

**CITY OF WIXOM  
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY  
49045 PONTIAC TRAIL  
TUESDAY, APRIL 24, 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:** Members Anthony Moscone and Wes Umlor 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.

**Approval of Agenda:**

**MOTION** and second by Vice Chairperson Berry and Board Member Gavron to approve the Meeting Agenda.

**VOTE: MOTION CARRIED**

**Public Comments:**

None

**Approval of Minutes:**

**MOTION** and second by Vice Chairperson Berry and Board Member Smith to approve the March 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 less than two weeks until the event. Participation from Wixom business owners seems better than last year. Sponsorships are set, and the Facebook post is doing fantastic. The number of volunteers is good, but we can always have more volunteers. On the day of the event, there will be a meeting for the volunteers at 8am. Member Gavron will be securing some of the bottled water for the day from 7-11. The manager at 7-11 will donate as many as possible. The board has requested four hundred bottles.

**B. Wixom Block Party Update**

Laura Cloutier provided an update. The DIA Away has been confirmed and has been added to the promotional activities for the event. The musical acts have been booked. The food trucks are sending in their forms and fees. Ms. Cloutier has passed out applications to artists at the Art Finders Keepers Vintage Market, held at Total Sports, and has received some emails from artists saying that they are interested.

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

Member John Smith provided an update. The board is looking to form a Promotion Committee of approximately four to eight members. They are looking for contributors that may have previous experience in marketing, social media, research, graphic design, or creative writing skills. The committee may also include an army of volunteers to be utilized as cleanup crews or other duties that may be needed to make events successful. Member Smith is planning on meeting with Wixom business owners to speak to them about their possible involvement or recommendations. He believes that perhaps some of the board members or employees of the city may be willing to take part in the committee. He asked for help from the board to identify members for the positions needed. Vice Chairperson Berry stated that last year he had contact with an HOA group, but did not have much success, but he could try again this year. Member Smith added that he is a president of an HOA group and he will work on talking to people to get involved. Member Smith added that, in the future, perhaps the board could use HOA groups for information and research.

Ms. Barker stated that from her experience she believes that volunteers will want to become involved when they see what is happening with the DDA. She added that two years ago, the volunteer group only consisted of a couple people and now it has grown to be at least a dozen members that she can count on. Member Rzeznik asked if perhaps the volunteers might need some incentives and Ms. Barker replied that that was an interesting subject because Milford Memories has stated that they have two hundred volunteers, but that one hundred and fifty are paid. Member Rzeznik shared that she follows the Downtown Farmington group on their Facebook page and the volunteers were compensated with a "thank you" meal at a restaurant. Ms. Barker indicated that the volunteers for Derby Day are receiving wrist bands which will allow them to get Derby Day discounts. Member Smith added that Wixom business owners may be in the position to help with some donations for volunteers.

Member Smith also wanted to add his thoughts for the Wixom Sixtieth Birthday Party Celebration. He felt that a summer celebration added to the calendar, at this late date, would be problematic. He suggested possibly a yearlong campaign that could include signage, banners on light poles, and a presence at community events that also included educating the residents on the history of Wixom to honor and celebrate the sixty years. Chairperson Cheney added that the City Council, Parks and Recreation, and the DDA should all be involved in this celebration. Mayor Zeigler stated that the city did not expect the DDA to take the lead, but just to be participating. The City Council was thinking about setting aside the funds for fireworks sometime around the actual date, which is in May, or sometime soon after since May weather will most likely be too cold for a fireworks event. Member Smith added that his thoughts were to maybe launch the campaign at one of the events already scheduled. Chairperson Cheney added that maybe this would be a great platform for all the boards to work together. She suggested to Mayor Zeigler that at the next city meeting that he make the proposal to the City Council that perhaps this is a good time for all the boards to start working together on events for Wixom. Mayor Zeigler and City Manager Brown indicated that the City Council had already discussed that issue. That is what prompted Deputy Mayor, Patrick Beagle, to come to last month's DDA meeting and ask for the DDA's participation. Mayor Zeigler offered that maybe a good time to make an announcement might be Founders Day, Sunday May 20, 2018.

