CITY OF WIXOM
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
49045 PONTIAC TRAIL
TUESDAY, MARCH 26, 2024

This meeting of the Wixom Downtown Development Authority came to order at 7:31 a.m. with the following individuals in attendance:

DDA MEMBERS: Chairperson Jessica Buck; Board Members: Mark Garmo; Kaitie Guzowski; Steve Hartman; Russ Meredith; Vanessa Willett; Patrick Beagle, Mayor

ABSENT: Excused: Carissa Osburn; Leslie Payment

STAFF: DDA Staff: Laura Cloutier, DDA Executive Director
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 Meredith to approve the Meeting Agenda.

VOTE: MOTION CARRIED

Public Comments:

None

Approval of Minutes:

Approved 4/24/2024

MOTION by Board Member Meredith and second by Mayor Beagle to approve the February 20, 2024, DDA Regular Meeting Minutes, as presented.

VOTE: MOTION CARRIED

Correspondence:

None

Executive Director Report: March 26, 2024

Downtown Development Authority Memorandum from Executive Director Cloutier, Subject: DDA Activity Report – March 2024 is enclosed in the packet.

Executive Director Cloutier highlighted some points from her Memorandum and DDA Activity Report.

Executive Director Cloutier stated the Derby Day registrations are coming in. As of this report, there are 96 participants registered. Last year at this same time, there were 17 registered. Registrations are coming in from all over the State.

Executive Director Cloutier met with the DDA director and Main Street County folks from Lyon Township, South Lyon, and Highland. Main Street is trying to get nearby communities to work together to help leverage each other's districts to collaborate on how to boost people coming into our district.

On March 6, 2024, we received notice that the DDA will be getting congressional funding for the West End Commons. This funding will be used solely for the West End Commons.

Mayor Beagle suggested to invite Representative Haley Stevens to the ceremony for the West End Commons.

Main Event awards submissions are in process. The Main Event is held on June 6 at the Roxy in Downtown Rochester. The theme this year is Back to the Future. We are submitting for multiple awards. Look for an email from Executive Director Cloutier for the last shot at Sibley Park. Josh will have a drone, and all the participants will be waving at the end of the video. The submission final date is April 26th.

Old Business:

A. West End Commons

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On March 6th, City Administration received the great news that the congressional funding through Representative Haley Stevens office that was applied for in May, 2023 had been approved and signed by the President. This funding of $738,400.00 will be used solely for the West End Commons project. With this news, the DDA can provide a full buildout, based on the original renderings, minus burying the power lines.

The packet contains the original renderings and the scaled-down renderings with the power lines. This second rendering is for reference. An update will be provided to the Board of the meeting with City staff, HRC, and CWA regarding this project that takes place after this packet is sent out.

Executive Cloutier included the original renderings for the Board Members as a refresher. For reference, the rendering shows how the power lines will look on the site. Grant funding will be received from Representative Haley Stevens' office. It is anticipated to be able to do the full build out of the original renderings. Executive Director Cloutier and Assistant City Manager Benson will meet with Mike Darga, HRC, the engineering firm, and Chris Nordstrom, CWA, to give a new estimate on pricing and updated renderings.

Assistant City Manager Benson indicated the main difference will be the quality of the finishes. When the project was scaled back, there was less brick and more concrete. There are still a couple of variables to play out, specifically, the restrooms may be difficult to place and could be a challenge.

Chairperson Buck inquired about the bocci ball court and chess pieces if this is a task that DPW is prepared to do. Executive Director Cloutier indicated the bocci ball court will be there all the time. We need to figure out how this will be managed. The Rzezniks from the Drafting Table were receptive to possibly purchasing a couple of bocci ball sets; you could bring your own or check one out with a driver's license. DPW does not have the manpower to manage this. The plans have not been finalized as to what is important.

Chairperson Buck inquired about the restrooms, if other options for a restroom have been explored or we might not have a restroom at all. Assistant City Manager Benson stated there are some alternative ideas, specifically, downtown Ann Arbor has implemented some semi-temporary, less permanent restrooms that are a little higher quality, which are not physically fixed to the ground. It would depend on how all the bids come in, and there is a scenario where restrooms would not work out. It is known that restrooms are a priority for the DDA; the Planning Commission has expressed a lot of interest to having a public restroom, as well. City Council has some reservations about the restrooms. City Council does not like the perception of having a restroom in the downtown area.

Board Member Guzowski expressed a restroom is very important. She would rather see a restroom than a bocci ball court and chairs. It is a must if Wixom has a social district. Board Member Guzowski indicated we cannot expect the businesses to allow people to use their restrooms. She also inquired if the power line removal was out of the discussion, as well.

