

**CITY OF WIXOM  
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY  
49045 PONTIAC TRAIL  
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 24, 2024**

This meeting of the Wixom Downtown Development Authority came to order at 6:30 p.m. with the following individuals in attendance:

**DDA MEMBERS:** Chairperson Jessica Buck; Board Members: Kaitie Guzowski; Russ Meredith; Leslie Payment; Vanessa Willett; Patrick Beagle, Mayor

**ABSENT:** Excused: Osburn, Garmo, Hartman

**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:**

**MOTION** by Mayor Beagle and second by Board Member Guzowski to approve the Meeting Agenda.

**VOTE: MOTION CARRIED**

All in favor.  
None opposed.

**Public Comments:**

None

**Approval of Minutes:**

**MOTION** by Board Member Meredith and second by Willett to approve the March 20, 2024, DDA Budget Session Minutes, as presented.

**VOTE: MOTION CARRIED**

**MOTION** by Board Member Meredith and second by Willett to approve the March 26, 2024, DDA Regular Board Meeting Minutes, as presented.

**VOTE: MOTION CARRIED**

**Correspondence:**

None

**Executive Director Report: April 24, 2024 Report**

Executive Director Cloutier highlighted points from her report dated April 24, 2024, which is included in the packet.

Executive Director Cloutier commented Derby Day registrations are coming in strong. We are up to 200 participants. Last year at this time, there were 158 participants. Starting tomorrow through Saturday, there is a \$10 off special, to try to hit the 300-participation mark.

Executive Director Cloutier indicated she was impressed on how far people are coming for the race – Ludington, Chicago, California; she assumes they are visiting people here and will be in town. We are in good shape with volunteers, but she will always take more.

Executive Director Cloutier touched on how we can collaborate to promote our districts: South Lyon, Highland Lyon Township and Wixom. At the last meeting, it was agreed to create a six-week shopping/dining passport booklet to encourage community members to visit all our districts. Patrons would receive stamps from each business visited and spend money to enter to win a giant gift basket with products from all the communities.

Board Member Payment asked if there was a way to collaborate with other cities? Executive Director Cloutier stated it is all stemmed from the Main Street Oakland County. These are all Main Street Oakland County communities with close proximity. Walled Lake is no longer a part

of Main Street Oakland Community. Board Member Payment asked if we could go to Walled Lake business owners to talk to them about open spaces in Wixom. Executive Director Cloutier stated yes, or any other community.

**Branding, Logo and Signage:** The executive team and steering committee met to review branding and logo concepts. This will be discussed in Old Business.

**West End Commons:** She met with the HRC regarding the estimated pricing for this project. At the time of this report, this is being updated by HRC. New renderings have been completed due to obtained funding, which will be discussed in Old Business.

City Council Budget Session was held on April 16<sup>th</sup>. Executive Director Cloutier indicated the conversation was good and there were no issues with the DDA budget as proposed, except to continue to work on bringing the number down for the maintenance services for the hanging baskets.

There is a flyer for the Main Event to be held on June 6<sup>th</sup>. Board Member Meredith and his wife, Roberta, will be attending along with Chairperson Buck, and Vice Chair Osburn. If anyone would like to attend, please let Executive Director Cloutier know. The last day to register is June 2<sup>nd</sup>. There is a flyer in the packet.

Executive Director Cloutier commented there was a meeting with Throne Labs to learn about its restrooms and how they would be a valuable addition for a pilot program in Wixom. The restrooms are all touchless, enter with a QR code or their app, they can track how many usages per month and report back to the City. Throne Labs services the restrooms, you do not have to hook up to sewer water, all self-contained and run off of solar. If there is a problem with the restroom, Throne Labs can remotely lock the restroom. The hours can be determined by the City. She is awaiting a proposal from Throne Labs. More information will be forthcoming when available. Ann Arbor is the first in Michigan to bring Throne Labs. Throne Labs could write the service in with Ann Arbor and Wixom.

Board Member Guzowski commented if there are two restrooms, a very good spot could be near the new playground area (by the Loop).

