CITY OF WIXOM
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
49045 PONTIAC TRAIL
TUESDAY, JANUARY 25, 2022

This meeting of the Wixom Downtown Development Authority came to order at 7:35 a.m. with the following individuals in attendance:

DDA MEMBERS: Chairperson Vanessa Willett, Melanie Cheney, Kailee Fine, Mark Garmo, Kaitie Guzowski, Amanda Habbouche, Russ Meredith, and Patrick Beagle, Mayor

ABSENT: Excused: Vice-Chairperson Kristin Rzeznik, Carissa Serylo, Caleb Sheng, Wes Umlor

STAFF: DDA Staff: Laura Cloutier, DDA Executive Director
City Staff: Steve Brown, City Manager
City Staff: Drew Benson, Assistant City Manager
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.

Introduction of New Board Members:

Chair Willett introduced new Board Members Mark Garmo and Kaitie Guzowski.

Board Member Guzowski stated she is a resident of Wixom, moved into the City in the spring of 2015. She has enjoyed seeing the City grow and she is happy to help.

Board Member Garmo stated he is a long time resident of Wixom, lived in the City for over 18 years. He owns the building and property which is Wixom Liquor. Board Member Garmo has

Approved 2/22/22

owned Wixom Liquor for approximately 11.5 years. His children attend Walled Lake community schools. Board Member Garmo's wife teaches the PiYo classes in Wixom.

Approval of Agenda:

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

VOTE: MOTION CARRIED

All in favor.
None opposed.

Public Comments:

Mr. Caleb Sheng was a member of the DDA Board. He indicated it was a huge privilege for him to be a part of Wixom and to volunteer at some events and then become part of the Board, Chair of the Board, especially during the first year of the pandemic. Mr. Sheng thanked everybody for having him serve all of these years. Mr. Sheng stated he was not able to be involved during the latter part of last year; work continued to accelerate but he served out his term.

Mr. Sheng commented he was very excited for the new Board Members Mark Garmo and Kaitie Guzowski, who are working with a phenomenal City with phenomenal people from the community and fellow residents that work together.

Approval of Minutes:

MOTION by Board Member Cheney and second by Mayor Beagle to approve the October 26, 2021, DDA Regular Meeting Minutes, as presented.

VOTE: MOTION CARRIED

MOTION by Board Member Board Member Cheney and second by Board Member Fine to approve the November 23, 2021, DDA Regular Meeting Minutes, as presented.

VOTE: MOTION CARRIED

Correspondence:

None

Executive Director's Report:

A. Monthly Report

Approved 2/2/22

Executive Director Cloutier gave the DDA Highlights for her report.

The DDA ended the year with a very successful Candy Cane Lane event on December 15, 2021. This event brought out over 100 children and their parents/families to the downtown. Children visited ten participating businesses and collected candy canes. Many of the adults utilized the Junction as Junction cups from Wixom Station and Drafting Table Brewing Company were observed. Feedback from businesses and those that participated were positive.

11/11 Burgers & Fries will be moving into the former 7-Elevent space. They have received their permits and renovations to the space have begun. An estimated opening time is spring, 2022. Wixom Dentistry has been provided with their permits and will begin renovations of their building soon.

Assistant City Manager Benson and Executive Director Cloutier has seen more interest in the Heath Building as the Hutton family, who owns the building, has dropped the sale price. They had one meeting with a prospective purchaser and businesses owner, along with many phone calls from other potential purchasers.

The annual sponsorship campaign will kick off at the beginning of February. The DDA is continuing the joint campaign with the City of Wixom for 2022. This will be provided to the Board, once available, to aid in the outreach of our sponsorship efforts. The Organization Committee will also help with the outreach to increase the sponsorships for FY 2022-23.

Executive Director Cloutier thanked the Board Members who have turned in their 2021-22 Board Member Partnership forms and dues. She asked for the Board to return their form and dues as soon as possible, if they have not done so already.

Chair Willett asked if there were any additional grants for the purchase of the Heath Building right now. Executive Director Cloutier commented no, the Heath Building is not on the historical registry so this limits what is out there. Assistant City Manager Benson indicated there are, potential opportunities for the right development but a firm commitment would be needed to dive more into funding opportunities outside of the City. Brownfield is probably the best opportunity.

