

**CITY OF WIXOM
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
49045 PONTIAC TRAIL
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2019**

This meeting of the Wixom Downtown Development Authority came to order at 7:33 a.m. with the following individuals in attendance:

DDA MEMBERS: Chairperson Caleb Sheng, Vice-Chairperson Kristin Rzeznik, Kailee Fine, David Gavron, Amanda Habbouche, Melanie Klebba-Cheney (arrived 7:45 am), John Smith, Wes Umlor, Vanessa Willett and Richard Ziegler, Mayor

ABSENT: Excused Member: Grossi

STAFF: Steve Brown, City Manager, Debra Barker, Economic & Community Development Director (Absent), Sheryl Lucas, Administrative Assistant to City Manager, Laura Cloutier, Assistant to Director of Economic and Community Development, and Mona Freiburger, Recording Secretary

Determination of Quorum:

Quorum is met.

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 opportunity that attract businesses and residents.

Approval of Agenda:

Vice Chairperson Rzeznik added an update regarding the Hopkins Barn to the agenda under Old Business.

MOTION by Vice Chairperson Rzeznik and second by Board Member Willett to approve the Meeting Agenda.

VOTE:

MOTION CARRIED

Ms. Cloutier commented that some attendees did not know there was a Mediterranean restaurant in downtown Wixom or a Pilates center. Residents were rediscovering downtown. This was truly a DDA event which benefited our businesses, showcased the businesses and demonstrated to the community what downtown Wixom is all about. Ms. Cloutier indicated they are excited to do this event next year. There were comments to have this event twice a year, but Ms. Cloutier indicated she did not think we were quite ready to do two of these events a year; maybe in another year or two.

Vice Chairperson Rzeznik stated there was great feedback at the Drafting Table. The Drafting Table was packed and standing room only. The pop up shop, Michigan Crafts with Cass, did fantastic, almost selling out of their signs.

Ms. Cloutier indicated they raised over \$300 for the Believe in Miracles Fund through Ascension Health which supports women going through breast cancer with medical bills, etc.

- DDA Director Position/Job Description Update

City Manager Brown stated there were approximately 17 applications received thus far for the DDA Director position. The position has been open for approximately 10 - 12 days. City Manager Brown indicated decisions have to be made on how to screen candidates, shorten the list of candidates to interview. City Manager Brown recommended an interview committee to be set up along with interview questions. Mayor Ziegler suggested to have a meeting with the city attorney to seek advice and to go over questions for candidates.

Chairperson Sheng indicated they were curious as to the response to the position and applications submitted. City Manager Brown stated the response is very encouraging.

- Hopkins Property Update

Chairperson Sheng thanked Deanna Magee for attending the meeting.

Chairperson Sheng indicated a couple of board members went to the Parks and Recreation meeting. They were really passionate about the Hopkins Property as well. The board members were able to talk with them and explore what to do with the property, the costs and which direction to go from there. The City has been dealing with this subject for a very long time. There are historical considerations, and feasibility considerations as well, which sometimes they do not always agree. Everyone agrees there are amazing uses that we can imagine but, ultimately, does come down to feasibility. To that end, Chairperson Sheng stated Board Member Willett will lead this investigation into the renovation costs with her construction connections and experience; then also use planning and the remodel for maintenance administration. Board Member Smith also has been working with Oakland County, so, hopefully, with that together, we can come up with something tangible to help us make a better decision.

Vice Chairperson Rzeznik stated they met with Linda Zabik at Genisys Credit Union, who is the manager of Corporate Social Responsibility. Linda Zabik asked to have a meeting with the board and Ms. Magee; she was interested about the barn and the house. Her recommendation was to try to keep both the barn and the house, and to figure out a way to make it a useful, viable space to for income. This property could be a destination to our downtown. One of the key factors to Main Street is preserving the historical properties, even though this property isn't on the historical list, it is a testament to Wixom's past. It would be a great gathering space and a nod to our history.

Chairperson Sheng stated we owe it to both the history and the taxpayers to be responsible with the way this is done, so we can show that we carefully went through the due process and diligence.

Board Member Smith stated very few communities have a barn property in their downtown. It is a very unique offering which Wixom can provide. The property could be a destination for our community, for our citizens and it is a very unique opportunity that most downtowns cannot claim. It is, definitely, a hot topic amongst people who seek out these types of venues.

New Business:

- Annual Board Member Partnership Form

Ms. Cloutier indicated an Annual Board Member Partnership Form was included in the packets. The forms should be returned to her with \$25 check or cash; if it is a check, made out to the City of Wixom. Please return form and check by the November DDA meeting.