Executive Director Cloutier met with Erick Phillips, MSOC, and various businesses to discuss, speak and show the SHOP OC platform. Erick Phillips joined the Economic Vitality Committee meeting on Monday to talk about the Shop OC Main Street platform site, and marketplace site. More discussion in the Economic Vitality report.

Unfortunately, Green Goat Gifts and Connect Boutique are closing at the end of April. Gerdom Realty, the realtor, are talking to potential tenants; they may have one very close to signing a lease.

Urban Gyro closed, as well; Mexican Fiesta will be going in their space. They bought a liquor license from someone in Royal Oak and transferred it over. Assistant City Manager Benson spoke with Urban Gyro owners directly and are staying in contact.

**Old Business:**

A. West End Commons

Congressional and County funding has allowed us to look at the West Commons Space differently, CWA has created and provided us with new renderings of what the area could become with features of a more enclosed stage area, a fire pit area, knee walls for extra seating, and more. In your packet are the new renderings and the original renderings for discussion.

Executive Director Cloutier stated with the money they are receiving, they asked Chris Nordstrom, CWA, to give us a higher end version for West End Commons. She provided the original plan to the Board Members and also the plan which Mr. Nordstrom came up with. She states these are only discussion topics.

Board Member Willett asked when bids would go out to start sourcing the actual project. Board Member Willett asked if restrooms could be included as a caveat in the higher end version of the plans. Executive Director Cloutier indicated restrooms were not included because there is a county pipe where the restrooms were, originally, located, which led to the Throne Labs conversation. The county will not let the City build restrooms on top of that pipe, so they are trying to figure out the best placement for the restrooms.

Chairperson Buck stated she was also concerned with the restroom situation, not having restrooms. Executive Director Cloutier stated they thought about in the area by the dumpster but did not think that was a good look to have a restroom right on the corner. Assistant City Manager Benson commented the utilities are underground and everywhere on the site. It is a lower priority compared to the opportunity to use high end elements and make the area look nice.

Assistant City Manager Benson stated they are working through the project. They have not received the next steps for the congressional funding and do not know when the monies will be received. Assistant City Manager Benson would like to have the project ready for bid this Fall; release it in December or January and start construction next summer. Board Member Willett indicated if we are willing to put out bids where we could start in the Fall when some of the other companies are slower and they could do some of the prep work, you may get a better deal.

There was a discussion in reference to the playground in the rear of the library and community center. Chairperson Buck mentioned there are no swings. Board Member Willett stated she is really struggling with this. It is not a playground, it is supposed to be a portion and a phase one of a much bigger buildout, and that's why the DDA put their money in over there. There were multiple discussions of this being a much bigger project in the future. We do not have the second and

third buildouts even though we have the renderings. Board Member Willett indicated the only reason she signed on for this is because it was going to be much bigger; we were going to build out that area; and we don't need just another park. Board Member Guzowski stated if the playground is going to be there, but if you walk 20 steps past the playground, there isn't anything. Assistant City Manager Cloutier indicated with the money that we are putting in for the playground, there are benches ordered to be installed around the path. This will be happening as part of this phase. Board Member Guzowski stated there is a lack of communication; she indicated she was not convinced that everybody, all the different departments that are contributing to this project, are aware or know that we are interested in a Phase 2, or whatever phases there may be. Executive Director Cloutier stated this is known. She has developed a good relationship with Parks and Recreation. Part of a buildout that will be along the pathway, Parks and Recreation secured a grant for a plaza area, outside of the community center. Although this is not the topic at hand; and doesn't have to do with DDA. Executive Director Cloutier apologized if she had not communicated this.

Board Member Meredith stated this is an important topic and discussion item for the next strategic meeting.

Assistant City Manager Benson commented, specifically, the West End Commons area, having this be oriented for children is concerning because of all the traffic; there is nowhere near the level of protection from the street.

Chairperson Buck commented it doesn't make sense for a playground to not have swings; every playground in existence has swings; it is very disappointing. There is a lot of activity on the Facebook posts regarding the playground and the West End Commons.