Old Business:

A. Wixom Block Party

The Board decided at the October DDA Board meeting to revisit this discussion and to make a decision at this month's meeting. It is the recommendation of the Executive Director to focus on one big event such as Derby Day and have multiple smaller events that directly benefit the downtown businesses such as Sip N Stroll, Candy Cane Lane.

Approved 2/22/22

There was a discussion regarding whether the Wixom Block Party would continue for 2022. Board Member Garmo inquired if the Block Party had been successful in the past. Executive Director Cloutier indicated yes, but it is hard to measure attendance as this is not a ticketed event. This event mainly affects businesses for one day at the west end. It does not impact the entire downtown area.

Board Member Guzowski commented she has always enjoyed the Block Party. This event has been one of her favorites while living in downtown Wixom. She likes the band atmosphere, and the whole street closure with the different activities outdoors. Board Member Guzowski indicated while this is a new role for her, although she has volunteered for the Wednesday night events and those events seem to be successful.

Board Member Guzowski also inquired if there is going to be another Junction Party kickoff or grand opening on a week night.

Chair Willett commented she reviewed the Promotion Committee's list of events and was disappointed that she did not see a Grand Opening of the Junction. Executive Director Cloutier stated a date was not discussed and was not put on the calendar.

Mayor Beagle indicated positive reactions from the business community is hard to assess. The downtown area is separated by a major road (Wixom Road), which cannot be closed off. The smaller events would only help a few businesses. Mayor Beagle commented a follow up with the businesses needs to be done to see if the events help the businesses. Board Member Garmo commented during every event downtown, he needs to have extra employees as they are busy the entire day. It helps and increases his business.

Board Member Meredith indicated the Block Party is designed to bring people into downtown and start using the City. He asked if the City is seeing a following on the next week, etc. Board Member Meredith recommended the businesses giving out a discount during the event to use at another visit to see how many of those discounts get turned in during a period of time. Right now, there is no way to measure the long term impact.

Board Member Cheney commented she has not heard any negative feedback during the last five years for the Block Party. Are people looking forward to this event, are we gaining momentum, etc.? Board Member Cheney indicated she was on the fence to continue the Block Party but thinks this event should be continued this year to see how it affects the Junction. She indicated she has always been an advocate of seeing a shorter amount of time for this event; it is a long event.

Assistant City Manager Benson commented he was pleasantly surprised on how well attended and the atmosphere was for the Block Party. He thought it was really cool that the businesses that aren't downtown had the opportunity to participate. This could be a business action tool to give them the opportunity to test the ground downtown.

Approved 2/2/22

Mayor Beagle inquired how many vendors are from Wixom. Executive Director Cloutier indicated the majority of the vendors are not from Wixom.

City Manager Brown commented he thought there was a consensus to continue the Block Party for another year. This event is to gain attention for downtown and to build habitual business to the downtown area. From an expense standpoint, he agreed with Executive Director Cloutier but he would like to see the DDA Board take a look at how this event can make it "sticky" to bring people back to do things. He also would like to see what happens with the Junction this time, as well. City Manager Brown indicated he is part of that coalition to see it go forward for another year and build on the success for that one day.

Chair Willett commented it is not the DDA's goal to become party planners, she thinks having one bigger event and a couple of smaller events such as Sip N Strolls are great. Parks and Recreation has done a great job with the concerts every week.

MOTION by Chair Willett and second by Board Member Meredith to continue the Wixom Block Party for 2022.

VOTE: MOTION CARRIED

All in favor.
None opposed.

Dates were discussed to hold the Block Party for September, 2022.

MOTION by Mayor Beagle and second by Chair Willett to approve the date of September 10, 2022 for the Wixom Block Party.

VOTE: MOTION CARRIED

All in favor.
None opposed.

B. Committee: Design

Executive Director Cloutier provided an update. The Design Committee has already planned on spring flowers for 2022. The Committee has also been working on phase two of the bike racks for downtown. The Committee provided the Board with a quote of $1,433.00 for six U-shaped bike racks from the Park catalog. It was recommended per the Board's approval to purchase six U-shaped bike racks to be placed at Sibley Square Park in the spring of 2022. The exact location at Sibley Square Park is being determined. Cement pads would need to be poured by DPW at an estimated cost of $3,000.

