

**CITY OF WIXOM  
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY  
49045 PONTIAC TRAIL  
TUESDAY, MARCH 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:** Chairperson Cheney and Member Caleb Sheng, excused

**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 Umlor arrived 7:33am

**Approval of Agenda:**

**MOTION** and second by Board Members Smith and Rzeznik to approve the Meeting Agenda.

**VOTE: MOTION CARRIED**

**Public Comments:**

None

**Approval of Minutes:**

**MOTION** and second by Board Member Smith and Vice Chairperson Berry to approve the February 27, 2018, DDA Regular Meeting Minutes.

**VOTE: MOTION CARRIED**

**Old Business:**

A. Wixom Derby Day Update

Kristin Rzeznik, Derby Day Co-Chair, provided an update. There are people signing up every day and there are a good number of sponsors. We have good participation with Wixom business owners with about five or six that are offering discounts on the day of the event. Twenty-five volunteers have been provided by Camp Casey and a variety of others are also helping. We are hoping to secure approximately twenty-five to thirty more volunteers to be cheerleaders along the route on the day of the event. Please contact Member Rzeznik if you can assist with volunteers. Vice Chairperson Berry noted that he was happy to see the event being advertised through Facebook.

**B. Wixom Block Party Update**

Laura Cloutier provided an update. We are gaining sponsors. An array of food trucks and entertainment has been booked. We are having cannoli and meatball contests. This year we are offering Art in the Alley. In April, Ms. Barker and Ms. Cloutier will be going to Total Sports because they are having an Art Finder's Keepers Vintage Market and we will be passing out applications to the artists. Our biggest addition will be the DIA. They will be bringing their interactive art truck, the DIA Away. As soon as we receive final confirmation they can be included in our promotional activities for the event. One last item, is an approval to order volunteer safety vests to identify our volunteers at events. We have found a company that will print our DDA logo on the back of the vests with the word, "volunteer" in black lettering. They are a bright yellow reflective vest that could be used over and over for all our DDA events. Fifty vests will cost \$172.50 and the printing will be an additional \$222.50 for a total of \$395.00. Vice Chairperson Berry stated that the Wixom City Council has provided the DDA with ten thousand dollars to be used for events so the funds are available.

MOTION and second by Vice Chairperson Berry and Member Smith to approve approximately \$400.00, as of March 27, 2018, to cover the costs of the volunteer vests.

**VOTE: MOTION CARRIED**

**C. Branding of the Downtown: Launch of Promotion Committee**

Member John Smith provided a PowerPoint presentation. He stated that he had been working on marketing and branding for twenty years in the automotive industry and now he is a small business owner. He explained that branding is a promise to our customers. It tells them what they can expect from our products and services, and it differentiates our offerings from that of our competitors. Our brand is derived from who we are, who we want to be and who people perceive us to be. For us, it is what we stand for as a downtown. It is conveying our downtown image to our customers, businesses, and small businesses. We must have a consistent theme. All our business members and our residents must be involved. It is not just a tagline or a logo. We need to be believing it and living it ourselves and then our passion will spread to everyone else. It takes time. It does not happen overnight. It is a process. We are going to be trying to answer some key questions: Who are we as a downtown? What do we stand for? What are the benefits and futures of our customers interacting with us? What should we do and what should we not do? Some things do not make sense for us and will not work if they are not consistent with our brand. We have been talking about the three words that identify who we are. What are the three words that describe Wixom? It could be any number of things: the barn, the trail, sports, history, dining, nightlife, events, fireworks, or shopping. We need to think about how our brand evolves with all these elements. Member Smith then showed some examples, Downtown Plymouth tagline, "Not Just a Walk in the Park". Think about the emotions that go with the downtown experience. Downtown Northville has a dedicated website that has visual images that conveys their message and their tagline is: "timeless...with a twist".

<https://www.downtownnorthville.com/1/163/index.asp>

Downtown Rochester incorporates their logo into their signage. Once we have defined our brand then we need to spread the word by getting a great logo and placing it everywhere. Write down our brand messaging. What are the key messages we want to communicate about our brand? Integrate our messaging into everything we do. Have a tagline, a dedicated website, a consistent logo and signage. Think about the inviting colors we may want to use: warm colors such as red, yellow, and orange evoke warmth because they remind us of things like the sun or fire. Cool colors such as blue, green, and purple create a cool feeling because they remind us of things like water or grass. Design templates and create brand standards for our marketing materials. Use the same color scheme, logo placement, look and feel throughout. We must be true to our brand and we must be consistent. We need to utilize the work that has been done, form a promotional committee, and identify people who would be great. Ms. Barker is working on finding some people who may be interested. Gathering research will be critical. Talking to our customers and finding out what they are looking for or expecting from the downtown. Talking to business owners and finding out why are some engaged and some not? Relationships are critical, our research will help us find out how people are feeling. The promotional committee will then be presenting our findings to the board. Our plan would be to meet monthly with this committee. We would like to host brainstorming sessions and workshops with the committee and with the DDA. The goal would be to figure out a time that we can work that is different than our

regular DDA meetings. Always keeping in mind, the integration of the Main Street Oakland County program. On an ending note, even if we are not on the branding committee please think about how we can live the brand by inviting and communicating with everyone we meet. We are the brand ambassadors. We must get our residences and businesses excited about our brand and our downtown. Creating a snowball effect for our downtown. We need to form our committees quickly and get these ideas going so we can tackle some of these issues. This is critical to our brand. Vice Chairperson Berry thanked Member Smith for his presentation. He encouraged the members to reach out to Member Smith by the next meeting if they want to be a part of the promotional committee. Vice Chairperson Berry reminded the members to bring their three words to describe Wixom to the next DDA meeting.

