

**CITY OF WIXOM
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
49045 PONTIAC TRAIL
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2018**

This meeting of the Wixom Downtown Development Authority came to order at 7:30 a.m. with the following individuals in attendance:

DDA MEMBERS: Chairperson Melanie Cheney, Vice Chairperson Tom Berry, David Gavron*, Dino Grossi, Anthony Moscone, Caleb Sheng, John Smith, Kristin Rzeznik*, Wes Umlor*, and R. Ziegler, Mayor.
ABSENT: Member David Gavron*
STAFF: Steve Brown, City Manager, Debra Barker, Economic & Community Development Director, Sheryl Lucas, Administrative Assistant to City Manager, Laura Cloutier, Assistant to Director of Economic and Community Development, and JoAnn Parkinson, Recording Secretary.

Determination of a Quorum:

A quorum of the Downtown Development Authority was present for this meeting.

Reading of Vision and Mission Statement:

Mission Statement: The Mission of the Wixom DDA is to coordinate the efforts of businesses and residents to promote the growth of the downtown area for the community's benefit.

Vision Statement: The Wixom Downtown Development Authority is to provide a friendly, welcoming downtown which will enhance and honor our history while promoting cultural, business and recreational opportunities that attract businesses and residents.

*Member Rzeznik and Member Umlor arrived, 7:32am.

Approval of Agenda:

MOTION and second by Board Members Berry and Moscone to approve the Meeting Agenda.

VOTE: MOTION CARRIED

Public Comments:

None

Approval of Minutes:

MOTION and second by Board Member Moscone and Vice Chairperson Berry to approve the January 23, 2018, DDA Regular Meeting Minutes.

VOTE: MOTION CARRIED

Approval of Minutes:

MOTION and second by Vice Chairperson Berry and Member Moscone to approve the January 29, 2018, Joint Board Meeting Minutes.

VOTE: MOTION CARRIED

Old Business:

A. Wixom Derby Day Update

Laura Cloutier gave the following updates on Wixom Derby Day. As of February 26, 2018, there are twenty-eight runners registered for the race: 18 runners for the 5K, 9 runners for the 10K, and 1 runner for the One Mile Fun Run. Sponsorship donations have been received from Robertson Homes, Waste Management, and she is waiting to hear from Genisys Credit Union for a total of approximately three thousand five hundred dollars. In kind donations from

Metro Sewers, Michigan Drone, and Total Sports. There are four DDA businesses participating in the Derby Day specials. Laura added that she had applied for a State Farm Community Development Grant for three thousand dollars, but there is a two to three week wait time for that decision. She expects to hear back from State Farm sometime next week. She also contacted PepsiCo, citing that they have a volunteer program through their corporation for their employees and she has requested 15 volunteers and 600 bottles of water. The 15 volunteers asked for are above and beyond the 25 volunteers that have committed from Camp Casey. The following items needed for the day have been ordered: wristbands, hobby horses for the Tot Trot, and temporary tattoos. Obviously, there is still more to do: metal and T-shirt design and to continue to get more funding. Member Smith noted that he has a couple of sponsors that he is working on Aldi's and The Bagel Station.

B. Wixom Block Party Update

Laura Cloutier continued with an update for the Wixom Block Party. Currently, sponsorship for the Wixom Block Party is approximately four thousand five hundred dollars. She is waiting on a firm commitment from Genisys Credit Union. Last year, some of the dance studio participants were not able to go into businesses to use their restrooms to change therefore she has secured the donation of an RV from General RV to use as a dressing room. She assured General RV that the RV will be used only as a dressing room and nothing else. The stage has been ordered from Oakland County. The food vendors that have confirmed are: Wixom Station Restaurant, My Little Honey Pot Food Truck, and Total Sports Food Truck. Wixom Station has confirmed that they will participate in the Meatball Contest again this year.

