CITY OF WIXOM
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
49045 PONTIAC TRAIL
TUESDAY, MAY 28, 2024 – 5:00 PM

This meeting of the Wixom Downtown Development Authority came to order at 5:00 p.m. with the following individuals in attendance:

DDA MEMBERS: Carissa Osburn, Vice Chairperson; Board Members: Mark Garmo; Kaitie Guzowski; Russ Meredith; Leslie Payment; Patrick Beagle, Mayor

ABSENT: Excused: Jessica Buck; Steve Hartman; Vanessa Willett

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:

Due to time constraints with the City Council meeting, Executive Director Cloutier asked that the Board move up New Business to the first order of business and then proceeding with Old Business, which is the presentation from Guide Studio.

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

VOTE: MOTION CARRIED

Approved 6/25/24

All in favor.
None opposed.

Public Comments:

None

Approval of Minutes:

MOTION by Mayor Beagle and second by Board Member Meredith to approve the April 24, 2024, DDA Regular Meeting Minutes, as presented.

VOTE: MOTION CARRIED

Correspondence:

None

Executive Director Report – May 28, 2024

Report dated May 28, 2024 to Patrick Beagle, Mayor and DDA Board of Directors included in the packet. Executive Director Cloutier highlighted items in her report.

Executive Director Cloutier summarized and highlighted her report. She stated Derby Day was a huge success and thanked everyone who attended. There was a record number of participants this year. $2,690.00 was raised for Camp Casey. Everyone loved the shirts, the medals, etc., and it was a nice day. People stayed after the race for Derby Day specials. Reports back from the businesses indicated they were slammed. Data showed that there were 2,300 people who visited downtown from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Next year's race will be held on May 3, 2025.

Executive Director Cloutier commented the National Main Street Conference was a great, and amazing experience. She attended many sessions, networked with directors and city officials from across the country, which she felt is invaluable. Next year's conference will be held in Philadelphia, PA.

West End Commons is coming along. There will be a webinar regarding the congressional funding on June 4th. The grant application for the Oakland County Funding was submitted last week for an additional $206,000.00 for the West End Commons. We should be hearing about this grant mid-June.

Executive Director Cloutier attended an HOA meeting with Tribute as the first of two annual presentations. They were very receptive to the Renton area project with many questions. There

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were no main concerns, everybody seemed excited about the project. There were questions about how many stories, when the project will begin, but they seemed very receptive to the project.

Board Member Guzowski agreed Tribute HOA meeting was a good place to hold the meeting for the future. She thought it is important to share information with the residents at the Tribute HOA.

Old Business:

A. Presentation of Brand Identity and Signage Plan

On October 24, 2023, the Wixom DDA Board authorized the purchase of professional services for branding, logo and signage development services from Guide Studios of Cleveland, Ohio. The purpose of this project was to update the DDA and City's current logo, build a comprehensive set of brand guidelines, and develop a gateway and directional signage package to visually implement the adopted logo and brand. The intent of the project is to create a single set of logos and branding guidelines that will build a cohesive identity for the DDA and City of Wixom, along with City department, such as the Parks and Recreation/Community Services.

Over the past six months, Guide Studio has been working with staff and our Steering Committee to develop a logo and branding guide that visually represents Wixom, what we are about and where we are headed. The Steering Committee is composed of volunteers from around the City, members of City Council, members of the DDA, and also staff from the City Manager's Office involved multiple in-person tours, and workshops, a community survey and multiple rounds of reviews and revisions. Guide Studio is now prepared to present the proposed Brand Identity and Signage Program of the DDA Board's review.

The purpose of this presentation is to show the outcome of the Steering Committee's work and to give the DDA Board the opportunity to comment prior to formal adoption and implementation. With City Council's consensus and approval, City Administration will then, at a future City Council Meeting, ask for formal adoption of the final brand guidelines and authorization for implementation of a signage package.

