

Approved 10/23/18

**CITY OF WIXOM
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
49045 PONTIAC TRAIL
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 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 Klebba-Cheney, David Gavron,* Dino Grossi, Amanda Habbouche, Anthony Moscone, Caleb Sheng,* John Smith, Kristin Rzeznik, Wes Umlor,* and Richard Ziegler, Mayor.

ABSENT: Excused: Member Gavron and Member Umlor

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:

Ms. Barker stated that she did not get the final details for the Spirited Walk sponsored by the Wixom Historical Society until September 24, 2018, therefore it was not included in the agenda. The Spirited Walk will be held on Saturday, October 13, 2018, at 4pm. The cost is ten dollars per person. Payment can be made at the City Clerk's office and if paying with a check please make the check payable to Wixom Historical Society. This event was posted on the city Facebook page and is listed on the city's website under the DDA.

MOTION and second by Board Member Habbouche and Board Member Rzeznik to approve the Meeting Agenda.

VOTE: MOTION CARRIED

Public Comments: None

*Member Sheng arrived 7:33am

Approval of Minutes:

Member Rzeznik requested a correction in the spelling of the word “lagers” in the June 26, 2018 minutes.

MOTION and second by Board Member Rzeznik and Board Member Smith to approve the June 26, 2018, DDA Regular Meeting Minutes.

VOTE: MOTION CARRIED

Correspondence: None

Old Business:

A. Wixom Block Party Recap/2019 Event

Ms. Barker provided the recap. She stated that the event was an overwhelming success. It was compared to a mini version of Arts Beats and Eats. Linda Zabik, from Genisys Credit Union, was pleased and excited about the event. She has offered many ideas for next year and believes the DDA should begin thinking about the funds and plans for next year’s event. The Detroit Institute of Arts reported that the Wixom Block Party was their most successful event for the 2018 year which is impressive considering the DIA holds many events.

Ms. Cloutier conducted a google survey for the vendors and reported on those results.

Were the vendors happy with their booth location? From the vendors that replied: 56.3 percent were pleased and 43.8 were not. Regarding the vendors who were not pleased, she stated, that those were mostly the food vendors who suggested that they all be in one area. Seventy percent of the responses felt that the day was too short. They would like the time frame to be extended. Eighty one percent would like to participate next year. Fifty six percent stated that they would return if the event were extended. Thirty one percent stated that they might return for a longer event and twelve percent said they would not return.

Ms. Barker asked if approximately fifty percent of the vendors responded to the survey and Ms. Cloutier said that she only received sixteen responses. Ms. Barker addressed expanding the event. She stated she has always been cautious about expanding an event because her experience has shown that you should build on an event, not start out large only to downsize it. Her office had a recap meeting with city staff and stated that there is a lot of set up involved in this event. The Police noted that this was an easy event for them, but their department does not have many funds for overtime. The fire department stated that they had two volunteer firefighters present and they were also manning calls, no one else was available on this date. Therefore, if the event were longer that would involve two shifts and manpower would be their issue with a longer day. DPW stated they do not have enough staff. Their set up and tear down time would remain the same for a longer event. They do not have to be present all day for the event. All of this will all

have to be decided later by the committee. Today, we need to vote on the date for next year which is slated for Saturday, September 7, 2019. Enough money was raised this year with about two hundred dollars left over, which will go towards the stage for the 2019 event. Chairperson Klebba-Cheney believes that the date in early September is good because this is the time of year that the public is used to. Member Rzeznik agreed because, at this time, school has already started, and most people are not taking vacations. Member Sheng expressed that the event was a good expression of what the DDA has been working towards and it was rewarding to see the community enjoying themselves and commenting on the DDA's success.

MOTION and second by Board Member Habbouche and Board Member Smith to approve the date of Saturday, September 7, 2019 for next year's Wixom Block Party.

VOTE: MOTION CARRIED

B. Design Committee Update

Ms. Barker provided an update noting that the DDA had been declined for the Brooksie Way Mini Grant which she had expected. It was stated that typically, businesses buy their own bike racks for outside their businesses and many of our Wixom businesses have committed to this purchase, but they are just waiting to see when the trail will be completed. The grant was specifically looking for permanent physical pieces that the public will get exercise from. She stated she was not discouraged, and the city could always apply for other grants again next year.

The committee has had a couple of meetings and they are meeting again on October 9, 2018. There are several ideas being discussed from another department such as banners, streetscape, and street design west of Wixom Road and she is encouraging those people to get assistance from the DDA because the Design Committee are experts in their fields. There are funds from the other departments that have been around for a long time, which are not designated to the DDA, and she feels that the DDA should be a part of these discussions. She will be talking with the City Council to allow the DDA to have some funds and to spread out their debt a little longer so that the DDA is allowed to be active, as the committees are made up of the taxpayers.

