

**CITY OF WIXOM  
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY  
49045 PONTIAC TRAIL  
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 2022**

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 Russ Meredith; Carissa Osburn, Vice Chairperson;  
Board Members: Jessica Buck; Melanie Cheney; Mark Garmo;  
Kristin Rzeznik; Vanessa Willett

**ABSENT:** Excused: Kaitie Guzowski; Patrick Beagle, Mayor

**STAFF:** DDA Staff: Laura Cloutier, DDA Executive Director  
City Staff: Steve Brown, City Manager  
City Staff: Drew Benson, Assistant City Manager & Director of  
Economic Development  
Mona Freiburger, Recording Secretary

**Determination of Quorum:**

Quorum was 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:**

Board Member Rzeznik indicated there is a monthly charge for the Goggle Work Space account which was on Caleb Sheng's credit card which should be reimbursed by the DDA. This discussion will be added to New Business.

**MOTION** by Board Member Willett and second by Vice Chairperson Osburn to approve the Meeting Agenda, as amended.

**VOTE:**

**MOTION CARRIED**



Bottom Line", "Real Estate Development", "Working Together Makes It Better" (The Oxford/Lake Orion Strong Together campaign), "Take This Job And...A conversation with Michigan Main Street Managers", "Community Foundations", "Show Me the Money", and "Layering Alternative Funding Sources With TIF Revenue". It was well worth the time and great conversations with other DDAs on their best practices.

Assistant City Manager Benson and Executive Director Cloutier continue to meet with a prospective business owner to relocate from outside of downtown to downtown. The business owner and property owner have met to begin conversations about building, lease rates, etc. Assistant City Manager Benson and Executive Director Cloutier continue to facilitate those meetings and work with both parties.

Assistant City Manager Benson and Executive Director Cloutier continue to work on the Barn Feasibility Study RFP and the Renton Property Development Project RFQ Proposals. The Barn Feasibility Study RFP will be discussed later in the meeting under Old Business. They continue to seek out quotes for proposals from prospective firms for the Renton Property Development Project RFQ.

Downtown Wixom will be featured in the SEMCOG Shop Small video series on Tuesday, December 6th. This is a free service from SEMCOG. Filming will be at the following businesses: Green Goat Gifts, SprayChic Airbrush Tanning, Trail's Edge Café, and Drafting Table Brewing Company starting at 9:00 a.m. A few more "extras" are in need for the shoot, if anyone is available, please contact Executive Director Cloutier.

Currently, there are three vacancies in Downtown. Assistant City Manager Benson and Executive Director Cloutier continue to work with property owners and/or realtors to help in any way to fill these spaces. Vacant properties include: (Kumon space), 49030 Pontiac Trail; (Heath Building) 49329 Pontiac Trail; (Classic Pilates Center space) 31202 Old Wixom Road.

There are two operating businesses that are looking to sell or find a new lease tenant. Neither of these businesses have begun advertising this but have reached out to inquire about potential businesses that would like to pursue other options: (Buttercream Bakeshop) 49046 Pontiac Trail; (The Hair Stop) 49321 Wainstock Street.

A meeting was held on November 28th in the City Manager's office regarding the possible submittal of the SPARK grant to help supplement the funds for the Civic Center Playground.

Executive Director Cloutier indicated there is legislation before the State House to allow short term rentals, i.e., for Air BnB's within cities which the cities would not be able to regulate any longer. The MDA is not in favor of the bill because it takes away regulation rights for downtown areas and for communities.

Executive Director Cloutier commented the Michigan Downtown Association has listed their future dates regarding the workshops and conferences.

Chair Meredith commented if anyone has a chance to attend the conference, it is interesting and provides a chance to network with a lot of people and other DDA's across the State.

Board Member Willett asked for two takeaways from the conference which Chair Meredith, Executive Director Cloutier and Vice Chair Osburn attended. Executive Director Cloutier indicated the developers commented that it was less expensive for them to use a building that is already in use versus new build which not only saves money but is more environmentally friendly; and that they are looking for those opportunities in communities, but are not opposed to new build.

