and Laurie will be available during their open hours to help their customers in a variety of ways. The three ladies look forward to serving the community for many years to come.

**126 E. Bridge St. 517-743-4204 scrappydivas@gmail.com  
ScrappyDivasPortlandMi.com HOURS: Friday, 12pm to 6pm Sat & Sun 10am to 6pm**

## POSITIVELY PORTLAND

### What is Positively Portland?

It's a fresh, upbeat gathering for people who love our community, enjoy brainstorming, and are willing to share a little time and talent. Each month we'll welcome a guest—voices from our schools, health care, city leadership, emergency services, or simply someone with something positive and meaningful to share.

Expect a quick 10-minute presentation followed by a lively round-robin conversation. Sometimes we'll bring topics that need community input; other times, you'll bring the ideas to the table. Connection, collaboration, and fellowship are the goal—and we happily leave negativity at the door.

**Please consider joining us for our roll out on February 10, 6pm, Upstairs City Hall !**

## 2026 DDA EVENT UPDATES

Our largest construction project in the past decade is approaching, and with it comes significant driving challenges—especially alongside I-96 construction 2026, on the opposite side of the freeway as 2025. Combined with decreased attendance at Sounds of Summer and Brews & Pours, we've had to make some thoughtful decisions. Both events will take an evaluation break in 2026.

**For Sounds of Summer**, we won't be booking a series this summer. Bands may coordinate directly with Parks & Recreation to schedule dates, seek their own sponsorship, and self promote shows. If we're notified, we'll share dates on our calendar and social media.

**Brews & Pours** has continued to decline since returning in 2021, despite many efforts to strengthen it. We're deeply grateful for the dedicated volunteers who make it happen. Beginning in late summer, this group will shift focus to developing a new, high-quality event designed to draw visitors from across the state. Targeted for May 2027

**Thank you for your understanding and continued support—we're excited about what's ahead.**