**New Business:****A. DDA Financial Report**

Marilyn Stamper, Finance Director provided the report. The first report will be the statement ending February 28, 2018. The activity has been stable with minimal changes. Donation and revenue has been coming in at basically the same rate with a little bit more than last year. The current fund balance is about twenty-six thousand dollars. It is anticipated that the total will be reduced back to approximately nineteen thousand dollars because any excess in the fund typically goes to pay the debt that is due on the DDA. In addition, if donations exceed expenditures then those funds will stay in the DDA fund, they are not taken away to pay down the debt and can be used for other expenditures. Expenses have been consistent, there has been some marketing and branding event expenses and there may be a little more spent this year than has been budgeted. There will be funds coming out of the event expenditures for Derby Day. Tax collection is at about eighty-nine to ninety percent. There will be an increase of about thirteen thousand dollars because of repayment of delinquent taxes that will occur in June. Vice Chairperson Berry asked when the funds are taken out of the account to pay the debt. Ms. Stamper said that typically this happens at the end of spring and fall and at the end of the fiscal year. At the end of the year, the finance department looks at the amount of the donations, event expenditures, and the debt and then tries to maintain about nineteen to twenty thousand dollars in the fund so the DDA has that amount to use.

Next, the 2018-2019 proposed budget. There is a captured value increase of about seven million dollars for the taxable value for the DDA due to the extra development that has occurred. This equates to an additional one hundred and fifty-five thousand dollars in additional captured tax revenue for the DDA when compared to the prior year estimated actual collections. With these additional funds, there is the expectation that the DDA will be able to completely cover the debt for the DDA Construction Debt Fund this year and the city will not have to contribute to the debt. This is a projection. This allows for a repayment to the city of about fifty-two thousand dollars which will be going back to the General Fund to begin repayment of the estimated nine hundred and eighty-two thousand dollars that is due to the city. This is a positive trend. Therefore, the balance of the account will remain around nineteen thousand dollars unless donation revenue is higher than event expenditures. This expectation of paying the debt will continue if the development across the street continues as it has thus far. The payoff of the debt will be seen in year four and the DDA will bring in approximately four hundred and fifty thousand dollars. The debt may be paid off sometime in year four and the DDA will see some of that capture coming back to the DDA. The budget also includes a twelve-thousand-dollar marketing and branding expenditure. Also, both the Donation Revenue and Event and Promotion Expense accounts have been increased to seven thousand dollars. The other line items are consistent. This is the projection for the budget. Ms. Barker had a question about the achievement goals for the fiscal year 2018-2019. The goals state that all future projects have been placed on hold pending improvement in finances. Therefore, there are no funds available for the Hopkins Barn Parcel unless the DDA can acquire additional donations to save the barn and then those funds would be separate from the funds used to pay the debt. Finance Director agreed.

Vice Chairperson Berry said that it was good that the DDA could begin to pay down the debt and the members agreed. Ms. Barker stated that perhaps the DDA would not be able to do what they had hoped to within their schedule, but now they have the budget information needed to move forward.

Mayor Zeigler added that regarding budgets, when there is a budget item and those funds are not used sometimes they may be cut back if not utilized. Therefore, it may be a good idea to use some of the money early in the fiscal year.

MOTION and second by Mayor Zeigler and Member Gavron to approve the Proposed Fiscal Year 2018-2019 DDA Budget.

**VOTE: MOTION CARRIED**

**B. Hopkins Barn Parcel**

Ms. Barker stated that when she began working with Main Street Oakland County and they found out that Wixom had a barn they were excited. She wanted everyone to understand what could be done with this city property, so she has brought this to the DDA, but now feels that before the DDA does anything more there should be an approval by the city council. There is plenty that could be done to raise money towards the project. The DDA members should investigate all options before a discussion with the council. Mayor Zeigler added that there may be some members on the council who do not see the value of restoring the barn. They see improving certain projects as a private venture, not using public dollars so therefore it may be a hard sell. The DDA members will need to do research and have a strong presentation for the city council. The question arose as to who would take the lead for the project the DDA or the city council and Mr. Brown stated that it would all depend on the funds. If the DDA could secure the funds and it was not coming out of the city budget, then the DDA would have less resistance. Vice Chairperson Berry proposed that if the DDA could supply the funds and restore the Hopkins house and barn and it became a future revenue stream then would the DDA benefit from the revenue. City Manager Brown stated that it would all depend on how the project was set up, but likely, if the DDA secures the funds then the profits would go to the DDA.