When the Design Committee meets again they will be working on the Downtown Dazzle with Parks and Recreation as partners. Parks and Recreation has created a new event, the Tree Lighting Festival. Ms. Cloutier is going to be visiting with the downtown businesses and our office has created an email that will be sent out to the Robertson's homes residents about a competition for the best designed holiday lights to encourage the residents to decorate.

There will be carriage rides and hayrides that will begin in the city center, and go through those neighborhoods. There will be a vote, by a committee, perhaps the Design Committee. Member Gavron has donated his building for decorating and the DDA has approximately \$2,600 that was specifically donated for holiday lights and the Design Committee is going to buy as many lights as they can with those monies. Several businesses have committed to decorating along with Member Gavron's building: Wixom Station, Wixom Liquors, and the DDA are going to ask more businesses to join in on the fun. The DDA has acquired some old bikes and are looking for more. They plan to decorate those and place them strategically around the downtown area to

generate excitement about the trail. Member Smith asked how many more bikes might be needed and there was a short discussion on the number of bikes that could be physically stored. Ms. Barker stated that they were even thinking about just using the wheels and having a wreath competition that could be used every season, so storage is an issue that must be considered.

C. Economic Vitality Committee Update

Ms. Barker stated that some of the members of the committee were Member Moscone, Member Umlor, a Wixom resident, and another Wixom resident has applied who had moved into the Robertson's homes about two years ago. This resident is an electrical engineer and wants to participate in either Promotion or Economic Vitality. He has four children and is always in the downtown and wants to take an active part in being involved with the city. The committee has decided to look at some Downtown concepts that had been created in the past, at the city planners requests, and they are going to look at those and try to target the best business types for the downtown area. Member Moscone added that it was interesting to take the walk of the Wixom bike path area. He stated that there is a drop off at Adams Road and M59, right by Oakland University, where people can park and get on the trail and the parking lot was full, on a Saturday morning, at about 8:15 to 8:30 am. It was exciting to see the potential. Ms. Barker added, on that same note, that she was at the Gibson House for three consecutive days last weekend preparing for an event and each day she was there people stopped by and asked if they could come in and see. The event attendees came from Plymouth to St. Clair Shores and Clarkston to Waterford for the event and it was exciting to see the people who just dropped by and wanted to come in, see the area and learn about the local history. Member Rzeznik added that she had gone to Fort Collins, CO for a wedding and that the city is bike friendly and there were signs on every corner. She took many photos that the committee could use when it came time to planning the Wixom signage. A short discussion took place on other towns that the members had visited such as Reed City, Michigan and Loveland, Ohio.

D. Promotion Committee Update

Member Smith provided an update. He invited everyone to the Cemetery Walk and stated that he and his wife are going to be Mr. and Mrs. Wixom. While doing research on the family he learned that Mr. Wixom died on Christmas Eve when he was hit by a train. Ironically, he was the person who brought the train to the city and he became the victim of the train.

Member Smith said that the Promotion Committee has had three monthly meetings so far. They have been working on a communication strategy and are developing a tagline for the downtown, so that will be forthcoming. They have also discussed how critical it would be to have a dedicated website for the downtown. They have looked at other downtowns like: Plymouth, Rochester, and Northville. They have a city website, but then a separate website for downtown that features their downtown businesses and their ongoing events. The Promotion Committee believes the website is a critical piece, but have found that there are budget constraints, so they would like to have a dedicated Facebook page for now and then this page would help launch the website, but not be in place of the website. They want to be very careful about the rules such as how often they post and filtering negative responses so there is some work left to be done. A short discussion followed that included how Facebook works and why it is a positive venue and

the logistics of how the Facebook page would be handled and who might oversee the postings. Ms. Cloutier was suggested and complemented on her past work with Facebook for the Wixom Block Party,

Ms. Barker added that, regarding promoting the city and the downtown, she has heard two tag lines that she loves. For the city, "All Trails Lead to Wixom" (noting Pontiac Trail and the Michigan Air Line Trail) and for the downtown, "Your Adventure Begins Here".

Member Smith continued that part of the communication strategy that the committee is working on is reaching across the aisle to other departments within Wixom to work together and to be certain there is a presence from the DDA. Chairperson Klebba-Cheney instructed the committee to decide on the parameters and then bring the information to the DDA Board for approval.

