CITY OF WIXOM
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY – SPECIAL MEETING
49045 PONTIAC TRAIL
THURSDAY, AUGUST 8, 2024

This meeting of the Wixom Downtown Development Authority came to order at 8:02 a.m. with the following individuals in attendance:

DDA MEMBERS:	Chairperson Jessica Buck; Carissa Osburn, Vice Chairperson (8:02 a.m.); Board Members: Mark Garmo; Kaitie Guzowski; Russ Meredith; Vanessa Willett
ABSENT:	Excused: Hartman; Hoppenstadt; Payment; Mayor Beagle
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

When the meeting started at 7:30 a.m., quorum was not met, therefore, Chairperson Buck stated the Board members would cover informational items of Agenda until quorum was met.

Determination of Quorum:

Quorum was met at 8:02 a.m.

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:

Agenda items were moved, and discussion started with the informational session and the Committee reports.

After quorum was met, the meeting Agenda was approved.

Approved 8/21/2024

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

VOTE: MOTION CARRIED

All in favor.
None opposed.

Public Comments:

None

Approval of Minutes:

MOTION by Board Member Willett and second by Board Member Meredith to approve the June 25, 2024, DDA Regular Meeting Minutes, as presented.

VOTE: MOTION CARRIED

Correspondence:

None

Executive Director Report:

Executive Director Cloutier stated she has been working with Main Street Oakland County on how to become Select Level, where more grant opportunities, etc., are available. Wixom DDA is at the partner level, which is the middle level. After a discussion with Assistant City Manager Benson, Chairperson Buck, Vice Chair Osburn and herself, the Wixom DDA would need to have a Strategic Planning Session. An outside consultant, POW! Strategies, works with downtown development authorities to talk about goals, etc. POW! Strategies has a multi-week, but one session commitment from Board Members, which includes committee members, key stakeholders of the DDA. The cost is $4,000 total (Main Street Oakland County would pay 50%; Wixom DDA would pay 50%).

Executive Director Cloutier commented Main Street Oakland County promotes POW! Strategies because they are a part of their program, and they like an outside company to come in versus doing it themselves. This company would review the by-laws, send out surveys to everyone, defining responsibilities for committees, director, etc. It would give the DDA the goals and a plan for the next 3 to 5 years. They would also be looking at the TIFF plan. The strategic session is a four-hour session.

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Executive Director Cloutier indicated she would be asking for the approval spend at the August monthly meeting. She is looking to do this towards the end of September.

Old Business:

None

New Business:

1. Downtown Sign Design and Bid Assistance quote from Guide Studio, Inc.

Assistant City Manager Benson stated the 30% signage plans were included at the May 28th, meeting. It is all the relatively detailed, colorized sign concept plans, which was received as a part of the original scope with Guide Studio. We get 30% plans when we get the location map. The drawings are not finalized from a full material and foundational standpoint; the same applies to the location plans. The City has rough locations from where the signs go but, the exact details have not been worked out. The next piece with Guide Studio would be to help the City and DDA signs to 100% construction, drawing stage as well as through the bidding process. Guide Studio will help answer questions and help put together the RFP. The first piece of the request to the DDA is to split the cost 50/50 with the City; 50% of the signs would likely be downtown, 50% would be in the City.

Assistant City Manager Benson indicated they are also asking for a budget not to exceed $8,700 for construction and implementation assistance. This is a little bit more "as we go" piece. Guide Studio would bill us hourly for services that we need during the construction process, likely next Spring. The full scope would not likely be needed, but that's the budget they recommend for us to have in place for their assistant and then used as needed. The upside of working with Guide Studio is that the City has had a positive experience and administration feels good about their ability to assist us. We will not have to pay sign fabricators to draw all these things for us. Likely, you will pay for these costs one way or another but having them on the front side is likely more beneficial to us in controlling costs when we go to have these constructed and built.

Board Member Guzowski commented she supports this request; she enjoyed being on the Committee and working with Guide Studio. Guide Studio specializes in this, and they are good people. Guide Studio has direct experience with signs for cities and their fabrication connections alone is a big value to us.

Assistant City Manager Benson stated that the Board members will get a chance to see signage concepts again. There will be multiple reviews, and that the signs aren't finalized.