Assistant City Manager Benson introduced Guide Studio to the Board members. He stated tonight's presentation is the branding and signage concepts which the steering committee has been working on with Guide Studio. The steering committee comprised of City Council members, DDA Board members, Planning Commissioners, citizens and business owners. Assistant City Manager Benson indicated tonight's presentation is close to the final version before it is brought to a formal adoption of the brand guidelines and working towards implementation.

Mr. Bryan Evans, Guide Studio and Ms. Gina Gerken, Guide Studio, introduced themselves. Mr. Evans stated it was fun working with everybody from Wixom over the past several months. They have made a lot of progress and excited to share with the Board the thoughts and ideas that have come together today.

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Mr. Evans presented samples of their work and stated their work is focused on places such as Wixom, it is places that are for people and about people; people looking for different ways for others to see their city.

Mr. Evans and Ms. Gerken presented a PowerPoint presentation (which is included in today's packet).

The presentation explained why Wixom needs to be branded. Mr. Evans stated a brand creates a platform that helps you make decisions, address challenges and achieves: a consistent representation of your city; support for economic development initiatives by positioning you to compete for residents, businesses and visitors; growing sense of community pride that fosters collaboration with your people; and success with reputation management by helping to shed unfavorable perceptions.

Mr. Evans described the process which includes design with direction. He explained when doing a branding project, one of the tools used is called the engagement loop. Mr. Evans stated setting expectations and consistently delivering throughout the entire experience is critical in creating positive impressions. They reviewed current brand, marketing materials, plans, maps and communications. A Wayfinding discovery workshop was held with the Steering Committee; brand discovery workshop with the Steering Committee; Community Survey (434 responses); driving and walking tours of Wixom; brand key finding reports and identity development; wayfinding assessment development; and signage conceptual design,

Ms. Gerken highlighted the brand discovery report. The brand objectives included creating a brand that is updated and reflective of where the City is going; ties into marketing and wayfinding; is a source of pride for the community; helps put Wixom on the map; supports downtown with a cohesive sub-brand that is connected but unique to Downtown; and is more than just a logo – a full brand family system with colors and other brand elements.

Ms. Gerken stated one of the things talked about in the discovery meetings and survey is the vision for Wixom which included: a more complete downtown, opportunity to continue to build upon the plan and pieces already in place; keep evolving, but don't lose character; more sidewalks (and buried power lines); more park upgrades; attract small/independent business, more places to go/diversity in business landscape and restaurants; more connected and bikeable; nightlife/places open later downtown; more well known, while retaining some mystery; Wixom as destination versus a single stop, people come to Wixom for more than one thing; and connected City/DDA/Parks brand family, moving forward with a shared vision.

Personality words to describe Wixom, if it were a person: Friendly; fun; smart; welcoming; active; growing/changing; multi-faceted; solid/dependable; approachable; helpful and energetic.

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Ms. Gerken highlighted the Brand Look: The City of Wixom has been around for half a century, but its roots run much deeper. It is home to some incredible amenities like regional multi-use trails, a nature preserve and wetlands, a budding downtown, loads of housing options, industry, and great services that tie it all together. Even with all those great things in place, it feels like Wixom is just getting started, leaning into the aspiration that is a mainstay of the city and its residents. This brand identity moves beyond what Wixom is today. It allows the city to grown into a brand that reflects not just what it is, but what it can become. The brand elements are North Stars, guiding Wixom to a bright and promising tomorrow.

Ms. Gerken stated sometimes a City doesn't need to start from scratch to get a fresh start. Some ideas are timeless. This honors the City's past while leaning into the ideas of progress and momentum as foundations.

Ms. Gerken went over the logos for Wixom. (All included in the packet). She stated the logo reimagines Wixom's existing identity, preserving the idea of the arrow within the X that links back to transportation as a formative piece of the City's history and speaks to the City's evolution and driven nature. The classic color scheme is Americana, hearkening back to the City's Midwest roots as a manufacturing powerhouse. Ms. Gerken indicated this captures a sense of "work hard, play hard, live easy" in its bold but approachable font. She presented different applications where these logos need to appear. The downtown logo ties back to the City's logo using the X as the divider between the arrow X as a divider between down and Town.