Assistant City Manager Benson commented it is a very important point, as we look at upgrading or maintaining what we do with these facilities. It is important to be intentional about it and look at it, comprehensively. We are building new things, and we are trying to be thoughtful about the intent of each of them. This project, specifically, has moved quickly because of the grant. We are moving at a quick pace. It is a good point that we have these conversations, being thoughtful about the long-term plans, not forgetting about what we started, while pivoting to other things. Board Member Willett stated it is also about having a platform and how we communicate, which we do not do a good job at right now. We communicate in bursts and don't give the full picture. West End Commons is a gathering space, more for adults, events, to utilize and help some of the businesses there. On the other end, there is Sibley Park with a playground, more family oriented.

Chairperson Buck commented on Derby Day, we are going to have big renderings of the projects. They will be able to see it. A lot of people do not know the library has a playground; it is hidden in a way.

Board Member Payment commented she thought Board Member Willett was right about the way that we communicate. To garner the support of the business and residents, there was a comment

posted if businesses could participate in the buildout of the West End Commons by placards on some of the benches. She stated there are other ways that we can, potentially, contribute. A lot of people do not realize that there is funding available for us and some of the things are going to take priority. A lot of people do not know about the DDA and what they do.

Executive Director Cloutier stated Board Member Guzowski gave an opportunity for Executive Director Cloutier to do a DDA presentation at the master HOA Associations for all the houses and condos at Tribute to inform the residents about the DDA and its projects.

#### B. Logo, Branding, and Signage

The Branding, Logo, and Signage services have been productive and is coming to fortition. The executive and steering committees will meet with Guide Studios to review the updated branding, logos and signage examples on Monday, April 22<sup>nd</sup>. The complete branding, logo, and signage package will be presented to this Board on Tuesday, May 28<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 p.m. and to City Council on the same night at 7:00 p.m. Staff will provide an update on this project.

Assistant City Manager Benson commented the Logo, Branding and Signage process is going along pretty well. There will be one more steering committee meeting on May 9<sup>th</sup> to go over visions to the sign concept. The brand pieces are locked in for the final presentation. They are going to work to finalize some signage concepts. The intent is to present to both the DDA and City Council on May 28<sup>th</sup>. There are funds budgeted for next fiscal year to implement and work through what the implementation plan would look like. It is more than updating the social media images and press releases.

Assistant City Manager Benson stated we have an opportunity for a splashy entrance from the East, so we are planning to incorporate that, and the intention is to work with Guide Studios even after the presentations. Funds are budgeted to be able to work with Guide Studios on an as needed basis to help bring all of this together. Guide Studios will be able to help the City with the packaging and bidding processes to find a fabricator and installer. The process is going well.

Board Member Guzowski commented Guide Studios is very professional, and they have experience. They have listened to all the collective comments in the group meetings. The logo they will present is absolutely a combination of everybody's collective comments. Board Member Guzowski thought Guide Studios did a great job of listening and reading between the lines, which is often difficult. She was happy to hear that we will continue to work with them.

The next DDA meeting is May 28, 2024 at 5:00 p.m. for the presentation with Guide Studios

#### **New Business:**

None

**Information:**

A. Committee Reports

- Design Committee

Board Member Guzowski commented for the Board to add Sunday, June 23<sup>rd</sup> to their calendars. The Design Committee is going to have a community bike painting event; details will be worked out. She will attend the Promotions Committee meeting tomorrow, representing the Design Committee project, to ask them for help in creating promotions for this project. We are going to ask the community to come out and help. The bikes around town need to be repainted. The bikes will be collected, cleaned, and repainted to look fresh. Shout out to Jeff Winters from Parks and Recreation Commission for this idea.

Board Member Guzowski will have an update after the Promotion Committee meeting.

Board Member Payment asked if the bikes would be returned. Executive Director Cloutier stated the bikes are at DPW. Board Member Payment asked if a bike could be put into the planter box with plants around it. Board Member Guzowski indicated they asked an artist to come up with ideas for the DDA. She stated it would be cool to do some kind of art installed with the bikes. The painting party is to refurbish all 12 bikes. Sunday, June 23<sup>rd</sup>, is simply to fix up the bikes.

Next meeting is May 7<sup>th</sup> for the Design Committee.