Assistant City Manager Benson indicated the next expense after the bidding, hopefully, next Spring, would be to seek authorization to install the first phase of signs. They are still operating

Approved 8/27/2024

under the intent of this being at least a two fiscal year process; it might be more. The better we refine, the better we work out exactly what signs would go where.

MOTION by Board Member Willett and second by Board Member Guzowski to approve to accept the quote from Guide Studio, Inc., of Solon, Ohio, for Downtown Sign Design & Bid Assistance for a cost not-to-exceed $11,900 from #248-729-956.006 Downtown Enhancements, and authorize a budget of not-to-exceed $8,700.00 for Construction & Implementation Assistance from Capital Account 248-966-995.004, Capital Contribution – Special Projects.

VOTE: MOTION CARRIED

All in favor.

2. Renton Redevelopment Area Sidewalk and connection between Hillside Apartments and the Civic Center Loop quotes from K.D. Cement of Commerce, MI

(Memorandum to Wixom Downtown Development Authority from Drew Benson, Assistant City Manager & Director of Economic Development; Laura Cloutier, Executive Director – Wixom DDA is included in the packet).

The City of Wixom owns multiple properties at the northwestern corner of the Wixom Road and Pontiac Trail intersection, which has been marketed as the “Renton Redevelopment Area”. Included in this collection of properties are multiple structures that are dilapidated, and the City Council has authorized their demolition in August, 2024. This demolition will include the structures as well as the asphalt parking area, and the brick paver sidewalk. The City and DDA have also been investing in pedestrian amenities at the Civic Center Campus, including the Loop as well as a new playground.

With all of this in mind, additional minor projects in both areas have been identified, and staff has secured quotes from K.D. Cement, the City’s concrete contractor. K.D. Cement was the low bidder for City concrete work per the bidding process back in the spring of 2024, and this project would use the same pricing as included in their original bid. The projects are summarized in the Memorandum to Wixom Downtown Development Authority from Drew Benson, Assistant City Manager & Director of Economic Development; and Laura Cloutier, Executive Director, Wixom DDA dated August 8, 2024.

It is recommended that the DDA Board approve a motion to accept the quotes from K.D. Cement of Commerce, MI for new sidewalk paving at the Renton Redevelopment Area for a cost not to exceed $27,528.00 and for a new pavement connection between Hillside Apartments and the Civic Center Loop for a cost not to exceed $6,175.00; and approve the associated budget amendment.

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Assistant City Manager Benson commented this topic was covered during information. Basically, there are two different projects that is brought to the DDA today. The first is Renton, and the second is a project that Mr. Tim Sikma, Director of DPW, and HRC has been working on for a while related to making a connection between Hillside Apartments and the Loop downtown. There are some topography and utility issues. Mr. Sikma was present at this meeting to answer any questions.

Assistant City Manager Benson indicated a budget amendment is requested. It is not a significant adjustment to the DDA budget. There are funds available under downtown site readiness to accommodate things like this. These would be booked through the Safety Path fund.

Board Member Willett commented she disagrees with voting for this project. There is a sidewalk that goes right across the front all the way around. We do not know what we are doing with the site and spending money for a second pathway when there is a pathway 80 to 100 feet from there.

Board Member Guzowski agreed with Board Member Willett. Board Member Guzowski stated she was representing those people at the Design Committee meeting and herself.

Board Member Guzowski stated she would like to see more interaction with Parks and Recreation and the library. She was very hopeful for this to be a good relationship building. Board Member Guzowski stated before she voted yes on adding this piece of sidewalk, she wanted to have a grand master plan of what we are going to do, what it is going to look like and what do we want it to look like when it is completed.

Mr. Sikma stated the grand scheme on the Loop, the only other addition that was planned, was going around the storm drain retention base on the far south side of the property.

Assistant City Manager Benson stated they noticed there is not a connection directly to Hillside Apartments. People who live there, if they want to access the Loop, they have to go all the way down to the street or across the grass. There are gas lines, electric lines, fiber optics that are two feet below the surface. The original plan was to connect it with the asphalt; in doing that, it gets close to the gas line. It was opted not to do it at that time. The other issue was the ADA compliance because we can only go up and down a certain percentage. If other people want to walk across the grass to get there, they can, obviously, do that. It is more for ADA compliance. The idea is to make it more convenient for people to get to. We are not adding a design element to the path; we are adding a connection to the path from Hillside Apartments. A wayfinding sign may want to be considered with the downtown logo; connection to the Loop. It makes it more readily accessible to a lot more people.