Ms. Gerken presented typefaces associated with the brand. Typefaces that are universally available, the colors will be defined to achieve consistency. Ms. Gerken showed how they can be changed into graphics or badges, stickers, graphic that appears on a shirt, etc. The banner programs can help define the downtown, define the social district, and Junction signs. She showed different application examples for departments like Parks and Recreation.

Mr. Evans highlighted the Wayfinding Assessment and outlined the Signage/Wayfinding Goals and Objectives: Develop an authentic and meaningful sign system to enhance visitor experience, create a sense of place, and exceed expectations. Increase positive perceptions with a consistent, recognizable and inviting sign family that creates a safe and welcoming atmosphere. Establish clear and concise messaging that utilizes consistent nomenclature while aligning with the website, maps and other communication pieces. Produce easy to maintain and expandable signage to allow necessary changes and updates due to the ongoing development. When things change, we want you to very easily do that. Drive traffic to city assets and areas, particularly those under-utilized. Connect areas of pedestrian activity with signage and placemaking elements. Support community pride to attract visitors, businesses, and residents; transfer visitors into advocates, who return often and share their journey with others.

Mr. Evans stated the current challenges: Signage is one of the first physical interactions a person has with a place and will make an impression – either positive or negative – to visitors, residents & potential business owners; *lack of wayfinding and placemaking especially downtown;

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*Michigan Air Line trail is not identified, nor is there identification or directional information coming off the trail; *Many assets, but not well identified or how to get to them; *Small, inconsistent signage; *Getting people from places near the highway to downtown; *Downtown is not highlighted or celebrated as a holistic destination; a lot of people know about individual things downtown and they are going to that place but not just to downtown which is a collection of all of these places, this perception should be changed.

Mr. Evans spoke about Wayfinding Guiding Principles: *Driving traffic downtown is the top priority. City wide directional signs will focus on trailblazing to down and top tier destinations where appropriate. Once downtown, specific downtown destinations will appear on signs. There are not a ton of main roads, so getting around isn't difficult in most cases.
*Because most destinations are accessed using the same main roads, direction to a particular place will be limited to the closest main road intersection, followed by trailblazing at other turns leading to the entrance. To emphasize downtown, it is the only message that will utilize the straight-ahead arrow (exceptions may be made only, if necessary, at points of confusion). It is important to think about the system, it is not about just putting some signs out and hoping people follow them.
*Placemaking will be used to elevate the downtown experience. Downtown signage and placemaking elements will be similar to the City-wide sign family design, but distinct.
*Special "impact" moments are recommended for several areas (signage that is more artful or unique) to elevate visitor and resident experiences.
*Pedestrian and bike signage should encourage exploration and longer stays. Trail signage will emphasize the regional connections to the downtown district, while providing information about city or downtown events. Strategically placed kiosks will highlight points of interest and events.
*City owned/maintained facility and park signs will have a consistent look and feel.
*Interpretative signage highlighting local history will be in downtown gathering spaces.

Mr. Evans commented on Signage Conceptual Design Highlights. He presented the conceptual signage. He stated the designs are very solid: bold, welcoming, and simple. The images are not just flat signs, the signs are dimensional, as well. Mr. Evans spoke about cast concrete as the base that hold onto some of the larger signs, the welcome signs. Perforated mesh is a major part of the sign. He indicated there are a lot of different ways to do the signs but gave a few examples of what the perforations can look like.

Mr. Evans stated the next steps would include finalizing style guide and deliver final art; and the citywide signage program. He indicated there are details to be worked out about construction and final materials, etc.

Assistant City Manager Benson stated the goal tonight is to get the Board's feedback. After the presentations with the Board and City Council, they will be bringing the brand guidelines back to City Council to adopt. We will continue working with Guide Studio through completion of the signage designs. There will be additional layers of detail before the Board's approval and then going out to bids.

