CITY OF WIXOM
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
49045 PONTIAC TRAIL
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2023

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 Russ Meredith; Carissa Osburn, Vice Chairperson; Board Members: Jessica Buck; Mark Garmo; Leslie Payment; Kristin Rzeznik; Vanessa Willett; Patrick Beagle, Mayor

ABSENT: Excused: Kaitie Guzowski

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 Willett asked to add the discussion of the Executive Director position and/or additional Executive Director position, which was discussed, previously.

MOTION by Willett and second by Payment to approve the Meeting Agenda, as amended.

VOTE: MOTION CARRIED

All in favor.

Approved 3/28/2023

None opposed.

Public Comments:

No public comments.

Approval of Minutes:

MOTION by Board Member Beagle and second by Willett to approve the January 24, 2023, DDA Regular Meeting Minutes, as presented.

VOTE: MOTION CARRIED

All in favor.
None opposed.

Correspondence:

None

Executive Director's Report:

A. February 28, 2023 – Report

The barn Feasibility Study deadline approached shortly after the last DDA Board meeting. Unfortunately, we did not receive any responses. We will bring this back to the Economic Vitality Committee for discussion.

The RFP for the Sidewalk project will be posted in the next week. Executive Director Cloutier is in communication with the business/property owners in that section regarding the project. Assistant City Manager Benson and Executive Director Cloutier have been in communications with Mike Darga of HRC, his team and Director Sikma of the DPW regarding the RFP and overall project.

City Council approved the proposal from Carlisle Wortman Associates for the Renton Redevelopment at their February 14, 2023 meeting. We will be meeting with Dick Carlisle on March 8th to kick off the project.

The joint City Wixom/DDA Sponsorship packet has gone out to all businesses within the City of Wixom and a handful outside of the City.

El Camino Real is still waiting on the approval of the Class C Liquor license and social district permit from the MLCC.

Approved 3/28/2023

Currently, there are 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: 49030 Pontiac Trail (Kumon space); 31202 Old Wixom Road (Classic Pilates Center space).

There are two operating businesses that are looking to sell or find a new lease tenants. Buttercream has not openly advertised this, but, Thee Hair Stop has, with a For Lease sign in front of their building. 49046 Pontiac Trail (Buttercream Bakeshop); 49321 Wainstock Street (Thee Hair Stop).

Executive Director Cloutier highlighted and overviewed her report.

Board Member Willett questioned whether the Board was concerned in reference to getting contractors for the Renton Redevelopment. Assistant City Director Benson answered that he thought we would do pretty well and not especially concerned.

Assistant City Manager Benson indicated he did talk with the MLCC regarding the liquor license for El Camino. The MLCC was looking for additional information, and he would not say it is outside of the normal timeframe a State agency takes to process applications.

The Heath Building has been purchased. The new owners have not pulled any permits or shown the City any plans as of yet.

Board Member Willett asked how often the website is updated; there are many old events on the website. Executive Director Cloutier indicated she will speak with Josh, who does the website, to see how the site can be reconfigured because new stories have not been added. Chair Russell suggested if anyone sees an article regarding their business in the newspaper to forward those to Executive Director Cloutier to be included in the newsfeed. Board Member Payment also suggested to highlight businesses on a monthly or quarterly basis to be included on the website.

Old Business:

A. Committee – Design:

The Design Committee met to discuss the West End Commons renderings. There was a robust discussion that resulted in many questions that are in the process of getting answers. Member Rzeznik will provide an update.

Board Member Rzeznik commented the Design Committee coordinated with Parks and Recreation for landscape colors for the basket of flowers for the downtown area.

Approved 3/28/2023

Board Member Rzeznik updated the Board on the West Common areas. She indicated the initial cost estimate by Carlisle Wortman was $1 million dollars without burying the power lines. From there, the Design Committee went through and outlined top priorities for the pocket park. One priority was seating; activities, flowers, landscaping, paved areas, electrical, restrooms (and other options). The $1 million included restrooms. This design was the "Rolls Royce" of design. Board Member Rzeznik inquired if Carlisle Wortman Associates could do a "low end" design and what it would entail, and also a "medium" design with cost to see what this design would include. The Design Committee will be checking out additional options. The cost to bury the power lines is $3 million. The most expensive part of the estimate was the ground preparation. The activities buildout was minimal.

Executive Director Cloutier commented there are grants that the DDA can apply for, but it is not guaranteed money; many of the DDA communities have been awarded for similar parks. The DDA could apply for those grants. This item will be a part of the budget session which will be held on March 8, 2023.

B. Committee – Economic Vitality:

The Economic Vitality Committee met to discuss the next steps for the Barn Feasibility Study RFQ. At the time of the deadline, the DDA did not receive any response to the initial RFQ that was posted. Chairperson Meredith and Board Member Willett will provide an update.

Board Member Willett indicated the Economic Vitality Committee met on February 27th, 2023. There was not a response for the barn feasibility study. They will be going to phase two on the project to see if there is some interest in the barn. A survey will be sent to the public for their opinion. There was a brief discussion regarding the Renton property. Additional grants, etc., should be considered and applied for in the Spring and late summer.

Board Member Willett commented the Economic Vitality Committee would like to discuss doing business visits from fellow business owners to the downtown businesses to see who is struggling, and who is not.

Assistant City Director Benson commented Executive Director and himself will put together a draft plan for questions on the survey for the barn. Ultimately, this will go to City Council as well to make sure they are on board with what the DDA is doing in relationship to that property. They are looking at alternative ways to move this forward.