City Manager Brown stated he appreciated where they are coming from as far as some of the concerns about making sure that we are tied to Parks and Recreation as well as the DDA.

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Board Member Willett stated, again, tearing it out and wasting money in the future when there is a solid sidewalk to get there. She also stated that she likes having more access for people to come downtown and be a part of what we are all trying to do here as a whole throughout the City.

Board Member Meredith stated if this is going to bring more people, including ADA access, he was in favor of this project.

Assistant City Manager Benson commented they are cognizant of this balance between having cohesive plans. We are doing everything at one time as opposed to piece-mealing, but we are also very thoughtful of how to get things done.

Board Member Guzowski asked if there was any benefit or cost savings to add this piece by the Loop to the Renton sidewalk. Assistant City Manager Benson indicated the contract price would be no lower than today, if we waited to have the sidewalk installed. Board Member Guzowski asked if these projects could be voted on, separately.

Chairperson Buck commented she was a little hesitant, but she wanted to make sure that we are talking about the Loop, more stages, not just the playground, but she does like the fact that residents are able to get there, and it will be ADA compliant.

MOTION by Board Member Meredith, second by Vice Chair Osburn to accept the quote from K.D. Cement of Commerce, MI for new sidewalk paving at the Renton Redevelopment Area for a cost not to exceed $27,528.00.

VOTE: MOTION CARRIED

All in favor.

MOTION by Board Member Meredith, second by Vice Chair Osburn to accept the quotes from K.D. Cement of Commerce, MI for a new pavement connection between Hillside Apartments and the Civic Center Loop for a cost not to exceed $6,175.00; and approve the associated budget amendment.

VOTE: MOTION CARRIED

Motion carried with majority vote: 5 to 1

Information:

Assistant City Manager Benson gave an update on the Renton Development. He stated the buildings are down; they are clearing the site. The foundations and parking lot needs to be removed. If the Board Members are amendable to the sidewalk quote in New Business, the approval would go to City Council on August 13, 2024.

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There was a discussion regarding the installation of the new sidewalk and tie-ins. Assistant City Manager Benson stated the new sidewalk is going to be, significantly, further back than the old sidewalk. The building has to be 60 feet from center and then the sidewalk goes in five or six feet from the building.

Assistant City Manager Benson stated the ordinance and design guidelines for how things will go downtown are very descriptive.

City Council approved a listing agreement with Savills Real Estate to list the Renton site. Savills has started marketing the site. There has been at least one meeting with a prospective developer. The developer echoed a lot of things that has been heard previously regarding challenges with retail and that an expected project is most likely going to be multi-family on top.

Assistant City Manager Benson commented Board Member Willett and Todd Buck were appointed to the Planning Commission. Board Member Willett is the DDA representative on the Planning Commission.

The Planning Commission considered two items. Both projects are in the DDA district. The first one was a conditional rezoning request for the ten acres surrounding the BP gas station on the west side of downtown. They would rezone 7.2 acres to VCA transitional to allow building townhomes (either row or stacked flats). This was approved by the Planning Commission. The next step, it will go to City Council. If City Council approves this request, there will be a conditional rezoning agreement that spells out relatively minor conditions to be met; then they will have to go through the site plan process. This would be a nice generation of revenue for TIFF monies for the DDA downtown, as well.

Assistant City Manager Benson indicated this would very likely time out well with West End Commons. He stated he would keep the DDA Board Members up to date.

Assistant City Manager Benson stated the other project is a 13-acre parcel, the Cavallaro property. A preliminary site condo review was approved by the Planning Commission. It is a nice forty-three (43) single family home project by Pulte Homes. It will, essentially, mirror the other single-family homes.

1. Committee Reports

Chairperson Buck commented Committee Chairpersons would be making agendas and reports before the meetings to gauge interest. The report would include a paragraph for each Committee of what happened at the last meeting, the big projects, what the Committee is working on, etc.

A. Design Committee

Approved 9/12/2024

Board Member Guzowski commented the Design Committee met on Tuesday of this week. The West End Commons was discussed.

