

**CITY OF WIXOM
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (ZOOM)
49045 PONTIAC TRAIL
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2020**

This meeting of the Wixom Downtown Development Authority came to order at 7:34 a.m. with the following individuals in attendance:

DDA MEMBERS: Chairperson Caleb Sheng, Vice-Chairperson Kristin Rzezniak, Kailee Fine, Amanda Habbouche, Melanie Klebba-Cheney, John Smith, Vanessa Willett and Patrick Beagle, Mayor

ABSENT: Excused: Members Grossi, Umlor

STAFF: Steve Brown, City Manager, Sheryl Lucas, Administrative Assistant to City Manager, Laura Cloutier, Executive Director, and 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 Willett to approve the Meeting Agenda.

VOTE: MOTION CARRIED

Public Comments:

None

Approval of Minutes:

MOTION by Mayor Beagle and second by Board Member Willett to approve the September 22, 2020, DDA Regular Meeting Minutes.

VOTE: **MOTION CARRIED**

Correspondence:

None

Old Business:

A. Committee: Economic Vitality

Board Member Willett thanked Mayor Beagle for attending to pass out the checks from the CrowdFunding campaign. The businesses were thankful to receive the checks. They met with all of the participants who have been active which was very encouraging. Board Member Willett indicated there have been quite a few volunteers for some of the activities planned in the future.

B. Committee: Design

Director Cloutier gave an update on the package for the bike racks. She indicated she was in the process of writing and submitting the public notice for the Spinal Column newspaper and into the MiTTN website for the proposal.

Vice Chair Rzeznik stated Downtown Dazzle was around the corner. Hopefully, the businesses will have their lights up by November 18th which is the new Sip N Stroll date. Director Cloutier indicated a few businesses including Wixom Station, which they always have their lights done on Black Friday, cannot have their lights on by November 18th. The majority of the businesses Ms. Cloutier talked with said that they are going to try their hardest to get their lights up by November 18, 2020.

Vice Chair Rzeznik asked what kind of promotional items would there be for Downtown Dazzle. Director Cloutier indicated they only promote through social media, Facebook. Vice Chair Rzeznik recommended the photos from last year to be posted on the site to get people excited about the event.

C. Committee: Promotion

Director Cloutier indicated the participation forms went out to all of the business for the business spotlight series. There were approximately four or five businesses that had responded thus far. Board Member Fine indicated she reached out to the Promotion Committee members to coordinate with them to set up interviews with the businesses.

Board Member Smith indicated at the last meeting, it was brought up that it would be a nice idea to have banners which has been a project near and dear to him for about three years. A proposal was submitted in June, 2019 to the board at that time. Mr. Mike Powers, Signarama, had given the DDA a quote. There were an estimated 60 banners for every sign post and it was determined at that time the cost of \$7,200 was not in the budget. Board Member Smith stated the downtown area should be branded with signage and banners to set the downtown area apart from the rest of the city, showing that the DDA is a Wixom entity but there is a destination place for people to visit. Board Member Smith proposed and recommended that the banners and cost could be split up over time in order to be budget friendly. Board Member Smith suggested, potentially, every other sign post could have a banner downtown at a cost of \$3,600 for 30 banners. Board Member Smith stated there was discussion over the years about the leadership and ownership of the banner rights and rules that apply. City Manager Brown stated there were some banners installed to differentiate the downtown area; he has never had a conversation where he had been resistant to banners installed by the DDA. He indicated the city banners are installed on a seasonal basis. City Manager Brown indicated for the Committee to make an appointment to discuss the banners on the thought process and when they would be installed.

Vice Chair Rzeznik indicated at one point the DDA talked about submitting a request for an over the road banner for Derby Day. She asked if there was any progress on a form that the DDA could submit for banners. Director Cloutier indicated Ms. Deanna Magee did give her the specs for the over the road banner which is in the file. City Manager Brown indicated there are additional requirements for the over the road banner such as an approved vendor, the banner has to have certain characteristics and requirements. Ms. Magee stated there is a policy, which was forwarded to Director Cloutier and Vice Chair Rzeznik. There are requirements of the banner specifications and the process of going through the City Manager's office for evaluation and approval. City Manager Brown stated the light post banners is not in that policy because it is a different situation. City Manager Brown recommended having a meeting to discuss and to formalize a policy. Board Member Smith indicated he would get an estimate of current costs from Signarama.