For entertainment, the board is considering a More Fit Challenge with Amber Morfitt and her employees vs the Wixom Fire Fighters. A strolling musician/juggler has been hired. Also, there was a thought of hiring a band and extending the day until 8pm in the evening. Ms. Barker stated that this is something that the board needs to consider because when you extend an event you are now really making the event into two events. The pet adoption was huge last year, along with the cannoli eating and the meatball contest. If you extend into the evening then there would be a new focus, which might possibly involve, a band, beer tent, and other food choices. Also, numbers are a consideration, if two thousand people are expected for the day event and the event is extended and the attendance does not substantially increase then that will not necessarily be good attendance. To put on an event that long is a commitment because of the cost of police and fire and the other costs that are involved. A decision will need to be made as soon as possible, for sure by next week. Chairperson Cheney believed that they were not ready yet. Member Grossi agreed that the time commitment was too much for businesses. Member Rzeznik suggested that perhaps they could test out, for example, the beer tent during the day and see if that impacts the attendance. If it does, then they could think about presenting a beer tent for the following year. Ms. Barker felt that it is better to grow an event rather than to present one and have it not be successful and have to revert back.

C. Recap of Main Street Event: The Connected Downtown

Ms. Barker stated that she, Member Smith, and Tom Rzeznik attended the event last week. She invited Member Smith to speak to his experience. Member Smith expressed that they heard a variety of speakers and the one that stood out for him was a gentleman with a nonprofit that discussed how the trails can become an identity for the community. The presentation disclosed how communities are tailoring their cities around their trails. He requested a copy of the presentation. Ms. Barker added that she had not yet received it. Member Smith added that there were several examples throughout Michigan of how the trails were driving recreation and commerce in the area. He felt that as the board moves forward with branding that they should consider how they can best emphasize the Wixom Trail. On the second day of the event, Ms. Barker said she was excited about the presentation from representatives from the City of Ferndale. Although there are different demographics in Ferndale, she feels there is still much that Wixom could do, that would be unique to Wixom, to mimic what the City of Ferndale has done with branding.

Vice Chairperson Berry asked for an update on the overpass and the Wixom Trail. City Manager Brown said there is a video on the Michigan Airline Trail website that keeps you posted on the updates, but he did not know a completion date. He offered to check on the updates and inform the board at the next meeting. Vice Chairperson Berry affirmed that if the board could plan a celebration at the same time as the opening of the Michigan Airline Trail that would be great for the City of Wixom. City Manager Brown stated that the good news was that the city has

a conditional approval, on a major award, to fund a good portion of the trail development upfront. The bad news is that the city asked for a lot more than the approval amount to begin with so there is a gap in play. His office is excited about and pursuing some ideas to close that gap including the Airline Trail. The current plan ends at Wixom Road and brings you down Wixom Road to Pontiac Trail, but the rest is not completed. There is a section where there is an easement that is in question to make it a complete trail because that section involves private property. A secondary funding source is looking for a way to include all of that, so we can get the trail completed. Things are moving along faster than he thought since there are three communities involved: Commerce Township, Walled Lake, and Wixom. He is optimistic and looking for a lot to happen with the Michigan Air Line Trail and the new bridge currently begin built over M-5.

<http://www.miairlinetrail.com/index.html>

New Business:

A. Hopkins Barn: Ron Campbell / Joe Frost – Oakland County

A presentation was given by: Ron Campbell, AIA, Principal Planner/Preservation Architect and Joe Frost, Associate Planner, Oakland County. *John Bry, Main Street Oakland County was also in attendance.

First, a little information on terms in the historic preservation world.

- Stabilization- is looking at what is there currently and stabilizing the property so that it does not get demolished.
- Restoration- is when you take a property back to a specific time. An example would be George Washington's Mount Vernon home. You are taking the property back to how it looked in the 1700s when Washington lived there.
- Rehabilitation- this is mostly the preservation that you see going on today. The property may have been a church and you are keeping all the character defining features of the building, but you may change the property and make it into a brewery.
- Reconstruction- is when the resource may be gone, but it is culturally and historically significant and so it is rebuilt. A great example of reconstruction, in Michigan, is Colonial Michilimackinac, just under the Mackinaw Bridge, which was taken down in 1779 and 1780 and moved across the ice to build Fort Mackinaw and Mackinaw Island. In the 1960s, using archeological records, maps, and illustrations the properties were rebuilt because of their historical significance.