Board Member Guzowski stated it was important to work with the Library, and Parks and Recreation master plan before any changes are made. She indicated the plans have changed a lot since the original plan.

Board Member Guzowski stated there is a vote today for a piece of sidewalk, but she did not know the plans for the other departments. At the next Committee meeting, Board Member Guzowski indicated they are going to come to the table and start planning, get some ideas by looking at different communities, putting down their thoughts in writing of what they want to see in that area.

B. Economic Vitality Committee

Board Member Willett indicated they had a small meeting Executive Director Cloutier, Will and herself. The Committee is working on setting goals and items for the next year. They have come up with some type of business to business, either gift cards or promotional to help with the new businesses coming in and keeping the monies in the downtown. They are also working with the Promotion Committee.

Executive Director Cloutier commented the Shop Oakland County Main Street site is up and running. Spray Chic and Dough is on the site, currently.

C. Promotions Committee

Chairperson Buck commented their main focus has been the Block Party. More vendors were needed, so Executive Director Cloutier and herself walked around the Walled Lake Farmer's Market to talk to vendors to find diversity with the different vendors.

La Casita will set up a food stand, as well as Backyard Coney. There will be some food trucks with food that is not already downtown. The Drafting Table is also setting up their sidewalk area to order drinks through the Junction. Bluey will make an appearance for the kids. There will be face painters, and a puppet show.

Chairperson Buck indicated if the Board Members had any ideas about the Block Party to email her or come to the Promotion Committee meeting at Backyard Coney every other Thursday at 8 a.m.

The Promotions Committee is also working with Kelly to make sure that the new logo is on some apparel to sell.

D. Organization Committee

Approved 9/12/2024

Vice Chair Osborn commented the next Organization Committee meeting will be held on Tuesday, August 20, 2024, at the Wixom Station.

2. Downtown Business News/Events

   A. 2024: June 6 – August 22 – Summer Concerts/Family Fun Nights
   B. 2024: September 21st – Downtown Block Party – 3:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Public Comments:

None

Executive Director's Comments:

Assistant City Manager Benson commented that when this meeting was, originally, scheduled, they had considered bringing the West End Commons discussion to the Board members. It is not quite there yet. Assistant City Manager Benson will keep the Board updated.

Executive Director Cloutier stated she met with Board Member Hoppenstadt, the newest Board member. Member Hoppenstedt will be taking on the role as the volunteer coordinator. The DDA has paid for the Volunteer Local platform. Onboarding sessions will take place soon. Once the onboarding session is complete Member Hoppenstedt and Director Cloutier will send out the volunteer sign up for Block Party. It would be sent out to Board Members as a test in the next week or so, to see how easy it is to sign up online, download the app, check-in and checkout for your volunteer assistance on the app.

Board Members' Comments:

Chairperson Buck thanked everyone for attending and the Committee Chairs for taking the extra time to meet and run the Committees more effectively and efficiently.

Board Member Willett stated she would like to see some type of sign “coming soon”, semi-permanent at the West End, even if it is a generic overview of the site by Block Party. She also indicated the big projects, and developments are a big deal. Chairperson Buck agreed and stated she loved the idea of some type of sign “coming soon” at the West End.

Board Member Willett also commented that the Board members need to know the expectations and process of what needs to be done such as communications, timelines, follow-up, etc. Board Member Willett states she would like to see the West End Commons area developed, not three years from now.

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Executive Director Cloutier stated the federal money for the West End Commons area doesn't need to be spent until 2028, we are not waiting that long. Unfortunately, we are at the mercy of the federal government for their portion. She is waiting for approval to start the environmental review of the site. After this meeting, Assistant City Manager Benson and Executive Director Cloutier will meet with HRC to discuss the next steps. It is the intention to have an RFP out early winter and, hopefully, ground breaking by the Spring/early Summer.

Board Member Willett stated she knows the bathroom situation is up and down. She stated every person she has spoken to would like to have some type of restroom there.

Adjournment:

MOTION by Board Member Garmo, second by Vice Chair Osborn to adjourn the meeting. This meeting of the Wixom Downtown Development Authority was motioned and adjourned.

Mona Freiburger
Recording Secretary

Approved 8/27/2024