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Board Member Guzowski commented she was curious to see what the Board thought about the proposed color pallet. The Design Committee has talked about using those colors in chairs, painting the bikes, etc.

Board Member Payment stated she liked it. She indicated the logo is super compelling; mostly because Wixom has a track that separates the east and west. The "x" can be used as an offshoot to a lot of things.

Executive Director Cloutier stated in the latest concept design for the West End Commons, Chris Nordstrom, Carlisle Wortman Associates, put in the middle of the seating plaza the "x".

Assistant City Manager Benson indicated they anticipate working together for the foreseeable future even on some of the collateral pieces. This is the first opportunity to have a defined color pallet and a defined typeface.

Board Member Guzowski thanked Guide Studio. She found the staff to be very professional. Ms. Gerken commented it was great working with Wixom; everybody had great ideas, and very passionate about the project.

New Business:

A. Memo of Understanding between Wixom DDA and City of Wixom

Copy of Memorandum to Mayor Patrick Beagle and DDA Board Members from Executive Director Cloutier dated May 28, 2024 enclosed in the packet along with the Memorandum of Understanding for Fiscal Year 2024/2025 – Cooperative Services Agreement between the City of Wixom and the Wixom Downtown Development Authority.

Assistant City Manager Benson indicated they are recommending consideration of a Memorandum of Understanding between the DDA and City Council. This is an annual item started a few years ago which outlines the DDA's cost sharing with the City for specific services. It has been helpful to clarify what the DDA gets in exchange for its contribution to the City. City Council has been appreciative of having this in place, as well. Most of the information is the same as what was presented to the Board last year. It is consistent with the budget that was presented to the Board, approved and recommended to City Council.

Board Meredith posed the question to the business owners on the Board of whether they have seen a change in trash pickup, snow removal, and other services from the City. There was a discussion regarding the snow removal, maintenance, street sweeping and grass cutting. Assistant City Manager Benson stated if there were any concerns to contact DPW as this is a relatively new relationship set up.

Approved 6/25/24

MOTION by Board Member Guzowski and second by Board Member Meredith to approve the Memorandum of Understanding for Fiscal Year 2024/205 – Cooperative Services Agreement between the City of Wixom and the Wixom Downtown Development Authority.

VOTE: MOTION CARRIED

Information:

A. Committee Reports

- Design Committee

Board Member Guzowski commented the bike painting event is on hold. Executive Director Cloutier is in contact with an Eagle Scout from Walled Lake, who seems very interested to doing this project.

Board Member Guzowski indicated the next meeting is to be held on Tuesday at Drafting Table at 5 pm.

- Economic Vitality Committee

Board Member Meredith commented Main Street Oakland County Shop Online program is a program available free of charge to the businesses within a community. The DDA will host it, but the business is responsible for setting up the website.

Executive Director Cloutier commented she has spoken to Eric Phillips who oversees the Placer AI program at Main Street Oakland County, he has our list, he has all the lists from all the Main Street Oakland County, and he is working on the initial list, as well.

The Economic Vitality Committee met inside Alex's dining room; it is not open, but three groups of people walked in while the meeting was being held.

- Promotions Committee

Executive Director Cloutier highlighted Derby Day in her report. Promotions Committee is now working on Block Party. She has been in contact with JAG Entertainment and AFP Sound regarding the rest of the entertainment. The Committee is looking to add children's entertainment earlier in the day, possibly a magician or guitar player who sings children's songs.

One of the restaurants was upset because there were food trucks. Food trucks are still invited but it was encouraged for the businesses to set up a stand in front of their businesses for specials. Drafting Table, and El Camino set up drink stations for the Junction. The Committee is going to

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suggest to El Camino is they would add guacamole, chips and salsa to go along with the margaritas.