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Chairperson Buck indicated City Council did not want to have a restroom on the Renton property because it was businesses, etc. This is a park, and to bring in people, you should have restrooms. Board Member Willett stated none of the businesses want people to use their restroom. Drafting Table is not open during the day. Restrooms are very important. To have a walkable downtown, you need restrooms.

B. Downtown Public Art

The Design Committee has been meeting with Lisa Little regarding bringing artwork to the downtown district. Through their conversations, they have decided to focus on the bikes located downtown to be reimagined as pieces of art. In the packet are examples of how these bikes will be reimagined with the addition of flowers and butterflies. These are just a few examples. The Committee is also looking at incorporating hummingbirds and dragonflies. While Ms. Little will create the three-dimensional artwork, the Design Committee is planning a "community paint the bike day" at the West End Commons this spring. This project is expected to be completed in this current fiscal year at the cost of $2,500.00.

It is recommended to approve the spend of $2,500.00 from the Design Committee account 248-729-956.005 for the three-dimensional artwork to be installed on the downtown bikes by artist Lisa Little.

Board Member Guzowski commented the Design Committee discussed the bikes that are around town; the bikes need a little help. There was a discussion with the artist, Lisa, while walking downtown regarding the installation of mural art around the various buildings. The bikes were discussed. Repainting the bikes was out of budget for her. The budget is $2,500.00 for downtown public art. The artist offered to make 3D attachments (picture in packet) with flowers and butterflies. The artist indicated it doesn't need to be flower and butterflies; this is an idea.

The Design Committee discussed holding a community event to gather all the bikes, and paint them, and fix them. The Committee would like to do something to refresh the bikes and the downtown area.

This was a simple but effective way to introduce art into the downtown versus a mural for now.

There was a discussion regarding the repainting of the bikes, and the 3D attachments. The bikes need to be painted and would be an improvement.

Assistant City Manager Benson indicated the $2,500.00 is a dedicated effort and a degree of creativity. The artist has done projects for many other downtown areas. The artist is very creative, and she could bring other ideas.

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Assistant City Manager Benson stated this is a relatively low-cost opportunity to see how we feel about the artist's work, do we like the outcome, is it a good value?

Assistant City Manager Cloutier indicated the artist will be creating, cutting out the pieces, painting the pieces; everything but the installation of the pieces.

Board Member Meredith recommended to ask the Design Committee for some other ideas above and beyond the flowers and butterflies.

MOTION by Board Member Willett and second by Mayor Beagle to approve the spend of $2,500.00 from the Design Committee Account 248-729-956.005 to revamp the bikes (design and manufacturing of artwork) which final design to be decided by the Design Committee at a later date.

VOTE: MOTION CARRIED

C. Logo, Branding, and Signage

The Branding, Logo, and Signage services has been productive and is coming to fortition. Guide Studios has created logos for the DDA and City, along with working on signage examples for both downtown and the City. The Guide Studios team will be in Wixom for the May 28th City Council meeting to present the final designs for approval. The team would like to have the chance to present to the DDA Board as well on that day. It is recommended to move the May 21st DDA meeting to May 28th at 5:00 p.m. for this presentation.

Assistant City Manager Benson commented the branding, logo and signage work with Guide Studios is moving along at a good pace. The main update is Guide Studios is planning to do a presentation to City Council at their May 28, 2024 meeting. The DDA has a meeting on May 21, 2024. Guide Studios would also like to do a presentation to the DDA at 5:00 p.m. prior to the City Council meeting held on May 28, 2024 at 7:00 p.m. Assistant City Manager Benson stated he realizes this is not ideal, specifically, the day after Memorial Day, but it is trying to take advantage of the fact that Guide Studios will be here for City Council meeting. It may be difficult for them to, physically, get here for a morning meeting.

Chairperson Buck and Board Member Guzowski indicated they would not be able to make the meeting on May 28, 2024.

MOTION by Board Member Willett and second by Board Member Meredith to reschedule the DDA May 21, 2024 meeting at 7:30 a.m. to Tuesday, May 28, 2024 at 5 p.m., in order for Guide Studios to present the final designs for approval to City Council.

VOTE: MOTION CARRIED

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New Business:

A. Executive Director Annual Review

The Executive Committee completed Laura Cloutier's Annual Review on March 20, 2024, with input from individual DDA Board members. A summary of the average scores provided by responding members of the DDA was shared with Ms. Cloutier and is attached to this report. In general, the majority of Ms. Cloutier's scores fell between "Meets Expectations" and "Exceeds Expectations". Specifically, she scored highly in her work with pursuing, securing, and communicating grants for the DDA and downtown businesses; her development of the Wixom's relationship with Main Street Oakland County; and her efforts to pursue and promote placemaking in Downtown Wixom. The areas where she scored lowest were related to pursuit and communication of donations to the DDA; efforts to build relationships with other Business Development organizations such as the Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce; and communication/frequency of Business Retention Visits. These lowest areas, on average, were still close to satisfactory in terms of score, but are areas to focus on in 2024.

