

**CITY OF WIXOM
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
49045 PONTIAC TRAIL
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 2019**

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 Caleb Sheng, Vice-Chairperson Kristin Rzeznik, Kailee Fine, David Gavron, Amanda Habbouche, Melanie Klebba-Cheney, John Smith, Vanessa Willett and Richard Ziegler, Mayor

ABSENT: Excused: Members Grossi and Umlor

STAFF: Steve Brown, City Manager, 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:

MOTION by Board Member Cheney and second by Board Member Willett to approve the Meeting Agenda.

VOTE: MOTION CARRIED

Public Comments:

An introduction of the people in attendance: Ms. Roberta Meredith

Approval of Minutes:

MOTION by Mayor Ziegler and second by Board Member Rzeznik to approve the October 22, 2019, DDA Regular Meeting Minutes.

VOTE: MOTION CARRIED

MOTION by Mayor and second by Board Member Rzeznik to approve the October 21, 2019, Joint Board Meeting Minutes

VOTE: MOTION CARRIED

Correspondence:**MSOC 2020 Tentative Calendar**

Ms. Cloutier indicated she put in the Board Members' packets information from Main Street Oakland County with their tentative calendar events which the members may be interested in attending.

Old Business:

- DDA Executive Director Update

Chairman Sheng stated we were fortunate to have a lot of applicants to apply for the DDA Executive Director position. He thanked everyone involved who helped facilitate to make this happen. There are four or five candidates which have been shortlisted. Before interviews, Chairman Sheng wanted to get all of the members' thoughts.

Chairman Sheng gave an overview of the interview and hire process. Chairman Sheng indicated there would have interviews for the short listed candidates. Chairman Sheng stated he would break up the information, resumes and such, from the individual candidates, and send it to the whole board. The board could review all of them and give all of their feedback and questions. Then the feedback would be compiled, and similar questions merged to a list. In the interview process, those will be filtered through. This way everyone has a chance to look at them. The feedback would be brought into the interviews in a round table format. There are going to be six people total, five from the city and a candidate.

It seems unlikely that this process would get done within the two weeks after Thanksgiving. Chairman Sheng originally thought about calling a special meeting in December to approve the final candidate but it was decided it would be better towards the end of January when everyone is back. City Council meets bi-weekly, so that would give the board a chance to get everything in place by the end of January, if possible.

Board Member Habbouche suggested making contact with the candidates that are selected to give them a general update and would be in touch with them, shortly.

Chairman Sheng suggested planning a tentative special meeting date of Tuesday, January 7, 2020 at 4:30 p.m.

MOTION by Chairman Sheng and second by Board Member Willett to a special meeting to be held on Tuesday, January 7, 2020 at 4:30 p.m., contingent on city administration being able to facilitate the meeting at City Hall.

VOTE:

MOTION CARRIED

- Downtown Dazzle Update

Vice Chair Rzeznik stated there is a city wide light display to help raise holiday cheer. It is from December 1st through January 5th. The DDA is also coordinating with the Parks and Recreation with their tree lighting ceremony.

At the last DDA Meeting, the trees at the intersection at Wixom and Old Wixom Roads were discussed. The Committee in the years past, these trees had been lit up. In 2018, they were not. This year, the DDA asked if they could be lit, and it sounded like they are not going to be touched by DPW.

Vice Chair Rzeznik indicated she received a few quotes from some local installers. In order to do the six trees by the sign, the cost would be \$2,250. This is the entrance to our downtown. We are encouraging all of these businesses; she felt that we needed to have the entrance to our downtown lit up, as well.

There is approximately \$1,100 in our budget right now. There is a good amount of money in the race proceeds from Derby Day last year. Vice Chair Rzeznik motioned that the DDA use \$1,112 from the Derby Day Race proceeds from last year to get those trees lit up in time for the tree lighting.

Board Member Willett asked if the DDA owns the lights, then all we have to do is put back up next year. Vice Chair Rzeznik indicated we own the lights, the company would store them and pick them up next year, and there would be a recurring fee. Next year, it would be \$1,200 for just labor because we would own the lights. It would go on for three years.

Board Member Smith stated in past discussions, he heard that sometimes DPW could be hired to do additional things. Vice Chair Rzeznik indicated she did confer with them and that they do not have time to do it before the tree lighting. She thought it would be a missed opportunity if we don't get those lights up before December 6th. DPW had time afterwards but we are at a hard deadline of December 6th.

City Manager Brown stated timing is always bad for DPW because the leaf collection process is consistently a problem, and there was the winter storm this year that delayed things. DPW installs the regular decorations downtown. They have equipment to do the regular decorations but these are not the same kind of trees.