Vice Chair Osburn inquired about using a trucking company to block the street for the Block Party. Last year, DPW trucks were used to block. The music gets very loud because the sound bounces off the trucks. Executive Director Cloutier indicated she would look into using semi-trucks.

Board Member Payment inquired if there was a way to block off the street from Junction to Junction to go into Pontiac Trail near Sibley Park to capitalize on the Junction. Executive Director Cloutier indicated the problem with block off Pontiac Trail is that the police need to be able to leave, if there is an emergency; if there is a train, the police have to go the other way. Parking needs to be open because of the tremendous amount of people. Data shows approximately 5,100 people attended last year throughout the way for Block Party. Many people park in that area and walk to the Block Party.

- Organization Committee

Vice Chair Osburn indicated the Committee did not meet but Executive Director Cloutier provided the Committee with a webinar for volunteer local which seems like an interesting option for finding and tracking volunteers. This was a company that was at the Main Street conference which has a management program that will help you set up your database for your volunteers. Volunteers can go in and create their own profile and be responsible for logging their hours worked. Signups can be held on there, as well. Executive Director Cloutier would like to discuss this program with the Organization Committee to see if this is something the Committee could utilize.

The next meeting is Tuesday, June 18th at 6:30 p.m. at Wixom Station. The volunteer appreciation will be discussed.

B. Downtown Business News/Events

- 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 – 8:00 p.m.

Public Comments:

No public comments.

Executive Director's Comments:

Executive Director Cloutier introduced Darby Hoppenstedt, who has filled out an application to be on the DDA Board. There is currently one vacancy. Executive Director Cloutier spoke with Mayor Beagle, and she thought Ms. Hoppenstedt would be a great fit and asset to the DDA. Mayor

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Beagle will bring her before City Council at the June 11th meeting for appointment. Ms. Hoppenstedt is a Wixom resident.

Executive Director Cloutier thanked the Board for allowing her to attend the National Main Street Conference, which was very beneficial. She stated she met so many amazing people, and it was a lot of fun. Birmingham, Alabama is very interesting, emerging city, she equates it to where Detroit was ten years ago. There is a lot to do in Birmingham but there are some cool things that they have done. Opening reception on the Sunday night under the overpass of a highway which they converted into a park. There is an amphitheater for music, a butterfly garden, dog park, seating areas and light displays at night. It was interesting to see what other cities are doing. There was a contingency of approximately 40 people from Oakland County; from the State of Michigan, there was approximately 100 plus. Over 2000 people participated at the conference from across the country. It was one of the biggest conferences Birmingham, Alabama had seen. The conference will be held in Philadelphia in 2025.

Executive Director Cloutier commented she will not be attending Derby Day next year, 2025. It is her son's graduation from college that weekend. She will leave the planning in very good, detail. She has notified Trivium Racing that she will not be attending.

Board Members' Comments:

Assistant City Manager Benson gave a short update on Renton. Bids are in hand to demolish the buildings. Currently working with the low bidder on trying to get demolition scheduled. This has gotten a little more complicated than anticipated, hoping to bring before City Council in June. Demolition is still on track but has slowed down a bit. On the brokerage services, the City has received proposals from a few different firms, the proposals are being evaluated. Assistant City Manager Benson would like to bring a recommendation for partnership to City Council in June. The City continues to market the site, as well. The West Retail building has been able to fill their leases quickly; the Green Goat space did leave, and a business is very close to signing a lease. There is a demand for space.

Assistant City Manager Benson stated the new park behind the library is very much constructed, almost completed. Hope to have some sort of celebration or ribbon cutting. The next step for the playground is that the concrete pads for the benches and the picnic tables will be poured this week or early next week. On June 10th or 11th, the turf will be last to be installed.

Adjournment:

MOTION by Board Member Meredith, second by Board Member Garmo to adjourn the meeting. This meeting of the Wixom Downtown Development Authority was motioned and adjourned at 6:25 p.m.

Mona Freiburger

Approved 6/25/24

Recording Secretary

Approved 6/25/24