Based on this review and Ms. Cloutier's satisfactory performance, the DDA Executive Committee is recommending increasing Ms. Cloutier's compensation by $2,000.00 in fiscal year 24/25, to a total of $57,000. This recommendation is included in the proposed budget for your consideration in New Business B.

Assistant City Manager Benson stated the Executive Committee has been working on Executive Director Cloutier's annual review. There is a different format with her most recent contract where the mid-year review is done with just the Executive Committee and the annual review is also done with the Board Members. The Board Members will have an opportunity to submit their comments and thoughts on her performance for the year. There were responses from six different individuals. The Executive Committee then reviewed it and presented the combined results to Executive Director Cloutier. The summary is included in the packet. In general, Executive Director Cloutier's performance has been graded well with most of her scores between above meets expectations and some above exceeding expectations. There are a couple of areas where she scored high, specifically, in grant opportunities, and relationship with main street place making efforts downtown. The Executive Committee felt Executive Director Cloutier's performance has been satisfactory.

The Executive Committee recommends the Board Members to consider increasing Executive Director Cloutier's annual compensation by $2,000.00 to a total of $57,00.00. The Executive Committee felt a flat number of $2,000.00 would be a simple way to reflect her performance and to appreciate having her here.

Chairperson Buck commented there is a lot of things that Executive Director Cloutier does that we do not see as individuals, and volunteers. Chairperson Buck stated she thought the raise

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seemed a little bit low, but she has in the last two times gotten a raise, and we wanted to increase her pay to let her know she is appreciated in everything she has done.

Board Member Willett asked if Executive Director Cloutier could step out of the room while we are discussing her raise and salary. Board Member Willett stated the Board has given a 20% raise in this position so far over the last two years. She indicated Executive Director Cloutier was doing a better job, but there is still room for improvement. The first raise of $5,000.00 went in front of City Council; she was surprised City Council approved the second $5,000.00 because there was some disgruntled feedback for it.

Executive Director Cloutier left the room for the discussion. Mayor Beagle indicated it would be up to Executive Director Cloutier if she wanted to leave the meeting; it would be her choice. This is not a formal closed session; there is specific protocol for closed sessions.

The Board Members spoke freely during the discussion in reference to Executive Director's salary, job duties, her accomplishments, and her raises.

Assistant City Manager Benson commented it was his opinion, having worked with Executive Director Cloutier the last couple of review, there has been improvements in the scores. It is difficult to compare from year to year. Specifically, looking at the scores and looking at the comments received, the Executive Committee found her performance was meeting and exceeding expectations. She is doing a good job for the DDA. A $2,000.00 increase amounts to approximately 3.7% per year.

After the discussion, the Board Members and Mayor Beagle moved to increase Executive Director Cloutier's salary by an amount not to exceed $2,000.00 starting in fiscal year 24/25.

MOTION by Board Member Meredith and second by Board Member Hartman to approve the recommendation of the DDA Executive Committee an increase of $2,000.00 to Executive Director Laura Cloutier's compensation in fiscal year 24/25.

VOTE: MOTION CARRIED

Executive Director Cloutier returned to the room for the remainder of the meeting.

B. FY 24/25 Budget

On March 20th Executive Director Cloutier and Assistant City Manager Benson presented the proposed FY 2024/25 DDA Budget to the DDA Board at their annual DDA Budget Session. A robust dialogue occurred and in your packet is the updated budget for approval along with the working budget. Areas of discussion from the DDA Budget Session are as follows:

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248-729-801-481 DDA Director: This budget shows the compensation for Executive Director services and reflects the increase of $2,000.00 to this compensation based off the annual review conducted on March 20th.

248-729-956.006 Downtown Enhancements: This account supports many functions that bring overall upgrades to the aesthetics of downtown.

- Downtown Art: $30,000.00 – The budget for downtown art will allow the DDA to bring murals and larger scale artwork to the district.
- MSOC Collaboration: $10,000.00 – This budget allows for the South x Southwest Main Street Communities to collaborate and share any expenses that may be incurred for shared marketing, events, business workshops, and more. South X Southwest Main Street Communities – Wixom, South Lyon, Lyon Twp., and Highland.
- Junction Social District: $5,000.00 – This budget allows for the DDA to continue to support participating businesses with Junction branded cup purchases, future new participating businesses with reimbursements of the first-year social district permits, and maintenance to Junction signage.
- Miscellaneous Downtown Enhancements: $10,000.00 – This budget allows for small scale projects to occur throughout each fiscal year.

248-729-956.481 Special Studies/Services: $54,350 – This budget allows for the continuation of engineering services from HRC for the West End Commons and Pontiac Trail Streetscape project, along with funds available for future studies.