Vice Chair Osburn commented this was a very interesting angle. She found it interesting and most impactful, as a business owner, Lake Orion and Oxford are together strong; the cities were able to acquire a trolley that goes between the two cities which was very cool.

Chair Meredith concurred with Executive Director Cloutier's comment in which there were interesting topics. It does not impact Wixom very much because of the number of historic buildings but it was food for thought. The side discussions were very interesting as well their approach and interactions with the city or with the commercial businesses in the area to work with the DDA to make improvements.

Executive Director Cloutier indicated she has had a few conversations and meetings with the DDA Director in South Lyon to try to bring our two communities together to run some sort of trolley. They are still in discussions to try to figure out how this idea may work.

Assistant City Manager Benson commented it is very relevant to attract businesses to Wixom. They are trying to figure out alternative funding arrangements or ways to help facilitate the businesses. Assistant City Manager Benson indicated he was optimistic that there are ways to make this work, but in real time, it is a little disappointing.

Board Member Willett commented labor costs and material costs are going to go down; they have gone down a little bit. She talked about the Renton development on how to attract them on this project, if it 50% higher for them to build versus how we are going to get people interested. Assistant City Manager Benson indicated it would be part of how we package it. It was made clear to City Council that they shouldn't expect to get their money back for the properties that have been purchased so far. That's the strongest area that we can make a financial impact is considering to reduce the sale prices.

Executive Director Cloutier indicated they have been working on the barn feasibility study which is included in the packet and up for discussion. They are also receiving quotes for the Renton property development. They have two quotes and trying to get a third quote from a qualified firm. The price differences are interesting and they are evaluating that difference. Board Member

Willett asked them to have the companies break down the costs per section to see what you are getting for your money.

Executive Director Cloutier indicated the DDA was given the opportunity to participate in the Small Shop Local video series done by SEMCOG (Southeast Michigan Council of Governments). This is a free service. On Tuesday, December 6, 2022, SEMCOG will be in Wixom to film the downtown at some of the local businesses. They are very short videos; a minute and a half to two minute videos. The amount of reel that they take is greater than what is going to be shown in the video. This video will be posted on their website. The DDA will receive the master video once it is completed. This video will be a tool for us to share with our businesses on social media and our channel, as well.

Executive Director Cloutier indicated Assistant City Manager Benson, Deanna Magee from Parks and Recreation, City Manager Brown, Mike Darga from HRC Engineering, Tim Sikma from Wixom DPW and herself met regarding a grant called the SPARK grant. The thought behind this was to pursue the grant for the buildout of the playground. The grant is funding for \$100K up to \$1 million dollars. There are three rounds. Right now, they are looking at applying for the second round. The SPARK grant is giving away \$15 million the first round, \$25 million the second round and \$25 million in the third round. The proposals need to be submitted in the spring of 2023. This grant will be written internally between Parks and Recreation, Assistant City Manager Benson and Director Cloutier; HRC will also be involved. It is federal money through the State of Michigan. Executive Director Cloutier commented this fits into the project timeline for the playground.

Assistant City Manager Benson commented there has been interest in working on the barn. A grant program like the SPARK grant might be a perfect opportunity to try to incorporate that into future steps or a larger project for the playground area. The goal is to evaluate all possible options and scenarios.

Board Member Willett commented the RFP for the barn feasibility doesn't cost us anything to do and it does not have to be awarded. This could be put out for bid to see the response then come back in January to review the proposals. Executive Director Cloutier commented public restrooms was brought up in the discussion.

**Old Business:**

A. Barn Feasibility Study RFP

The DDA Board gave specific guidance on the desire to seek out services to conduct a feasibility study on the Hopkins Barn that sits on City property just east of the community center building. Mr. Benson, Executive Director Cloutier, and the Economic Vitality Committee created the document for requesting such services. Discussion on the provided document and a motion to approve the request for Proposals for a Feasibility Study for Adaptive Reuse of the Hopkins Barn.