Vice Chair Rzeznik indicated the trees are very large, DPW may not have the equipment to put up the lights. Last year, the reason why they did not put up the lights was because they ran out of time, and also, the trees were too tall and too large around for them to install.

MOTION by Board Member Cheney and second Chairman Sheng to approve that the DDA use \$1,112 from the Derby Day Race proceeds from last year to install and light the trees at Wixom and Old Wixom Roads.

VOTE:

MOTION CARRIED

- Hopkins Barn Property Update

Vice Chair Rzeznik indicated they met with Ms. Laure Dorchak, who is president of the Historical Society to get a full grasp of their understanding of the property, past history and their involvement in the project. The history is on their website. The information on the website is very informative. Vice Chair Rzeznik encouraged the board members to visit the website. She said the property is important because it is a testimony to the pioneers of Wixom. The Hopkins and Baker families as well as many early residents of Wixom endured many hardships but still assisted others. They sacrificed for the greater good, kind of like what the DDA is doing. It reminds us that much can be achieved with hard work, courage and determination.

Board Member Willett indicated she and a colleague from a company, that put a bid on the barn for us, toured the barn. The good news is there is a concrete floor which we, previously, thought was a dirt floor. The concrete floor is in great shape. Structurally, the building is sound. There is one large beam that would have to come out but it is on the east side of the barn. There are multiple design options. A smaller support beam for the smaller mezzanine areas is one of the options. The barn is not in bad shape; it might look like it from the outside but a lot of that is cosmetic.

Board Member Willett stated the floors are a little uneven, there is about an 8 to 10 inch drop between the two sections but that is still doable whether we ramp it out to make it handicap accessible, which would not be a huge cost. To even out the floor would be, obviously, a little more. They gave us a price range based on what type of finish used. A list of different uses from some of the other barns and restored projects would be useful.

Chairman Sheng stated the quote is very nice because it forecasts a lot of things that the DDA would have to do, contract it to be done and then, there would be other estimates that are going to be brought in. Something that construction doesn't include and that's a chance for the design, particularly, is the chance for the history to be shown and incorporated.

Board Member Smith indicated he has been highly encouraged by the feedback. He thanked Ms. Cloutier for posting the great post to get community members to weigh in on the different uses and practical applications of the barn which have been encouraging. He said they had been working on the presentation to summarize all of the findings and speak to the budget. There is definitely a lot of support. Board Member Smith stated he saw the loft on the second floor and the wide open space. He had this grandiose vision of what it could be; he is highly encouraged as well. Board Member Smith thanked everyone for all of their efforts.

Vice Chair Rzeznik indicated the Historical Society worked on the barn in the past, and they would love to see it be renovated, but they do not want to be in the driver's seat. The Historical Society is in total support of seeing what could be done.

Chairman Sheng indicated he was very excited about this project, and it was very touching to see Ms. Dorchak speak of the barn. He stated that this is something that has not been totally illuminated to the population about its significance; and the fact that it was raised there by people who have not been really significantly honored for their sacrifice. It really struck us to see what they did for the history of the city and that now, could be brought back to facilitate new life events in 2020/2021 as well.

Vice Chair Rzeznik asked if there was an informal session where the board members, parks and recreation, and the historical society could all talk. Ms. Cloutier said a meeting could be set up.

Board Member Willett commented that this is one of the purposes of the DDA, is to help with preserving historical portions of the city and the downtown. Her understanding is part of the money going toward the DDA is to do things like this and to be able to do fundraising as well.

New Business:

- Derby Day Update

Board Member Cheney stated Vice Chair Rzeznik, Ms. Cloutier and herself met and secured the contract with Trivium Racing as in the last couple of years. The event will be held on Saturday, May 2, 2020. The early pack pickup will be at the Drafting Table the night before. The race group put together a Thanksgiving special for early registration. There will also be another discount on registration for New Year's, as well. They have updated the race website.

Ms. Cloutier indicated Total Sports would sponsor the T-Shirts as in the past. The event is receiving sponsorships for Derby Day.

- Trails to Downtown Update

Vice Chair Rzeznik stated Board Member Umlor and herself were working together to look at locations, styles and pricing for bike racks, City Manager Brown indicated they were waiting to

see what was going to happen with the design decisions with Trailway. Vice Chair Rzeznik indicated she did talk to Mr. John Hensler, who showed them their designs. He is getting those costs together along with install costs. There are mile marker signs going up. A ribbon cutting reschedule date has not been made as of yet.