Chairperson Sheng indicated everyone was aware after the last meeting and with the DDA Executive Director position coming up, the DDA is at a bridge period. The city of Wixom has been kind enough to share their time and donation of time to the DDA. The DDA lost some of that support and has yet to establish someone who is paid. Chairperson Sheng talked about making the committees robust. Board Member Willett with her experience is now lead for Economic Vitality, which would operate as treasury. The committee would meet monthly and the purpose of that is because everybody donates their time on top of their regular jobs; burnout can occur and wears on people over time. Chairperson Sheng said to respect the time that people are donating, make the conversations more targeted. We want to get through the bridge period until the point when the DDA Executive Director takes the wheel with both hands.

Chairperson Sheng thanked everyone who had attended the joint board meetings which are as important as the regular DDA meetings, if not more so. Attending the meetings puts context and shows that we are not in the silo and that we care enough to be there and hear what is important to them.

Board Member Willett indicated there was crossover of items at the joint board meeting; some of the things talked about involved the DDA. She stated the board members should participate and be accountable at the joint board meetings.

Chairperson Sheng stated there are three joint board meetings next year and asked the DDA members to attend two, if not all three meetings.

- Wednesday's In Wixom

Ms. Cloutier indicated the DDA approved \$500 to be spent for Wednesdays in Wixom for 2019. The DDA needs to consider the amount to be spent for 2020. Promotion Committee requested \$500 for Wednesdays in Wixom, however, with the addition to Trail's End Coffee (with \$20 to be allotted), the total amount considered is \$520 with nine restaurants/establishments.

Chairperson Sheng proposed an increase to \$520.

Board Member Smith indicated the Promotion Committee is open and they have been talking about how they can help promote the event.

Vice Chairperson Rzeznik inquired if the amount to be considered for Wednesdays in Wixom could be increased to \$600. Ms. Cloutier stated she didn't see the increase as a problem, they could allocate the additional funds from Derby Day or somewhere else to make up the difference.

Board Member Smith asked if the \$600 was, specifically, for gift cards or if it included promotional spending as well. Ms. Cloutier indicated it was for paying of the bill at the venue.

Board Member Smith commented, from a marketing standpoint, the event is about the promotion; the restaurants are seeing the benefit of that promotion, the restaurant can contribute the meal for Wednesdays in Wixom, the restaurant is getting free publicity. Board Member Smith indicated our job is to promote and help generate the activity, bring people to the downtown. Board Member Smith stated he was not sure if he agreed with paying of the bill at the venue. Vice Chairperson Rzeznik stated they could explore this in the future but since it is so new, it is good for the DDA to pay for that first. Chairperson Sheng indicated we have to demonstrate to the establishments that it is valuable enough for them to pay for a free meal. Board Member Smith indicated if our budget is fully allocated to the gift cards, then we have very little promotional room and it would be difficult to demonstrate the value without doing a full effort on the promotion of the event to make it as big as possible. Ms. Cloutier stated we do have a promotion budget. This is, specifically, for paying of Wednesdays in Wixom. The DDA has allotted monies for promotions that we have used in the past.

MOTION by Board Member Willett and second by Board Member Gavron to approve reallocating the difference between \$500 and up to \$600 from sponsorship monies that are not specifically targeted to an event for a total amount of \$600 for Wednesdays in Wixom gift cards.

- Design Committee: Bikes/Downtown Dazzle

Vice Chairperson Rzeznik indicated bike racks and locations were discussed at a prior meeting. She will go through her notes for additional discussion for cost, locations and installation. She stated one of the residents spoke at the Parks and Recreation meeting and was very passionate about the need for more bike racks; the DDA is in total agreement.

City Manager Brown indicated he spoke with the Trailway Council, who is looking at bike racks on the trail; there is a potential supplier for the bike racks but it is not finalized. We are waiting to see what happens, if it is something we want to do, like carryover the design or if we want to make it unique for Wixom. This would have to be discussed and decided at a later time to see if there is any action.

Vice Chairperson Rzeznik stated bikes that are throughout the downtown streets were decorated for summer with flowers. Now, we are transitioning to winter. The Committee put together a sponsorship pack that is going out to call the public to see if anybody is interested in being a sponsor for the bikes. Sponsorship would include decorating the bike. We would give them the location and we would put their name onto the bikes; i.e., Family Smith is a sponsor of the bike in front of the name of the establishment, for instance. The sponsor would decorate, maintain, make sure the bike looks presentable. We would have the sponsor change it out from season to season. The sponsorship would be renewable every year. It is going live today via Facebook.

For Downtown Dazzle, Vice Chairperson Rzeznik stated Ms. Cloutier emailed all of the downtown business owners and landlords to have them participate this year. Last year's event was spectacular. We joined and supported Parks and Recreation with their big event, the tree lighting. The whole city was lit up and made an impact. We are looking forward to this event this year.