Chair Meredith commented he took the pictures of the barn to be included in the packet. The barn has deteriorated since the 2016 picture. He indicated we can do a feasibility study on the barn, provide it to the City and then they will let us know what to do with it and see if the DDA would like to help.

Chair Meredith asked if anyone had additional comments that hasn't already been submitted in writing to Assistant Manager Benson and Executive Director Cloutier on the barn proposal. Executive Director Cloutier commented Board Member Guzowski expressed a concern regarding the timeline and the holidays. These dates are adjustable.

There was additional discussion regarding the barn, and use ideas. It was clear to get the RFP, and review the ideas brought forward.

**MOTION** by Vice Chair Osburn and second by Board Member Willett to approve the request for Proposals for a Feasibility Study for Adaptive Reuse of the Hopkins Barn.

**VOTE: MOTION CARRIED**

All in favor.  
None opposed.

B. West End Commons Area Rendering Proposal

The West End Common Area buildout has been an ongoing topic of discussion for the Design Committee as well as the DDA Board. Through this discussion process, it is recommended by the Design Committee to purchase renderings services from Carlisle Wortman Associates, Inc. on what the buildout of this property could be, and the estimated costs associated with it. A request for a motion to approve the rendering services provided by Carlisle Wortman Associates, Inc., of a spend not to exceed \$2,500.00 from Downtown Enhancement account.

**MOTION** by Board Member Rzeznik and second by Vice Chair Osburn for approval of rendering services by Carlisle Wortman Associates for the spend not to exceed \$2,500.00 from the downtown enhancement account.

**VOTE: MOTION CARRIED**

All in favor.  
None opposed.

C. Civic Center Playground Renderings

Director Magee of the Parks and Recreation Department received three renderings for the Civic Center Playground at the request of the DDA Board. There are three renderings at the three price points requested: \$100K, \$200K and \$300K for the DDA's review.

Chair Meredith indicated to have the Design Committee review the renderings and to bring their ideas back to the Board for discussion.

Board Member Willett indicated the three designs were a good representation and a good basis to work with and move forward.

The Design Committee meets the first Tuesday of every month at 5:00 p.m. at the Drafting Table; if there is a larger group, they can meet at the City's conference room, if available.

#### D. Committee – Design

Board Member Rzeknik commented on the tree lights at the intersection of Wixom Road and Old Wixom Road. There has been feedback that they look “messy”.

Executive Director Cloutier commented she has spoken with the contractor and they have not been able to adjust the lights as of yet. The contractor is aware of the situation, it is their busy season and to be patient.

Board Member Rzeknik commented the trees are really large; DPW indicated they couldn't do the lights. The prior contractor said the trees were too big and couldn't do them this year. There was only one company out of 12 that agreed to do them. Executive Director Cloutier indicated she met with them, and told them the budget. The company took the existing lights from the previous contractor and installed them. The contractor used giant poles, as they weren't bringing lifts out this year. The cost will increase next year.

Board Member Willett recommended to have a protocol in place when contracts are done to approve the work prior to paying the bill. Chair Meredith indicated it was a budget and timing issue. Executive Director Cloutier indicated she would ask the contractor for the cost for installation next year, how many more lights are needed to be ordered and get those estimates before budget season to plan appropriately.

Board Member Rzeknik thanked Executive Director Cloutier for scrambling the last minute to try to find a contractor to do the lights on the trees.

#### E. Committee - Economic Vitality

Board Member Willett commented they have struggled to get people on the Committee. The Committee did not meet this week. She indicated before we cancel meeting, if we are trying to get people on the committees and where people commit to the committee, they should have

consistency. The dates have to be set, no matter what. There should be consistency with volunteers because they are inserted into their plans and schedules.

Assistant City Manager Benson gave an update and shoutout to members of the Economic Vitality Committee. A number of the members attended the Planning Commission meeting about the VCA ordinances which was a useful exercise. The Planning Commission meeting was a long but very productive with community members sharing their thoughts to the Commission of what the future of the VCA should look like and a plan to divide it into smaller districts. It is important that the DDA, at a minimum, understand the expectations of the Planning Commission. The next meeting of the Economic Vitality Committee would likely be related to the Briton project and goals. The Committee meets the last Monday of the month.