- Phase 2 Marketing Spend

Board Member Smith indicated the promotion committee meets twice a month at 7:30 a.m., Backyard Coney, everybody is invited to attend. The Promotions Committee is working on an event, marketing calendar. The idea is for all of the events upcoming calendar, to provide promotional material to support every event, but to be proactive so we are not trying to figure out the different needs, marketing needs last minute. They have been working in partnership with Josh to develop a media kit, if you will, to outline all of the different materials such as posters, cards, and/or Facebook posts. We want to promote a particular event, so that we can have the year ahead, so it is not a surprise of trying to figure out a new way to market, have a consistent package of marketing to share. We did a design for Downtown Dazzle and shared it with Ms. Cloutier, so it could be a poster, a Facebook post, digital, print or other applications where you can have physical or digital materials.

Next, we are working on Wednesdays in Wixom. We need some input and updates from Board Members Gavron and Grossi when that becomes available. Ms. Cloutier has taken the lead on some of this, so we will continue to help and, hopefully, they will have some input for us, as well.

Board Member Smith stated Josh has been a key driver in a lot of creative, design and the original presentation of the experience here. Our wishes are to develop banners and signs, take that campaign and brand the downtown. That's been the wish all along. With that, Board Member Smith proposed that we establish a budget against the marketing budget for Josh. Josh had given Board Member Smith a proposal of \$2,500 with the idea being that he would continue to support the marketing design for events, create collateral and use ours against that budget. The \$2,500 would be 25 hours at \$100 an hour, to consult, design services, create collateral and support as needed. The experience here is the overall campaign to create the materials to support our efforts. Board Member Smith indicated he wanted to propose this to utilize the marketing spend. Last year, it came down to the last minute to spend all of this money. We want to be pro active and utilize the budget throughout the year and have an effective campaign that would tie into the trails and tie into future barn experiences, etc.

Ms. Cloutier suggested before a vote is taken, the proposal would need to be presented and we also need to double check the figures for the existing marketing budget.

Vice Chair Rzeznik indicated she is always an advocate for utilizing social media and digital as much as possible, instead of just banners and flyers. Digital is so impactful.

Board Member Smith indicated they call it an integrated marketing campaign. We want to have physical and digital in conjunction with one another. So when people come to our downtown,

much like lighting the trees of the downtown entrance is having branded, the banners are a branding of the downtown. People can, physically, see it in conjunction with digital, like some of the window decals; they are physical but have a digital interaction.

Vice Chair Rzeznik indicated the banner across the roadway or the structure got approved. They have installed the bases. If the roadway banner could be included or Josh designing the road banner because we know we can use it.

Board Member Smith stated he had done some research in the past and he would be happy to work with existing vendors, definitely, for cost efficiencies.

City Manager Brown stated they have the footing supports in place and then it is the setting of poles after that which will be next. The banner over Pontiac Trail, the city has paid for it, to utilize it for our events but we are also looking to make it available for other organizations like the DDA, etc. It is tricky sometimes about who can and cannot avail themselves over resources.

Board Member Smith stated the mindset has been that the downtown banners which helps people understand that they are in a downtown, so it is part of our overall branding, which is key.

Board Member Smith thanked Vice Chair Rzeznik for mentioning the digital part of the campaign. Josh helped us establish the Facebook page and he has been involved in posting, a big part of what he does is digital. We are, definitely, not losing sight of that, we want to make sure that's part of the overall campaign.

Board Member Smith stated he would share the presentation to the whole group and include City Manager Brown, as well.

- Office Equipment for DDA Executive Director

Chairman Sheng stated he put together some costs to provide equipment, cables and software for the DDA Executive Director. He thought a lot of these items on the list would be less expensive during deals on Black Friday and Cyber Monday. City Manager Brown indicated smaller expenses could be reimbursed without prior approval. Mayor Ziegler indicated the city purchased new computers for the police department. The prices were good and it might be worthwhile to see if we could take a look to see what that personal might be able to do for the DDA. City Manager Brown indicated we would want to talk with him about the compatibility, and consistency with the city system in case there are interactions.

Board Member Smith also suggested Micro Center in Troy, to look for computer equipment and supporting accessories.

Information:

- **Business Forum Events**

City Manager Brown stated December 10th was the next Business Forum Event. He stated he was reluctant for the meeting on December 10th, overall, and he was leaning towards not having one in December because of conflicts such as the Oakland County Business Round Table which is held on the same day.

City Manager Brown indicated he wanted to have a discussion if it would make sense to have cancel the business forum event in December and proceed in January. City Manager Brown suggested to cut down from monthly to bi-monthly or quarterly meetings, maybe we would get better attendance participation. Attendance is light with the same five or six people that attend; then, occasionally, if there is a good speaker, it goes up to approximately 12 to 15 people.