D. Event: Sip N Stroll - Ladies Night Out

Director Cloutier indicated she and Board Member Willett had been working on the Ladies Night Out event. There are approximately 10 to 12 businesses that are participating. There is a pre-registration form on the FB page for the Sip N Stroll Adventure cards, where the ladies go and get the card checked off to enter for prizes at the end of the night. There are 50 ladies signed up; the limit is 250. There are a few pop up shops for some of the businesses that have agreed to host them.

Director Cloutier stated there are funds left over in the amount of \$2,085 from last year's Sip N Stroll event. She proposed a budget to spend no more than \$1,600 for the Sip N Stroll. Board Member Willett commented there was quite a bit more money spent for last year's event. They had talked to all of the businesses and instead of the DDA paying out of funds for portions of what the businesses given, the businesses are either doing a special drink, a special appetizer for

Ladies Night Out, along with special giveaways, due to not being able to raise additional funds in such a short time for Ladies Night Out. Board Member Willett stated they worked to try to decrease the budget, so they can still give some nice prizes. The businesses benefited last year quite well from the Sip N Stroll event in obtaining new clients, new customers and/or an interest in their businesses.

Chair Sheng asked for a motion to have a budget of \$1,600 for the Sip N Stroll event.

MOTION by Board Member Willett and second by Mayor Beagle to approve the rollover of \$1,600 of the Sip N Stroll funds for this year's event.

VOTE: MOTION CARRIED

E. Event: Derby Day

Director Cloutier indicated she and Vice Chair Rzeznik met with Rich from Trivium Racing who has been the racing company partner for the last three years. They brainstormed ideas on how to manage and what to focus on amidst of the pandemic. It was agreed to change the 5K route and to incorporate the Michigan Air Line Trail. They had not spoken with Mr. John Hensler, Trail Manager, Michigan Air Line Trail or the City of Wixom. Director Cloutier included a sample of the proposed 5K route in the DDA packet. Rich recommended was to do staggered starts and limit the number of people at the race. There could be blocks of times for the start times. He also recommended to focus on the 5K race this year, not include the 10K, the Tot Trot and the Fun Run; leave it as simple as possible. Based on those scenarios, Rich will write a contract and that contract will go before City Council for approval.

Chair Sheng inquired how many people participated in the Fun Run and the Tot Trot because he remembered that it was a big community event, and surprisingly, a lot of participants brought their families along to attend. Director Cloutier stated she did not have the numbers in front of her. She recalled the Tot Trot had approximately 20 participants. She suggested negating as much contact with hard surfaces as possible as possible and the horses cannot be cleaned or sanitized because they are made of cloth.

F. Executive Director Review

Chair Sheng indicated the Executive Director Review discussion has been going on for over two months. He emailed everybody out the review links that Director Cloutier had provided after the August, 2020 meeting. Chair Sheng stated he appreciated Mayor Beagle taking the time to review it and hoped that other Board Members had as well. Previously, it was discussed that escalating her compensation from \$45K to \$50K is too big of a leap and to, instead, split it to where half of it is awarded as a bonus for the performance that occurred during the last six or seven months, particularly, because there was not a ramp up period, and then also, all of the extra work; there was no precedent for what has occurred over the last seven months. Then after that, negate the rest of the compensation behind an annual review which would occur in March, 2021. The annual

review, in fact, can be reviewed at any time, to be able to evaluate her performance. The numbers are ideas for how to satisfy to a smaller degree. One, reward for work performed and recognition of what has been done; and two, having a longer process by which to, eventually, have the compensation to what was, originally, budgeted.