F. Committee - Promotions

Board Member Buck commented Candy Cane Lane is coming up. Executive Director Cloutier indicated there are approximately 200 participants. Chair Meredith and herself will be approaching businesses to sign up for this event. The DDA will be providing the candy canes. There is a sponsor for the bags. Walled Lake Western acapella group will stroll downtown singing Christmas carols. The group is looking forward to performing. The event will be held on December 14, 2022, and will start at 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

G. Committee - Organization

Vice Chair Osburn commented the Organization Committee did not meet and did not have anything to report at this time.

**New Business:**

A. Wednesdays in Wixom

Executive Director Cloutier commented El Camino Real was added this year. The amount of money will be bumped up from \$50 to \$60 for all businesses. Executive Director Cloutier asked for a spend of up to \$1,000.00 for Wednesdays in Wixom.

**MOTION** by Board Member Willett and second by Board Member Buck to approve the spend of up to \$1,000.00 for Wednesdays in Wixom.

**VOTE:**

**MOTION CARRIED**

All in favor.

None opposed.



- B. Repayment to Caleb Sheng for reimbursement of Google Work Space from March 1, 2020 through November, 2022.

Executive Director Cloutier commented there was a payment of \$12 a month for Google Work Space. Mr. Sheng had been paying this amount since March, 2020 to November, 2022. There will be a final invoice submitted to reimburse Mr. Sheng. Executive Director Cloutier is asking for a spend not to exceed \$400.00.

**MOTION** by Board Member Rzeznik and second by Board Member Willett to approve the reimbursement of monies paid by Caleb Sheng for Google Work Space (which includes email for the Executive Director and DDA), not to exceed \$400.00.

**VOTE: MOTION CARRIED**

All in favor.  
None opposed.

**Information:**

- A. Downtown Business News/Events
- 2022: November 23rd - January 7th - Downtown Dazzle
  - 2022: December 2nd - City of Wixom - Tree Lighting Festival
  - 2022: December 14th - Candy Cane Lane
  - 2022: January 4 - February 22nd - Wednesdays in Wixom

Assistant City Manager Benson commented El Camino Real is on the City Council agenda for November 28, 2022 to seek a Class C liquor license and also a social district permit. The City has completed their review and is recommending approval. The City is excited to have a third establishment participating in the social district. If it is approved, the City will have one more Class C liquor license. The State has liberalized downtowns for liquor licenses to new construction as well as redevelopments, so it is not much of a constraint anymore, specifically, in the downtown district.

**Public Comments:**

Roberta Meredith, Wixom resident, thanked the DDA, and volunteers for their contribution and everything they do for the City of Wixom. Mrs. Meredith read and translated a thank you note from their 3 year old granddaughter, Mara Liston, for the Spooktacular event held in downtown Wixom in October: "Dear City of Wixom DDA, thank you for the wonderful Halloween Spooktacular and I hope you do it again. I had a great time. Signed Maya Liston."

**Executive Director's Comments:**

Executive Director Cloutier welcomed new board member, Leslie Payment. This is her first official meeting. She apologized for the confusion with switching the DDA meeting from last week to this week. She thanked the Board Members for their flexibility. Executive Director Cloutier commented there is not a DDA meeting in December. She wished everyone to have a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

**Board Members' Comments:**

Board Member Willett commented she went out shopping on Small Business Saturday and spent some time at the Green Goat shop. The traffic was, definitely, down; their annual sales are the same although their transactions and traffic have been lower. She asked if promotion was done for downtown businesses and Shop Small Saturday.

Vice Chair Osburn thanked Leslie Payment for volunteering to be a board member and attending the DDA meeting. She also thanked the DDA members for supporting her.

Chair Meredith also welcomed Leslie Payment as a new Board Member.

**Adjournment:**

**MOTION by** Board Member Garmo and second by Board Member Willett to adjourn the meeting. This meeting of the Wixom Downtown Development Authority was motioned and adjourned at 8:45 a.m.

Mona Freiburger  
Recording Secretary