City Manager Brown stated the Business Forum Event is business networking that is held in the mornings. We try to find new businesses to highlight or existing businesses that are interested in hosting. The business would host at their facility, provide basic, light breakfast, introductions of 1 to 2 minutes are made on your business with the people in attendance and then wrap up with the people that are hosting to talk about their business. There is, typically, a speaker, they try to get somebody that can talk on a subject. The last one was body language consultant that had the misfortune of having it scheduled on November 11th with the snow storm. Typically, in attendance is the same people month after month.

Board Member Willett agreed that having a meeting to have a meeting is not really beneficial to anybody and maybe, you would get a better turnout and more people would want to attend as new businesses come in to promote the business to business advantage.

- **Downtown News/Events**

- Downtown Dazzle: December 1 to January 5
- City of Wixom Tree Lighting Festival: December 6 (5:00 pm)
- Wednesdays in Wixom: January 8 to March 4
- Derby Day Races: May 2

Public Comments:

Mrs. Roberta Meredith introduced herself. She stated she wanted to speak on the Hopkins Barn property. Mrs. Meredith asked if the property would include the house and if the house was historical. She stated the house is getting worse every year. She indicated we want to bring businesses into Wixom, and there are lovely decorations for the holidays. She stated the house is an eyesore to the City and future businesses considering moving to Wixom.

Chairman Sheng stated the house is a significant part of the DDA's research. There is a lot of concern about the road to recovery for a property like that and how steep it is and what the alternatives would be. On the other hand, there have been some surprise in probability that there may be avenues that happen. He indicated there are different possibilities, whether it is moved,

renovated or demolished. It is going to come down to what makes the most sense and which direction would be responsible in making that spot attractive.

Mayor Ziegler spoke on the history of the property and house. He stated 20 years ago, there was a discussion with the planning commission and the City Council to use the house as an exercise for the fire department to train on, burn the house down, because it was in bad shape 20 years ago. Most recently, the Historical Society became very interested in it and, in fact, they moved their office in that building to house the historical society. They worked a long time on trying to preserve the house. It has been indicated that the Historical Society is still interested but they don't want to be in charge because they know how much of an uphill battle it would be to preserve it. The Historical Society moved to the Gibson House for their headquarters and they have been there for a few years now.

Mayor Ziegler indicated the city always valued the barn and felt it was a valuable asset, it could be a valuable asset going forward. The house sat vacant for many, many years and just deteriorated. It is an eye sore. It was also discussed that the house be destroyed and the barn be moved down to the Gibson House.

Mayor Ziegler stated he was encouraged by the comments that have been made and the interest taken by the DDA. It would be his suggestion, and he said he could only speak for himself, if the DDA was seriously interested in going forward on this, Mayor Ziegler would not have a problem selling the property from the city to the DDA. Then the DDA could make the decisions because there is a lot of involvement here.

Mayor Ziegler indicated there was a new interest about a year ago from someone from Oakland County. He gave the City his presentation and gave beautiful drawings as to what might be with respect to the house and then the barn such as cider and donuts and a little shop to sell memorabilia.

Board Member Smith thanked Mrs. Meredith for her concern. He stated that the DDA board is young, excited and has been fired up about the barn property. There have been discussions, looking at budgets, and have talked to vendors. They are looking at marketing opportunities. There is a lot of energy and effort behind it in order to see the viability of this project. All of us know how unique it is to have a barn in the downtown.

Board Member Willet stated there are some larger corporations and partners that the DDA is going to look for; until the DDA has a plan to move forward, we can't go and request the funds until we know which direction we are going as a board and getting approval.

Vice Chair Sheng stated he understood that this has been talked about for two decades. The DDA is approaching this with due diligence. To do that due diligence, we do have to balance not just current opinions of aesthetic appeal but the interest of all stakeholders and government entities that are interested in that as well as come up with the best solution that facilitates all of the variables as much as possible.

Mrs. Meredith asked if there was any money right now that is for the house and barn. City Manager Brown stated no, as was mentioned, there is payback going on right now, the city's deferred payback to allow the executive director position hire for the next three years. For the next three years, there really shouldn't be any major sources of new monies available to the DDA. Any money that would occur would be through fundraising efforts which has not started yet. There is potential to have some corporate benefactors that might become involved.

Mayor Ziegler stated that there have been fundraisers attempted by the historical society to preserve historical sites and those were not real successful. Mayor Ziegler indicated that the city would not bail out the house on the property. There are prices on destruction of the house and for moving the barn as well but there is not a price on preserving the barn in place. Mayor Ziegler indicated it would make sense to take the house down and sell the barn to the DDA and let the DDA develop it.