Member Smith asked Ms. Barker since she had been working with this for some time for her input. Ms. Barker stated that the DDA could use the barn for minimal cost. Since there are bathrooms within five hundred feet and both properties are owned by the same entity, the city, 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 roof is in good shape. 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. It could be used for perhaps an art fair or a farmer’s market. Oakland County and a few businesses have said they would help. A few years ago, the cost was estimated at twenty to thirty thousand dollars, but most of that cost included a curb cut that our engineers thought that we would need. Oakland County was pretty sure that we would not need the curb cut because there is a ramp there. Therefore, the cost could be much less. Ms. Barker said she understood the council’s concern because they had to put funds into two other historical buildings even though we did receive some small grants for those projects. Member Smith suggested that the future promotion committee could perhaps work on this project. If it started first as a farmer’s market and then began to generate revenue, then that money could be put back into the project later. The board decided to discuss this more in the future.

**C. Request to Designate Funds for the Promotion of Events**

The members had a short discussion about which promotional venues they believed would be most effective to use this year from their past experiences. They decided to use Facebook boosts and online services.

MOTION and second by Vice Chairperson Berry and Member Rzeznik to approve up to one thousand dollars for Facebook boosts and online services for all events.

**VOTE: MOTION CARRIED**

**Information:**

**A. Business Forum Events**

- **Detroit Branding, Tuesday, April 10, 2018**

Josh Donnelly, Director of Marketing and Creative at Detroit Branding Company will be speaking. He is a downtown resident and his accounts include Chrysler/Fiat. He has a unique presentation that the businesses may like to hear. He will be speaking about how branding your business will not only attract college graduates but help retain your employees. This will be held at the Wixom Community Center, 7:30am, breakfast included. 49015 Pontiac Trail, Wixom, Michigan 48393.

- **Oakland Schools Technical Campus, Southwest, Tuesday, May 8, 2018**

Oakland Schools culinary students are providing a breakfast and a tour of the facility. They would like to take some of the businesses on a tour of their facilities, annually. Oakland Schools Technical Campus, Southwest, 1000 Beck Road, Wixom, Michigan 48393.

- **“Autonomous Vehicles – Kettering University”, Tuesday, June 12, 2018**

Showcasing Kettering University’s courses and training with autonomous vehicles. Held at Denise’s Grill, in their banquet room, 29710 Wixom Road, Wixom, Michigan 48393.

Vice Chairperson Berry thanked Ms. Barker for all her hard work and bringing all these business form events to the DDA’s attention.

**Public Comments:**

Deputy Mayor, Patrick Beagle, said he recently attended a goal setting session with the City Council members for the city and they discussed what they would like to see take place for the city of Wixom. The holiday market is in the winter and we have the fireworks in the summer, but the City Council are thinking that they would like to have a big Saturday event in the summer. This year, since it is Wixom’s 60<sup>th</sup> birthday the City Council is thinking about having a birthday party with two or three bands, a food truck rally, craft beer, brandy sampling, perhaps an all-day event with fireworks in the evening. We would like to see the DDA, the City, and Parks and Recreation all involved. We would like to know if the DDA would be interested? Vice Chairperson Berry replied that the DDA is always interested in events like this. The concern would be to coordinate a date for the event. He asked if someone on the City Council like to work with the DDA on a date. Mr. Beagle said that he would be available to work with the DDA on the date, the cost of the bands, and fees for the food trucks. The actual date of the city’s birthday is May and they believe that is too early and the block party date in September is too late. The City Council is interested in a summer date perhaps separate from the July 4<sup>th</sup> fireworks. Mr. Brown stated that the 50<sup>th</sup> birthday of the city came at a down time financially for the city, therefore a celebration was not possible. Member Smith added that sometimes cities celebrate events such as this as a yearlong event. Ms. Barker said she had been in contact with the Historical Society about a sip and stroll where customers would go to different restaurants and sip wine, sample appetizers and then stroll to hear about the history of an attraction in the city. The DDA would have to take the initiative for something like that. The birthday party for the city would probably have to be a one-day event, on a Saturday. Vice Chairperson Berry told Mr. Beagle that he has the DDA support and he can work out the specifics with the promotional committee. Member Smith noted that the DDA would have to get started on this immediately and Ms. Barker concurred. Ms. Cloutier added that if anyone can attend the Oakland Schools Culinary Event that they should go. The students there are getting an amazing opportunity for an education in a variety of career fields.

**Executive Director’s Comments:**

None

**Board Members’ Comments:**

None

**Adjournment:**

Vice Chairperson Berry made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mayor Zeigler second the motion. This meeting of the Wixom Downtown Development Authority was motioned and adjourned at 8:24am.

JoAnn Parkinson  
Recording Secretary

\*The DIA Away is a free, mobile interactive classroom and a creative exploration space for people of all ages. It brings educational, hands-on art experiences to schools, community centers, senior facilities, fairs and festivals throughout Macomb, Oakland and Wayne counties.