These are all different approaches to preservation. They continued by discussing some of the history of the Hopkins Property which includes, the land, house, and barn. The house is a Folk Victorian style built between 1870 to 1910. It has a gable front and wing or also known as an upright wing. The windows appear to be original, six over six and based on the manufacturing of glass generally tells you that it is around the time of the Civil War, 1860 or earlier.

The barn seems to have been built around 1915. It has a Gambrel style roof and looks like a very early 20th century building. They showed several maps, noting that it is sometimes hard to read some of these old maps. They could go to the deed office and trace the property to when the United States government owned the land, to pre-settlement time if need be. The first map from 1872, did not have a name attached to the property. The next map, 1896, shows the property listed as the Erwin Est., est. stands for estate and apparently someone had just died. In 1908, the property was owned by M. Johnson, which is believed to be Mary Johnson, because Mary Johnson owned another piece of land nearby. There was a document from the Historical Society that states that Hopkins purchased the property in 1910, so the 1908 map would not show Mr. Hopkins as the owner. The next document was in 1937. During the Great Depression, the Works Progress Administration, WPA, hired out-of-work surveyors and geographers, in Michigan. These were people who went door to door so sometimes the information is only as accurate as what was available to the surveyor. In 1937, the barn was listed as being in good condition, but the house was listed as poor condition, which was not surprising, since it was the height of the Great Depression. This is just a little bit of history on the property. Once the names are removed from the property deeds then it would be possible to go into the census data and get more information on the Hopkins family. There is a good summary of the property on the Michigan Historical Society website. There is information on Mr. Hopkins' wife and her family and their connections to the Civil War.

Currently, a conditions assessment of the barn reveals that it is in good condition and the roof looks pretty good. The soffit probably needs some repair, but the frame is intact, the base is rotting, but remember that barns were not meant to be weather tight. Barns were used to protect animals from the open air. The barn could be used and made profitable. It would need to be cleaned out, repaired, insulated, and painted. Barns are in demand right now for weddings and other occasions.

The property should be looked at as an entire site that has unlimited potential. Drawings and pictures were shown for possible ways to utilize each section of the property. Suggestions included planting trees to buffer the property, placing the entry in different places, parking spaces, ways to enhance the bridge entrance, a white picket fence, (used as both visual and crowd control), a farm yard out front, and an activity center. It would be important to establish a central point for events. There is parking on both sides of the property and there is room for more parking near the library. They recommended maintaining the front yard. Since the City Hall has several Bradford Pear trees there was the suggestion to plant an orchard of the same trees in the front yard. The Bradford Pear tree is a non-fruit bearing tree. There are many photo ops for the property, senior photos, family photos, or weddings. The property is totally visible from Pontiac Trail.

The potential for the house is limitless, such as, adding public restrooms, a bridal room or suite, a groom's room, a ticket booth, a concessions area, or a coffee house area. Houses are great for resale shops, hair salons, village offices, or bakeries. There could be outdoor dining, art events, or music. The doors to the barn could open and there could be a stage there and people could bring their lawn chairs to sit outside. The entry to the barn, on the north side, is significant. Focus on the history of the property and the branding. Create an experience.

This may be done in phases and over time. Rome was not built in a day. Improving the curb appeal with some cosmetic improvements will allow the barn and the grounds to be used almost immediately for a minimal cost. The property could be made safe and usable.

Pop ups events might be considered. Pop-up events are an affordable way to create retail density and to test a product or a service. They use existing structures or temporary structures. The events can last for a few days or a few weeks. Some examples of pop-ups, in Michigan, would be in Muskegon, where gloried storage sheds were used for pop-ups, although, they were custom made. In Pontiac, funky containers are being retrofitted for temporary pop-ups, and in Detroit, glass greenhouses were set up outside at Christmas time around Campus Martius. The pop-up idea just seems to fit with what is going on in Wixom. The rationale being that there is a young population here and some of them are entrepreneurs and sometimes the retail space is out of reach financially. Pop-ups are an opportunity to help, using the farmstead property, and will resonate with the younger population.

Ms. Barker added that a couple years ago she talked to the city engineers and building officials and found out that to get the barn to a place where the city could use it would be a minimal cost. Since there are bathrooms within five hundred feet and both properties are owned by the same entity there do not have to be public restrooms immediately. When using it for events, portable restrooms could be brought in. The buildings need to be cleaned and there is electricity, but that would have to be brought up to code. The bridge has fallen and there is a two-foot step there because the ground has sunk. There is some preparation to be done and it must be handicap accessible.