248-966-995.005 Transfer to Safety Path: This line item shows the repayment to the City of the Klebba Sidewalk project. These payments will be completed in FY 2025-2026. In future fiscal years, you will see $400,000.00 for the Chambers to PT Sidewalk.

248-966995.004 Capital Contributions – Special Projects: This line item shows a DDA contribution of $320,000 to the West End Commons. Also, the Signage Implementation that will result from Branding, Logo, and Signage services that is currently being created. These funds are spread out between FY 2024/25 and 2025/26, as a phase 1 and phase 2 project.

Assistant City Manager Benson commented he would not go into the same level of detail as they did at the DDA Special Financial meeting last week. On the revenue side, things are looking positive for the DDA. In year three of the projected budget goes down because the City's additional operating millage is projected to roll off. There will be a vote this year, and assuming Wixom residents renew this, the DDA capture would continue to increase.

Assistant City Manager Benson indicated the projected revenues are to increase to $1.4 million next year. The expenditure side, a lot of the budget is staying the same. The key areas changing are downtown enhancements is being increased from $40,000.00 to $55,000.00. He pointed out that even though the amounts are budgeted, any expenditure still has to come to the Board;

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historically, we would not have spent the full amount, but the idea is to earmark money to be available to do things, and also have flexibility.

Executive Director Cloutier stated the collaboration item would be to promote our districts, bring more people into our spaces/businesses, and how we can help make our existing business stronger. The collaboration would be with Main Street districts: South Lyon, Highland, and Lyon Township.

Assistant City Manager Benson commented the other key areas that are changing, most of the DDA's operations are relatively flat. There is the inclusion of the Spooktacular Treat Hunt allocated for $5,000.00. There is a $100,000.00 budget for downtown site readiness for next fiscal year from $80,000.00 this year. It is unlikely that the full $80,000.00 would be spent. Anything that is not spent will be rolled forward into the fund balance.

The intention of the downtown site readiness was, originally, for physical site improvements to help make sites more attractive. The demolition services are out for proposal now for the Renton properties. It is the intention to recommend City Council to pay for that, but they may ask the DDA to help after the buildings are demolished; there is going to be some sidewalk work needed, some improvements. It might make sense to install lamp posts, as an example.

Assistant City Manager Benson indicated for Special Studies and Services, $54,000.00 is comprised of the second half of engineering for West End Commons; second half of engineering for Chambers sidewalks carried forward from last fiscal year. The $20,000.00 is to be made available for other special studies or projects that you may work on throughout the year. The other important item, the DDA will pay $468,000.00 for transfer of the existing bond debt. That does roll off after fiscal year 26/27 for bond debt. This is the largest, single expenditure.

This budget is projected to be over expenditures by about $246,000 and leave a fund balance of $51,000.00, which is recommended.

Assistant City Manager Benson commented this budget projects to improve the downtown and do a lot of things for the community to get people involved.

MOTION by Board Member Willett and second by Board Member Meredith to recommend approval of the 24/25 budget as it stands to Wixom City Council.

VOTE: MOTION CARRIED

Information:

A. Downtown Business News/Events

Approved 4/23/2024

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

Public Comments:

None

Executive Director's Comments:

Executive Director Cloutier thanked everyone for their commitment and time to the DDA, and to those who serve on the different committees.

Volunteers are needed for Derby Day. Executive Director Cloutier has reached out to NHS students, St. Catherine's, Walled Lake Schools, as well as St. Patrick's students; she will take NHS students and any students that need service hours.

Board Members' Comments:

Board Member Willett indicated Economic Vitality had a good meeting last night and the month before. They are setting actual meeting locations and rotating through restaurants now. Executive Director Cloutier will update the website. The Economic Vitality Committee talked about the SBA and NEDC, dividing up some of the information with each of the members to get more knowledgeable to put together a packet for our business owners. Executive Director Cloutier will be sending email; but we need to have a better understanding of the grants, certifications, funding programs, etc., to help our business owners. Board Member Willett has used these services in the past on multiple occasions. The Committee members agreed to put a report together for Executive Director Cloutier to work with the businesses on funding and different events.

Chairperson Buck spoke regarding the Promotions Committee. They are working on Derby Day and Block Party events. There will be a petting zoo and some pony rides for the kids for Derby Day. They have noticed in the past, there are a lot of families that come, and the main goal is to try to keep people downtown after the race is completed. Mega 80's is booked for Block Party.

Chairperson Buck commented there are webinars and training for board members offered by the Main Event regarding different topics. There are a lot of resources that could come to us or to the area.

Adjournment:

Approved 4/24/2024

MOTION by Board Member Meredith, second by Board Member Willett to adjourn the meeting. This meeting of the Wixom Downtown Development Authority was motioned and adjourned at 7:35 a.m.

Mona Freiburger
Recording Secretary

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