Board Member Willett stated she had no interest in reaching out and using relationships to get funding if we are not going to have 100% and the city working with us. Mayor Ziegler indicated it would be interesting to have a conversation with city council and ask questions.

Executive Director's Comments:

City Manager Brown indicated Ms. Deanna McGee and him had been talking about if there is any interest and if it would make sense for the DDA and the city to get together on the solicitation for contributions of events; to put out on piece of communication of people saying we are going to participate in these events, we are looking for your support at these kind of events. Right now, if the City sends out one and then the DDA sends out one, there is feedback through Parks and Recreation that you just asked me for something and now you are asking for something again. City Manager Brown brought up the concept of, potentially, coordinating those solicitations into one.

Ms. McGee stated they discussed this at the Parks and Recreation Commission meeting as well, and the Commission had strong concerns because they had heard several things in the community about they were confused, why they were donating to the DDA and Parks and Recreation. So the Parks and Recreation Commission made a motion to discuss with the DDA the possible joint sponsorship program that would go to the City of Wixom events. The important part of the Parks and Recreation Commission is looking at is coming to the public and the businesses as one unit.

City Manager Brown said it would be nice if we could get on the same page and coordinate and have discussions jointly about which way we are going to go on this as opposed to you say one thing and I say another thing and we are not coordinated. It would be another opportunity for discussion purposes.

Board Member Smith stated he agreed from a marketing and branding perspective, particularly as well have been talking about this experience here, campaigning. There are a lot of events which would be an extension of that branding of that campaign that we experienced here and that is part of his proposal, or in conjunction with Josh was to bring that into light. We would not want to have conflicting information but ensuring that we stick true to our campaign of experience that we have already approved as a board.

Ms. Cloutier stated it may need to go on further discussion with the new DDA director, depending on who that is, their experience. Most DDAs have their own sponsorship campaigns, they don't pair up with the Parks and Recreation or their cities.

Board Member Willett stated it is not for any reason not to try to collaborate, it is part of being an individual identity. She indicated that's where part of the confusion comes in, just from our events and talking to the people that live here and frankly, talking to people that she knows lives here, neighbors, etc., a lot of them didn't know who the DDA was or what it was. We are starting to get that out there. Board Member Willett stated if she was a sponsor and got the mail, she would give you this amount and you decide what to do with the money. That's going to come up and that's going to be a problem. To the credit of this board of volunteers, and your participation, both Mayor and the City Manager, they have had to work very hard to get the funding and get the programs off the ground thus far. It is a very delicate situation. There will be some issues that come up with that down the road. Who decides what gets distributed where? The DDA, itself, does have to have its own presence and stand on its own two feet. We need to educate the businesses and the community and the surrounding businesses and then the people will be able to understand.

Vice Chair Rzeznik indicated she agreed with everybody and she didn't think this subject is something that we can decide on today. This could be an opportunity to put together a nice packet regarding the Parks and Recreation and the DDA in the different events. It could be another opportunity to get additional sponsors, hopefully, we have the same lists.

City Manager Brown suggested a separate piece of documentation, it goes out under one cover, perhaps, at the same time with the DDA set of events, Parks and Recreation events, and a calendar that mixes and puts them together.

Vice Chair Rzeznik discussed the timing on everything. She indicated she likes to get the letters out early because there are companies that are looking to spend money now. So it would be nice to have it come out early November for the following year.

Board Member Smith stated, as a Wixom resident, he had seen a lot of Thursday night concerts, and the family movie nights. These events are great for our families. At the end of the day, we have shared goals with Parks and Recreation and he stated he was encouraged by how many people attend the concerts. As a DDA member, he indicated, wow, we have all of these people in our downtown, in our city and how can we continue to help evangelize our mission together?

City Manager Brown suggested partnering with one of the food trucks that does business at the concert series and co-brand with the DDA and have a booth there explaining the DDA.

Board Members' Comments:

Mayor Ziegler indicated it was a pleasure serving on the DDA board and he really enjoyed his last two years being able to speak his mind at these meetings. He stated he hoped he added something to it.

City Manager Brown indicated December 17th would be the swearing in of the new Council members. He encouraged the board members to attend and participate in this meeting.

Chairman Sheng thanked everyone for their time; it is recognized and appreciated.

Adjournment:

MOTION by Board Member Willett to adjourn the meeting. Board Member Smith second the motion. This meeting of the Wixom Downtown Development Authority was motioned and adjourned at 9:10 a.m.

Mona Freiburger
Recording Secretary

APPROVED 1-23-2020