Approved 2/22/22

MOTION by Mayor Beagle and second by Chair Willett to approve the purchase of the U-shaped bike racks and cement work not to exceed $4,433.00

VOTE: MOTION CARRIED

All in favor.
None opposed.

Executive Director Cloutier indicated Chair Willett signed the contract for the flowers. We are contracting with Landscape Design and Associates for the installation and maintenance of the hanging baskets on the lights posts for a total of $38,790.00. The contract is for six months at $5,483.33 per month.

MOTION by Chair Willett and second by Board Member Habbouche to authorize to spend $38,790.00 for the flower hanging baskets to be installed in the downtown area and maintenance contract for the 2022 year.

VOTE: MOTION CARRIED

All in favor.
None opposed.

C. Committee: Promotions

Board Member Guzowski provided an update. She indicated Executive Director Cloutier set up a schedule for the full year of events. Board Member Guzowski commented she worked around and spoke with the businesses regarding the events. The businesses liked the idea of the calendar of events to plan with staffing, etc.

The Promotions Committee is planning the next Sip N Stroll event which is March 16, 2022, which would be a St. Patrick's Day event.

Executive Director Cloutier indicated the June Sip N Stroll event is June 22, 2022. The idea was tossed around for a guy's night out but felt it may not be well received as ladies night out, so they are going to focus on couples for the June event. Executive Director Cloutier provided two budgets for the next two events.

Chair Willett indicated part of what the DDA is trying to do is branding for the DDA and events. She indicated she thought it was a waste of money to keep ordering new banners. Chair Willett suggested using the nice banners that hang with the zip ties and get the stick on numbers, etc., Board Member Guzowski agreed and thought Parks and Recreation has done a good job by using

Approved 2/22/22

"next Saturday" or "next Wednesday", something to reuse. Chair Willett commented she would rather take the banner money and either give it to the businesses for extra giveaways or to do extra promotions, etc., than to continue with the purchase of new banners.

Board Member Guzowski commented Executive Director Cloutier does a good job on social media advertising, as well. Although, it is nice to have banners for people driving through the area. Executive Director Cloutier indicated posters for the businesses can be more precise for the dates.

The Promotions Committee held Candy Cane Lane on December 15, 2021 and received positive feedback from the participating businesses from those that attended. The Committee is working on the next two Sip N Strolls and would like a budget of $788.90 approved from the Board. This Committee created an event calendar for fiscal year 2022-23.

MOTION by Board Member Meredith and second by Board Member Fine to approve the budget of $400.00 for the March, 22, 2022, Ladies Night Out, Sip N Stroll.

VOTE: MOTION CARRIED

All in favor.
None opposed.

D. Committee: Economic Vitality

Chair Willett provided an update. The Economic Vitality Committee has resumed meeting. At the last meeting, the Committee reviewed the ESRI data for Wixom and began working on their goals for the 2022-23 fiscal year.

E. Committee: Organization

Executive Director Cloutier provided an update. The Organization Committee continues to meet and find ways to recruit new volunteers. At the last meeting, their focus was on creating goals for the 2022-23 fiscal year.

New Business:

A. DDA Annual Public Meeting

Executive Director Cloutier indicated it has been brought to her attention that the DDA is not in compliance right now with Public Act 57 of 2018. Each year the DDA Board is required to hold not fewer than two public meetings. Stats are put together to show what the DDA has accomplished. It can be a quick slideshow presentation. A public notice in the newspaper, and

Approved 2/22/22

mailings would be needed to send out within the required radius. Executive Director Cloutier suggested the DDA meetings held in June and November.

B. Michigan Air Line Trail Signage

Board Member Meredith indicated he sent a letter to Executive Director Cloutier to propose a sign with a little map of "specials" that are offered by the downtown businesses when you come down the Air Line Trail at Wixom Road. The sign would direct people to the right or left for the businesses; maybe two signs would be needed. This is a suggestion to see if the businesses are interested and to get a proposal for whatever the sign would cost. Board Member Meredith stated he talked to the Manager of the Air Lane Trail and he had no problem with the DDA doing this, as long as the City of Wixom has no objections.

Executive Director Cloutier indicated there are signs on the trail; it is traditional way finding signs for businesses and/or restaurants. She asked who would be responsible for changing the signs, and who would be responsible for acquiring the weekly and/or monthly specials from the businesses. Board Member Meredith indicated the business specials would be seasonal, not weekly or monthly.