\*Member Dino Grossi arrived 7:42am

**New Business:****A. Economic Vitality Committee Update**

Ms. Barker stated that the committee did meet and set an outline for a criterion for important issues. One of those issues being financial backing for new business owners. The committee is looking at something like what Oakland County has, the One Stop Shop Business Center where business owners can access powerful business tools, data analysis and business services that can lead to long-term business success. The facts are that commercial retail is the most difficult to get financing for and with that in mind, her office is attempting to find banks and/or credit unions who will work with the city to create a new package for financing. The DDA needs to know beforehand just how long it is going to take for new businesses to secure the financial backing that they may need and any other requirements that are necessary for a perspective buyer to be successful. If you see empty store fronts it is probably because there are uncooperative property owners, or the perspective buyer does not have a good business plan. Sometimes there can be an eighteen month to a two year wait to get into a building and people do not want to wait that long. Desirable businesses, for the downtown, are "Mom and Pop" shops, however, it is very expensive and tough to get financing unless they have a lot of backing or a considerable amount of money. Therefore, regarding our economic vitality downtown, the committee feels that having a financial package that is ready to go will expedite new businesses coming into downtown.

Member Smith asked if the landlords would consider offering introductory rates and Ms. Barker replied that that has not been her experience in the downtown so far. Member Smith asked if there is the thought of having a variety of businesses in the downtown. Ms. Barker added that, at this time, some stores will not consider the downtown, for instance, like a clothing store, because clothing stores want a good amount of foot traffic. That is not to say that they will never come. She has offered the idea of pop up shops to the current property owners and they do not understand the concept. The property owners have the belief that their insurance companies would not be understanding of that sort of arrangement. Ms. Barker has assured them that the insurance companies would, most likely, be cooperative. Pop up shops that are destination are very attractive especially if it is continual. For example, if you have an empty space, like a restaurant, and an entrepreneur buys that space and then every few weeks brings in a different chef or a different type of food, those are very profitable and appealing to the public. Creativity is very important in retail. There are positive things happening, but there are also frustrations with the downtown area. The committee named some new properties where they would like to see some things happen. The committee does not want to say too much because sometimes talk can destroy a deal, but hopefully the empty space, across the street, will not be empty much longer. Ms. Barker is still looking for some key people to serve on this committee, possibly a CPA, or real estate background.

A short discussion followed about Panera Bread coming into the downtown area and Ms. Barker stated that Panera Bread requires a drive thru which was one of the reasons they, most likely, would not locate in the downtown. The main reason is the population demographics. A drive thru may take away from the walk ability of the downtown area.

Ms. Barker told the members that regarding the economic vitality of the area she spoke to a business developer who conducts market studies for Kroger and has years of experience. The conclusion of the market studies established that both the apartments and homes in the area are considered as well as the incomes of the occupants. The Robertson's homes and the future homes that are going to be built will bring up the income levels. The six hundred apartments in the area attracted 7-11 to their location and the future homes will attract other new businesses. The property taxes for some of the new homes are in the range of six to seven thousand dollars a year. It is coming. It just takes time for new commercial.

**Information:****A. Business Forum Events**

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

Oakland Schools culinary students are providing a breakfast and a tour of the facility.  
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.

- **Signarama July 10, 2018**

**B. Tech248 flyers (April 27, 2018 and May 8, 2018)**

Sponsored by Oakland County Department of Economic Development and Community Affairs, 3-5pm.  
Connect with some of the 2,000+ tech companies that call Oakland County home.  
Hoffman Farms Winery, 2521 Rose Center Road, Highland, MI 48356.

Chairperson Cheney encouraged all the members to attend the business forum events. It is always interesting to see other businesses around us that we may not know about.

**Public Comments:**  
None

**Executive Director’s Comments:**  
None

**Board Members’ Comments:**  
None

**Adjournment:**

Vice Chairperson Berry made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Member Gavron second the motion. This meeting of the Wixom Downtown Development Authority was motioned and adjourned at 8:00 am.

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.