- Economic Vitality Committee

Board Member Willett commented she missed the meeting on Monday. There was a gentleman from MSOC who attended the meeting and spoke about the marketplace on the website to help some of the businesses sell merchandise, gift cards, etc. She thanked Executive Director Cloutier and Board Member Meredith for their notes and feedback.

Board Member Guzowski indicated the Economic Vitality Committee decided to ask the Promotions Committee to split a one-year contract with the County website opportunity. The total price is \$1,500 for the year. After one year, we will see how the businesses do, and what happens, before another year is renewed.

- Promotions Committee

Chairperson Buck commented the next meeting is tomorrow morning at Backyard Coney at 8 a.m. The main focus will be Derby Day. There will be coffee brought in from Trail's Edge and bagels from the Bagel Station. Carousel Acres will bring in two ponies and there will also be a petting farm to attract families.

Chairperson Buck indicated there will be a volunteer meeting held on Thursday. Volunteers are always needed because, surprisingly, some people don't show up on the day of the race. There will be light swords available, or you can bring your own. She hopes everyone will get into the spirit of Star Wars or Derby Day.

The routes are the same as last year which are posted on the website as well as on the calendar for Derby Day. There are 8 to 10 businesses downtown Wixom that will be doing Derby Day specials this year. Executive Director Cloutier highly suggested everyone to take advantage of as many specials as you can; some are doing great offers. The official after party site is Drafting Table; it is also in conjunction with their Mayfest. Drafting Table will have special beer releases throughout the day. They will have a costume contest with either traditional German, Derby Day or Star Wars costumes. Also, if you come in costume attire to Wixom Station, you will receive 10% off your bill. There will be a gift card giveaway too.

Chairperson Buck states the DDA both will have renderings of the West End Commons and the playground. The DDA is hoping to attract volunteers or let them know about upcoming meetings to try to get more community feedback and inform people what's going on.

- Organization Committee

Executive Director Cloutier commented the Organization Committee has been struggling a little bit. She will talk with Vice Chairperson Osburn. There was not a meeting held last month.

#### B. Downtown Business News/Events

- 2024: May 4<sup>th</sup>: Wixom Derby Day Races @ 8:00 a.m.
- 2024: June 6<sup>th</sup> – August 22<sup>nd</sup>: Summer Concerts/Family Fun Nights
- 2024: June 27<sup>th</sup>: Lite the Night Fireworks
- 2024: September 21<sup>st</sup>: Downtown Block Party: 3:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

June 6<sup>th</sup> is the first summer concert and also the employee and volunteer picnic. Mark your calendar to attend.

Chairperson Buck stated she signed up for the City of Wixom bulletin to get information about the events and information, but she does not get information about the DDA. Assistant City Manager Benson stated, if requested, the DDA information would be added. It is entirely request driven. He indicated we can work on getting that information over; more often than not, when you see DDA information, it is requested to be inserted. The City's website does not host DDA information.

Board Member Guzowski indicated she would like to request that the DDA Minutes to be on the City's website.

Executive Director Cloutier stated she will talk to City administration to see how we can incorporate the information.

Assistant City Manager Benson indicated he had one set of comments. On the Renton front, bids are due on Monday for demolition of the structures. This was delayed a bit; asbestos was identified in the structures that will have to be remediated.

Assistant City Manager Benson commented they are anticipating sometime this summer to do the demolitions. The planning consultants and himself have had preliminary conversations with different brokers. The City is in the process of getting proposals from different firms to evaluate what they bring to the table, and their fee structures. After the demolition, there will be further conversations regarding reinstalling the sidewalk that is more pedestrian friendly.

**Public Comments:**

No public comments.

**Executive Director's Comments:**

Executive Director Cloutier thanked everyone for their attendance tonight.

**Board Members' Comments:**

Board Member Meredith commented he was thrilled at the work that Chairperson Buck, Vice Chairperson Osburn are doing, along with the Committee Chairs.

Board Member Guzowski thanked everyone for their time especially this evening; it is not traditional work hours. She stated she is so proud to be a part of this group and it is not possible without all of us here.

**Adjournment:**

**MOTION by** Board Member Meredith, second by Willett to adjourn the meeting. This meeting of the Wixom Downtown Development Authority was motioned and adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Mona Freiburger  
Recording Secretary