New Business:

A. Academy of Russian Classical Ballet – "Nutcracker" Sponsorship

Ms. Barker explained that the Russian Classical Ballet has been performing outside of the area for a few years and she was pleasantly surprised when she received a phone call stating that they wished to move from Brighton to Wixom. Technically, the location would be the Walled Lake Western High School. The owner asked for help to promote their event. She had provided contacts and they will be presenting for the Wixom seniors, at the library, and hopefully the elementary schools where they go in costumes and read the "Nutcracker". The performance side is a non-profit organization and the dancers are amazing. These are young people who are hoping to dance with professional companies around the world. They are interested in performing at the Tree Lighting Festival perhaps to do some mini performances. Of course, this is all weather dependent, so perhaps they could go into a restaurant and perform if it is too cold outside. It was suggested that perhaps Member Grossi's restaurant clientele would appreciate something of this nature. They are not asking for money, just for assistance to promote the ballet. The DDA has approximately \$2,100 that are set aside for cultural events. Ms. Barker asked the DDA what their thoughts were on aiding or providing funds for this group. She added that most of their events have been planned out, but nothing is secure and, of course, the DDA would not be infringing on any of the Parks and Recreation event because all their event is south of Pontiac Trail. The gazebo could be free at that time. They also perform in Ann Arbor annually as well. Chairperson Klebba-Cheney stated that the DDA would be interested in assisting and Ms. Barker said she would pursue and return with more details.

B. Grant Partnership – Wixom Historical Society

Ms. Barker provided the update. The Wixom Historical Society met with John Bry from Main Street Oakland County and they are discussing a partnership using the 501C3 where funds can be deposited, because some grants will not allow the city to deposit the monies. There may be some historical opportunities involving the Gibson House or the Farmhouse project for partnerships. Also, there is an attorney, who is a Wixom resident, that would like to volunteer her time and energies for the Farm project, for grant writing. Ms. Barker stated that more information would be forthcoming.

C. 2019 Sponsorship Package

Ms. Cloutier provided the update. This is basically the same as last year. We changed the date and the events but did not change any of the donation amounts. The design and the color were changed a little. As the members review in the next few weeks, if they see anything that needs to be added or deleted please let her know.

D. Updates on Downtown Properties

Ms. Barker shared that she just wanted to let all the members know that this is how she spends much of her time and is another reason that she would like the City Council to hire a DDA director who would work on just the downtown. This is crucial to the city, today, tomorrow, and forever. If we do not have an active downtown it can all go away, and businesses and property values will all go down. She has been working very hard on the East retail, specifically eight thousand square feet of space. She wanted to inform the members of the businesses who would like to be in Downtown Wixom: a vision therapy store that includes an optical shop, a gourmet dog/pet supply store (not a chain, but a high-end specialty store), and JackRabbit: Running Shoes. Jack Rabbit representatives mentioned that Downtown Wixom needs more destinations. The two-story historical building has a lot of emotions tied up in the building as well as sibling and inheritance rivalry. The doctor's yellow house, she has retired, so Ms. Barker is actively looking for the right buyer. This is a historical building and Ms. Barker is meeting with someone who has a coffee shop in a historical building in another town to discuss this property. The bottom line is that we need to create destinations, commercial does not come until the residential rooftops are here.

Information:

A. Business Forum Events

-October 9: Wolverine Assemblies, 30260 Oak Creek Dr.

-November 13: ANCA, 31129 Century Dr.

-December 11: Wilson Marine, 48500 W. 12 Mile Road

Chairperson Klebba-Cheney encouraged the members to attend.

B. Downtown News/Events

-Tech 248 MeetUp, September 27, 2018 3-5 pm

-Drafting Table Oktoberfest, October 6, 2018

Member Rzeznik provided an update for her business. This is our third annual event. It is a celebration of community, but we are raising funds for *Hospitality House. Last year, we raised four thousand dollars for them and this year our goal is to raise more. It is a five-dollar cash donation to enter and Mayor Zeigler will be tapping a small keg of beer. We will be having beer; food and music so please come out and tell your friends.

Public Comments:

Member Smith stated that his business is not in Wixom, but he is having a Grand Opening on October 12, 2018, at 4:30pm and invited everyone to come.

Executive Director's Comments: None

Board Members' Comments:

Ms. Barker said that she had Ms. Cloutier go to other city websites and pull minutes just to see what they have going on and believes Wixom measures up comparatively. There are, of course, other cities that are doing more such as Rochester and Royal Oak. Rochester, for example, spends \$150,000 on their Bright Lights event. She stated we can do quite a bit with much less. A short discussion followed about the cost to hire a company to put up and take down lights and cutting the lights down at the end of the season, and the impact on the environment when that is the procedure. The Wixom DDA does not plan to cut the lights down at the end of the season.

Regarding the Sponsorship Package, Member Rzeznik stated that the Derby Day turned out to be a good fundraiser for the DDA and that perhaps, if everyone reaches out to their network, the more money that can be raised and donated and the DDA can build on that.

Adjournment:

Member Moscone made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Member Grossi second the motion. This meeting of the Wixom Downtown Development Authority was motioned and adjourned at 8:24am

JoAnn Parkinson
Recording Secretary

*Hospitality House is in Commerce Township, Michigan. They are a local food pantry feeding those in need in the Walled Lake, Wixom, and surrounding Michigan communities.