Ms. Cloutier indicated we got a good response from business owners that did not participate last year and they would like to participate this year.

Vice Chairperson Rzeznik indicated it was brought to their attention that there are trees at the intersection of Wixom and Old Wixom Road. In years past, they had been strung with lights but last year, they were not. Vice Chairperson Rzeznik inquired if it was possible for the trees to be strung with lights this year. City Manager Brown indicated they would check.

Chairperson Rzeznik inquired if the DDA could support and promote the Parks and Recreation event this year. It could be tied in with the Downtown Dazzle. Chairperson Rzeznik requested photos from last year to help promote the event. Ms. Magee stated photos could be accessed on the City drive.

- DDA Plan Update: Budget

Ms. Cloutier stated the budget was included in the meeting packet.

City Manager Brown spoke about the presentation from the planner at the joint board meeting. It was consistent with the budget that is provided in the packet with three main points as to what is being done. Zoning Board update, there are some changes to the Zoning Board that they want

to get done. The DDA plan update looks to extend it for an additional period of time because we lost time in the post recession period of time where we didn't have any tax capture. There are project updates that would be taken care of with the DDA plan. Lastly, marketing and branding strategies which take a different look as opposed to focusing on publicity pieces such as the logo, etc. City Manager Brown indicated he was trying to present the city as a package. Once the Minutes for the meeting are established, they would be shared with the DDA as well. The purpose is the redevelopment certification is to get the certification accomplished. There is recognition from the MEDC and others that we have to have some funding to address some of the issues which may need some assistance. There was also some discussion at the joint board meeting about a tracking device, a new software package that the MEDC rolled out at the meeting last week.

Vice Chairperson Rzeznik indicated they were going to have a session because a lot of these things were not brought to our attention before it was submitted. We want to make sure that we are all on the same page, and are educated, so that we can all work hand in hand.

Information:

- **Wixom Business Forums (7:30 a.m.)**
 - November 12: Nonverbal Science with Monica Levin at Denise's Wixom Grille (29710 S. Wixom Road)
- **Downtown Business News/Events**
 - Every Monday: Drafting Table 5K Run/Walk Club - 7 p.m.
 - Every Wednesday: Bike Night 6:30 p.m.
 - Downtown Dazzle: November 15 to January 5

December 6 is tree lighting date.

Public Comments:

Ms. Cloutier indicated if the board members had events for their businesses and wanted them to be highlighted for the Facebook page, please send her the information.

Board Member Smith stated he created a Google Drive link. There is a depository link for pictures and to create future posts. He explained that you can schedule Facebook posts to utilize images throughout the year, or used the following year.

Chairperson Sheng asked everyone over the next month to take a second to find a good picture of themselves and then in a couple of sentences or short bio, explain what they do. It has been long overdue to recognize the fact that everyone is, again, sacrificing all of their time and that is understood better when people see their face and understanding what it is they do. Board Member Smith suggested a group photo of the DDA board members, as well.

Executive Director's Comments:

None

Board Members' Comments:

Board Member Smith inquired about signs for the trail, if we had heard anything about them. City Manager Brown indicated they looked at a couple of mockups but it is not far down on the line.

Chairperson Sheng thanked Mayor Ziegler and Ms. Cloutier for every minute that they spend working with the DDA.

Vice Chairperson Rzeznik thanked Ms. Barker for all of her time and support over the last year, she had been the biggest advocate for the DDA and deserves recognition for supporting us and being the front runner for the DDA. She thanked Ms. Cloutier for all of her hard work; and also thanked the DDA members for their work.

Ms. Barker's retirement party is October 30, 2019 to be held at the Drafting Table from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. There will be appetizers and a cash bar. The price is \$15 per person for appetizers.

Vice Chairperson Rzeznik stated that the DDA would like to help sponsor, if possible, her retirement party because Director Barker had done so much for the DDA. Chairperson Sheng stated they were thinking sponsorship monies for 50 people, to include people from businesses or from the Chamber, etc. These monies could be reallocated from participation receipts from Derby Day and/or income to the DDA and not targeted or purposed for anything. Ms. Barker was Director of Economic Community Development.

City Manager Brown stated the City avoids sponsorship/subsidizing because of legality purposes, but he would inquire with the attorneys to make sure sponsorship could be done.

MOTION by Board Member Willett and second by Board Member Klebba-Cheney to approve to pay for 50 admissions (\$15 each, appetizer fee) to Director Barker's retirement party to be re-allocated from Derby Day participation fee receipts subject to review for food only, no alcohol purchases.

Adjournment:

MOTION by Board Member Klebba-Cheney to adjourn the meeting. Board Member Gavron second the motion. This meeting of the Wixom Downtown Development Authority was motioned and adjourned at 8:26 a.m.

Mona Freiburger
Recording Secretary