Member Umlor asked about the availability of historical grants. The answer was yes and no. It depends on how you pitch the idea. Campbell Soup is an example of a company who wanted to paint a barn and they pitched the idea as an educational program. "How can we teach students where food comes from without a farm that has a barn like all the barns children see in the picture books?" Mr. Bry added that there is potential funding available through community developments grants with companies like: Genisys Credit Union, Home Depot, Edward Jones, and Flagstar Bank. Banks could be approached regarding the pop-ups because that is creating economic development. They would be happy to assist the board with ideas to find potential grant money. The bottom line is to be creative. The Hopkins Property is a wonderful opportunity and a good revenue strand. Regarding the cost, rehabilitation will save the city money around ten to fifteen percent. A cost estimate for the house could be given, but it will depend on the final plans for the house.

B. Branding of the Downtown

Since the meeting was running long, item B., Branding of the Downtown, will be placed on next month's agenda. Ms. Barker stated that she tried to put as much information as possible in the packet that she gave the board and added that she hoped the board did some research. The good news is that our logo has been trademarked. Chairperson Cheney read the exercise from last month's minutes. "A good exercise for the board to engage in is for each member to ask, what three words do you think most describe Wixom? What and who are you trying to attract?" In the next month to come, please come up with three words that you believe most describe Wixom and who are we trying to attract? Ms. Barker passed out a copy of the historical minutes from a visioning session, with Oakland County, two years ago so that you can read what we discussed at that time. Member Smith added that he thought the board should set aside time and have a brain storming session. Chairperson Cheney added that the board is going to start having work groups. Ms. Barker added that the board is going to start assigning committees and then we need to start beginning in pro-bono experts that can help us. We have residents and business people who would be willing to sit in and help our committees. Chairperson Cheney added that this is an exciting time for those people to get involved with all that is going on right now with Wixom. Member Smith suggested that perhaps the members should produce a list of ideas of what each member feels are important and then see which items are shared and come up with a concrete list of ideas that are most important to all the members.

Information:**A. Business Forum Events**

- **GR Auto Gallery, March 13, 2018**
- **Detroit Branding, April 10, 2018**
- **Oakland Schools Technical Campus, May 8, 2018**

Chairperson Cheney encouraged the members to go and do some networking, if possible.

Public Comments: None

Executive Director's Comments:

City Manager Brown encouraged everyone to think about the DDA between meetings. The board is looking for new directions for the city and building the brand. Just attending the meetings is not enough. This requires a thought process for envisioning and trying to make something special. Versatility is important so that the Hopkins Property can be used all year around.

Ms. Barker added that her assistant, Laura, and herself are always sparring about events such as a fund raiser for the Michigan State vs University of Michigan game. Bringing in a truck with a large screen and food trucks or catering and charge fifty dollars a ticket and having the money going towards the barn. There is so much the board can do. She believes the next step is to brainstorm on how to get the funding to get the barn up and running in the least amount of time.

Board Members' Comments:

Member Moscone asked are we using Facebook to promote Derby Day? Laura Cloutier answered, yes, that a Facebook event has been created. Member Moscone continued to explain that you can create a mirror audience through Facebook and can reach thousands of people. He said he could help with that. Ms. Barker added that, March 1, 2018 is our deadline and we have been waiting on sponsors.

Adjournment:

Chairperson Cheney made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Vice Chairperson Berry second the motion. This meeting of the Wixom Downtown Development Authority was motioned and adjourned at 8:54am.

JoAnn Parkinson

Recording Secretary

*Oakland County is the first and only county in the United States to officially join Main Street, which is a program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Main Street uses historic preservation and placemaking techniques to drive economic development and revitalization in traditional downtowns and commercial districts. Metro Mode, M J Galbraith, "John Bry takes Helm at Main Street Oakland County", March 2, 2017.

*The Hopkins Barn, often referred to as the Munshaw Barn, is located on Pontiac Trail east of Wixom's Community Center.
Wixom Historical Society, Historical Sites