Board Member Guzowski commented there is a shadow board box with glass to open/close with community advertisements at Gunnar Mettala Park. This looks nice, but the printed pictures there are starting to peel, so there needs to be maintenance. This idea needs to be planned out properly, if we choose to do that.

Chair Willett suggested tasking the Design Committee with putting together a proposal for sign ideas and pricing.

Executive Director Cloutier indicated businesses were approached to put signage on the trail. Drafting Table is one of the participants.

Assistant City Manager Benson commented one of the concerns is to continually change the sign, and maybe it is getting back to the branding opportunity such as a sign, "Welcome to Downtown Wixom"; a broad statement indicating Wixom has restaurants/services.

Assistant City Manager Benson indicated he remembered Mr. John Hensley talking about installing signage downtown. Assistant City Manager Benson commented this may be a co-branding opportunity with the Air Line Trail. They may have a specific location in mind but we can bring that together and get a more cohesive product.

Chair Willett recommended tabling this to the next meeting; in the interim, the Design Committee can follow up with some ideas.

C. Executive Director Review

Approved 2/22/22

Chair Willett commented they are going to have a quarterly review with Executive Director Cloutier which would include Chair Willet, Vice Chair Rzeznik, Mayor Beagle and City Manager Brown, as part of the management of her contract. The current contract is for an average of 25 hours per week. Once the quarterly review is completed, the Board will do a formal review.

Information:

A. Downtown Business News/Events

- 2022: January 26th - Wednesdays in Wixom
- February 2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd - Wednesdays in Wixom
- March 16th - Sip N Stroll - Ladies Night Out

Public Comments:

Mr. Sheng discussed the company, Findable. Findable assists small businesses in attracting new customers through paid searches to increase their visibility on various media platforms. Chair Willett indicated this is an economically friendly way of business to business advertising. Mr. Sheng will forward this information to Executive Director Cloutier.

Assistant City Manager Benson commented regarding the Design Committee's enhancements to the tot lot area behind the library, which is a part of the Parks and Recreation master plan. The Parks and Recreation Commission has also been discussing this as there are some CDBG funds that City Council agreed to budget for that project.

Assistant City Manager Benson indicated at the last Parks and Recreation Commission meeting, the Commission was very interested and excited that the DDA is also interested in this project and working together. With the number of parks that are in the downtown district, there are clearly some opportunities to partners together, in general, to accomplish the goals of the DDA plan and the goals of the Parks and Recreation master plan. Assistant City Manager indicated if there was an open DDA board seat or being a participant on the design committee on specific projects, it may make sense to work together as a team effort, everybody to get involved, even if it was 100% DDA funded. The Parks and Recreation Commission was excited there was interest in working together.

Chair Willett indicated the Parks and Recreation has their budget and still has the responsibility, physically, to take care of the parks. If the DDA can help, especially, with the downtown parks, yes, it should always be a combined commitment because that's how it has been done in the past. The pathway was a great way to start the relationship. There is not the infrastructure on the DDA Board to manage but it is a great opportunity to work together and do three or four different

Approved 2/22/22

projects as opposed to being able to take over one funding. Chair Willett indicated she would like to be able to contribute in multiple areas.

Assistant City Manager Benson indicated that often times, the Parks and Recreation Commission know their focus and they don't know the focus of the counterparts. At some point, this may be a good topic to talk about the Parks and Recreation master plan as it relates to downtown, again, to promote that synergy and their thoughts for committees within the DDA.

Chair Willett commented she has been to one of the Parks and Recreation Commission meetings. The Commissioners have great knowledge and experience. She challenged everyone to attend a meeting at some point. Also, anybody is welcome to be on a DDA committee, and back and forth.

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Executive Director's Comments:

Executive Director Cloutier thanked Mr. Sheng for his mentorship and leadership. She also welcomed new Board Members Garmo and Guzowski.

Board Members' Comments:

Mayor Beagle, City Manager Brown and Chair Willett thanked Mr. Sheng for his involvement with the DDA. City Manager Brown welcomed the new Board Members.

Adjournment:

MOTION by Board Member Meredith, second by Mayor Beagle 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

Approved 2/22/22