Mayor Beagle commented he had thought about the review. Mayor Beagle thought, and no offense to Director Cloutier, she should not be listening to these conversations as it pertains to an employee with wages or performance until the decision is made; they are excused from the meeting. This is how it is done in the business with the government. Mayor Beagle said he felt uncomfortable the last time talking about this subject in front of Director Cloutier. Ms. Cloutier excused herself from the Zoom meeting.

Chair Sheng indicated we have had two months to look over and discuss the review. He stated he has not received any meaningful feedback from anyone besides the Mayor. The Mayor is the one that took the time to go through and evaluate, compared it against other practices. This is a situation where the entire board is the hiring person and we would discuss the review offline. City Manager Brown indicated there is a "review process" that you can as the subject of the review process advocate going to a closed session to avoid having it conducted in the public view for a variety of reasons; although there is not anybody that is participating from the public today. Chair Sheng stated we were being transparent with our decision making. Board Member Willett indicated that Director Cloutier is not an employee; she is a contractor on a professional services contract. Thus, we should have an annual review of the contract and the services provided in the contract. The potential raise has been called a bonus; we are trying to change order due to the circumstances that were unforeseen in the start of the contract based on us giving her directives to do additional duties. City Manager Brown said that was an excellent point. And a good way to think about it, you are not talking about a pay raise; you are talking about whether an adjustment is warranted in the contract.

Board Member Willett suggested Director Cloutier would request an increase in wages for the increase of services provided and to send an invoice based on the additional hours. Chairman Sheng asked the Director Cloutier to put together the services, duties, qualifications and unique circumstances over the time period based on the additional hours for the Board Members to evaluate and review.

City Manager Brown suggested a subcommittee to be set up of members of the Board, being Chair Sheng, Vice Chair Rzeznik and the Mayor, for an initial review and then proceed from there to the whole board.

New Business:

A. Election of 2020-2021 Chair and Vice Chair

Chair Sheng indicated he felt honored in being on the DDA Board and serving as Chair for the last year which he said has been an absolutely highlight of his entire life. He indicated serving as

Chair over the last year, particularly was a challenging time but very rewarding. He spoke of the beginning, the composition of this board, the composition of Council and the composition of the joint board meetings.

Chair Sheng stated there were three phases -- the first phase was the conversion over into a working board which Board Member Klebba-Cheney, pretty much single handedly had done; it was remarkable. Chair Sheng indicated we owe her where the board is today to what she did. Secondly, there was an organizational development phase, getting the relationships in place with the departments at City Hall, and communicating, and helping us understand each other with multiple mayors, City Manager Brown and Ms. Magee. Everybody was willing to take time to sit down and help us understand better and to work more effectively. Now there is a clear structure which still always needs improvement and process refinement for how things should work, from idea to actual implementation. We have a better understanding of the way the rules and regulations actually work and how we are supposed to function. Chair Sheng thought it takes somebody different to do that different kind of phase.

Chair Sheng nominated Vice Chair Rzeknik as Vice Chair for the 2020-21 year. Chair Sheng stated he has seen how she works behind the scenes and how much effort she has put into the board and committees. Chair Sheng nominated Board Member Willett as Chair, who is relatively new to some of the board members but who we have gotten to know very well. She has been on several government contracts, she has been in a directorial position for a construction board, worked on direct development initiatives and is leveraging on behalf of Wixom in developing our downtown.

Mayor Beagle thanked Chair Sheng for all he has done, and congratulated him on his new position at a different law firm.

Both Vice Chair Rzeknik and Board Member Willett accepted their nomination to the perspective positions on the Board.

Board Member Smith thanked Chair Sheng for his leadership as well as Vice Chair Rzeknik and Board Member Willett. He stated they have done a great job of leading the board through the transitional period and a lot of things have been accomplished. Board Member Smith indicated he appreciated Chair Sheng's friendship, as well.

MOTION by Mayor Beagle and second by Chair Sheng to approve to name Board Member Willett to DDA Chair 2020-21 and Vice Chair Rzeknik to the same position of Vice Chair for 2020-21.