C. Committee – Promotions:

The Promotions Committee has been meeting regularly and continues planning Derby Day, Downtown Day Block Party, and more. Member Buck will provide an update.

Approved 3/28/2023

Board Member Buck commented they are finding vendors for the Block Party; the major vendors are locked down. Derby Day registration will start in March.

D. Committee – Organization:

The Organization Committee met and is, currently, planning a volunteer recognition happy hour on May 15th at Wixom Station. The purpose of this event is to reengage with our current volunteers and recognize al their efforts over the past several years. We will be sending out email invitations to our volunteers to attend the event. The Organization Committee recommends a budget approval of $1,000.00 from account #248-729-956.015 for the DDA Volunteer Recognition event. Chairperson Meredith and Director Cloutier will provide an update.

Chairperson Meredith commented they are planning a volunteer recognition happy hour to be held on May 15, 2023, at Wixom Station. This will be for volunteers, their friends, board members, etc. Invitations will also be extended to City Council members and city officials.

Executive Director Cloutier indicated Wixom Station penciled in this event on May 15, 2023, 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. for the patio area. The Organization Committee has a budget of $1,000.00 for appetizers, and soft drinks.

MOTION by Board Member Willett and second by Vice Chair Osburn to approve to a maximum budget of $1,000.00 for the Organization Committee, Volunteer Recognition Happy Hour at Wixom Station on May 15, 2023.

VOTE: MOTION CARRIED

All in favor.
None opposed.

New Business:

A. DDA Events Calendar

The DDA hosts many events throughout the year that serves as marketing tools for downtown. These events bring visitors to our shops, restaurants, parks and more. Not only is this service to our community but those outside of our community. The Promotions committee has consulted the Parks and Recreation and Library calendars to schedule so there will be no conflicts. It is recommended to approve the 2023 DDA event calendar, as is.

MOTION by Board Member Beagle and second by Vice Chair Osburn to approve the 2023 DDA Events Calendar, as submitted.

Approved 3/28/2023

VOTE: MOTION CARRIED

All in favor.
None opposed.

B. Executive Director Discussion

Board Member Willett indicated the DDA had discussed this prior to the initial three year contract for the Executive Director. This was a one year contract with two option arms. Board Member Willett thought the DDA needs to have a discussion regarding another solicitation or an update for the Executive Director position.

Board Member Willett commented the Executive Director's position is part time, and if there was a need to hire a second part time position to help with event management, social media and/or website design, etc.

Board Member Willett said she thought Executive Director Cloutier has done a great job, but there is room for growth in the Executive Director's position considering the DDA has additional projects going on. Board Member Willett indicated the DDA will need a full time Executive Director position and/or an additional part time position or support staff to help with these additional projects. A job description will need to be drafted by the DDA, Executive Board, etc.

Chair Russell commented the DDA by-laws have not been updated since 2017. Chair Russell also indicated the DDA needs to take a hard look in what the Executive Director position would entail and what is needed for the DDA. At some point in time, Economic Development in the downtown, Executive Director and City administration will need to mesh nicely so the DDA's demands, needs and wants coincide with the City's demands. There is a lot of room for growth.

Assistant City Manager Benson indicated the Memorandum of Understanding between the DDA and the City is very comprehensive. He commented it would be helpful to have an offline conversation to work through how to coordinate the DDA's expectation with the City's plan although it is the DDA's choice to what they would want the Executive Director's position to be, then, ultimately, decided by City Council.

The Executive Director's position is set to expire on June 30, 2023, so there is a relatively limited time to change the job description, and hire someone else. There is a transition process to work through, as well. There are a lot of variables and step to go through before bringing a recommendation to the Board to approve. If the DDA would like to add the second position, a budget amendment for this fiscal year would need to be done. Board Member Willett commented the DDA does not have to hire the second person right now, but possibly in July or August.

Approved 5/23/2023

Board Member Willett indicated the Chair and Co-Chair would need to take the lead to put the job descriptions together, and also have discussions with the Board Members for comments. This would only be a placeholder.

Vice Chair Osburn commented they have been reviewing the KPIs, job description, contracts, etc.

Assistant City Manager Benson suggested to bring a recommendation from the Executive Committee to the DDA Board at the next meeting for discussion. There could be a variety of recommendations, but one of those recommendations could be to schedule a special meeting of the DDA in early April to then move to the next steps. It is reasonable to bring a recommendation to the Board at the March meeting. Chair Russell commented they could get some volunteers from the Board to do a special meeting in a couple of weeks to review this with Assistant City Manager Benson and City Manager Brown to fit in their schedule along with the Executive Committee.

Assistant City Manager Benson commented they can work together in small groups of less than a quorum offline, so it doesn't turn into a dialog or decision making process.

Assistant City Manager Benson indicated there are a lot of things that the City provides that is intentional and designed which is paid by the DDA.

Information:

A. Downtown Business News/Events

- 2023: March 1st – Wednesdays in Wixom

- 2023: May 7th – Derby Day Races

Public Comments:

No public comments.

Executive Director's Comments:

Executive Director Cloutier commented the DDA has to do the public presentation update twice a year. Assistant City Director Benson and herself are in discussions to possibly submit this to the City Council agenda for the first meeting in March.

Board Members' Comments:

Approved 3/28/2023

No comments.

Adjournment:

MOTION by Mayor Beagle, second by Board Member Willett to adjourn the meeting. This meeting of the Wixom Downtown Development Authority was motioned and adjourned at 8:25 a.m.

Mona Freiburger
Recording Secretary

Approved 3/28/2023