Mayor Beagle congratulated everybody on the board for all of their hard work and dedication to making Wixom the small community with a big heart that it is.

VOTE: MOTION CARRIED

B. Event: Business Summit - Economic Vitality

Board Member Willett indicated the Economic Vitality event is very fun and very beneficial, and they are not quite at the beginning stages but they have decided to put together a business summit. They believe it would help push to bring in business, not just into the downtown area but maybe some perspective businesses in other areas of Wixom. In addition with some of the projects that they want to do in the future, they have decided to put together a business summit in the spring where they invite entrepreneurs, potential franchisees, developers, some of downtown business owners. Work has been divided between committee members and getting volunteers to be presenters, businesses to come in with booths that says their type of business/franchise.

Board Member Willett stated a budget is needed for digital advertising, highlighting the businesses downtown, etc. She indicated she would like to take a portion in the amount of \$1,000 of the CrowdFunding award money, (the extra \$2,600), to be used, specifically, to put the business summit together for advertising, banners, and set up. Board Member Willett stated the additional funds, thereafter, would have to be raised.

MOTION by Board Member Willett and second by Mayor Beagle to approve the amount of \$1,000.00 of the CrowdFunding award money to be moved to the Business Summit budget.

VOTE: MOTION CARRIED

C. Downtown Business Update

Director Cloutier gave an update that Trail's Edge is having trouble financially but Derek Kevra from Fox 2, held a bottle fundraiser to help them. There is a storage unit with 40,000 to 50,000 cans to be returned. Distributors and retailers will take back the returnables during the pandemic at this time.

Director Cloutier indicated she and Board Member Willett stopped by the yellow farmhouse that is now a real estate firm. They have done a tremendous job rehabilitating the inside of that house and they are trying to get them involved in some of the DDA events. Potentially, there is a new business in the new spring, a husband and wife team, that are looking to open up a gift shop with painted signs, such as Traverse City. They have a name and will participate in Ladies Night Out.

Information:

- **Wixom Business Forums (7:30 a.m.)**

City Manager Brown stated they are to the point to get started and asked if they wanted to get back in person or shift to Zoom model. He said he was going to talk with Board Member Klebba-Cheney, whether she is willing to proceed. Board Member Klebba-Cheney indicated she would get back to City Manager Brown with an answer.

- **Downtown News/Events**
- **November 18: Sip N Stroll - Ladies Night Out 5:00 - 9:00 p.m.**

Director Cloutier indicated promotion will be started. Facebook media has been the best for promotion.

- **2021: January 6, 12, 20, 27: February 3, 10, 17, 24 - Wednesdays in Wixom**
- **2021: May 1 - Derby Day Races**

Public Comments:

None

Executive Director's Comments:

Director Cloutier thanked Chair Sheng for everything he had done for her, and downtown Wixom.

Board Members' Comments:

Vice Chair Rzeznik thanked Chair Sheng for everything he has done, and his time to develop the contract for the Executive Director position.

Board Member Willett thanked everybody for the new position of Chair for the DDA, and thanked Chair Sheng for nominating and thinking of her for the Chair position.

Board Member Smith indicated his words may not be as eloquent as Chair Sheng but he needs to step away from the leader of the Promotion Committee but his plan is to serve out as board member which expires in June, 2021. He stated he is proud to what we have accomplished with the launching of the Facebook, website and other initiatives. Board Member Smith stated he is traveling out of town more, and a lot of those commitments are taking time away from his role on the Promotions Committee and the DDA. He indicated he wanted to stay on as a volunteer but not lead the committee.

Board Member Smith nominated Director Cloutier as Promotion Committee chair. Director Cloutier stated she would be honored to act as Promotion Committee chair.

Chair Sheng thanked Board Member Smith for his expertise and he appreciated everything that he has done.

Adjournment:

MOTION by Mayor Beagle to adjourn the meeting. Chair Sheng second the motion. This meeting of the Wixom Downtown Development Authority was motioned and adjourned at 8:50 a.m.

Mona Freiburger
Recording Secretary

APPROVED 11/24/2020