CITY OF WIXOM
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
49045 PONTIAC TRAIL
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2021 - 7:30 A.M.

This meeting of the Wixom Downtown Development Authority came to order at 8:04 a.m. with the following individuals in attendance:

DDA MEMBERS: Chairperson Vanessa Willett, Vice-Chairperson Kristin Rzeznik, Amanda Habbouche, Russ Meredith, Carissa Serylo, and Patrick Beagle, Mayor

ABSENT: Excused: Kailee Fine, Melanie Cheney, Caleb Sheng;
Unexcused: 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.

Approval of Agenda:

MOTION by Board Member Meredith and second by Vice Chair Rzeznik to approve the Meeting Agenda.

VOTE: MOTION CARRIED

All in favor.
None opposed.

Approved 1/25/2022

Public Comments:

Ms. Jackie Duggan, introduced herself. She is the new chair for the Economic Vitality Committee. Ms. Duggan stated she is very excited about her new role. She is a financial advisor, she has business clients in the Wixom area and grew up in Wixom.

Approval of Minutes:

MOTION by Mayor Beagle and second by Board Member Meredith to approve the September 28, 2021, DDA Regular Meeting Minutes, as amended.

VOTE: MOTION CARRIED

Correspondence:

None

Executive Director's Report:

Director Cloutier overviewed her Executive Director's Report that is in the packet.

Sip N Stroll - Ladies Night Out was a huge success. There were approximately 300-400 ladies who participated in the event based on the count at the DDA table and reports from the businesses and pop-up shop vendors. Businesses reported their sales were up anywhere from 30-80%. The next Sip N Stroll - Ladies Night out is scheduled for March 16, 2022. Director Cloutier thanked Board Members Meredith, Serylo; Katie Guzowski, and Tamara Prechtel for their help in planning and running the event.

Currently, there are three vacancies in downtown as Classic Pilates Center moved out of their space. They are still located in Wixom. They needed a bigger facility that could not be provided for them in the downtown area. Director Cloutier indicated she has had conversations with one potential business. Also, one of the pop-up shop vendors from Sip N Stroll spoke to her regarding her interest in opening a storefront in downtown Wixom. She will set up a more formal discussion with her to continue the conversation.

The anticipation date for open the Junction is around Thanksgiving, provided the participating establishments have their permit approval from the MLCC. Further updates will be provided in Old Business on the agenda. The Promotions Committee is working on a grand opening.

Old Business:

A. Wixom Block Party

Approved 1/25/2022

Director Cloutier indicated the Board will need to decide whether this event will continue. Her recommendation is to focus on smaller events such as Derby Day, Sip N Stroll, etc., that directly benefit the downtown businesses. If the Board decides to move forward with the continuation of the Block Party, the September dates are: September 3, 2022 (Labor Day weekend), September 10, or 17 (Barkin' in the Park is September 18th), or September 24th.

Chair Willett commented the Block Party is a big event and she was opposed to this event for next year. She indicated the event was very successful this year but she would like to see the monthly or every other month revenue generation of the pop-up shops and individual stores.

Vice Chair Rzeznik indicated there were a lot of people who enjoyed the Block Party. There could be major improvements. Vice Chair Rzeznik recommended an outreach on the Facebook page to have more connections to the public and residents of Wixom before the Block Party is discontinued.

Mayor Beagle asked if there were many new visitors at Sip N Stroll from the previous year because if it is the same people attending, we are not really doing anything whereas if there is advanced planning for the Block Party, getting the bands and entertainment we want, we can try it for another year to see what happens. Director Cloutier indicated there were not registrations this time for Sip N Stroll. There is not a mechanism to track to see who was new or who was not. Board Member Meredith commented he was at the DDA table all day at the Block Party and he would say about 20% of the people said they were not from Wixom. A great percentage said they were not from Wixom when he asked. Board Member Meredith suggested having the merchants give them a 10% off one item, etc., which would be valid on their next visit.

Board Member Serylo indicated she recognized the same faces from the previous Sip N Stroll, whereas the Block Party, she felt like people that are at Total Sports, the kids just finished a game, saw there was an event going on and stopped by. As a business owner, she indicated she was not getting a lot of foot traffic in her salon, but there was a benefit for her to have a booth. Board Member Serylo stated she did make more sales this year. She indicated it is difficult for businesses to have a booth especially this year because of the lack of employees and staffing, but she is in favor of the Block Party.

Board Member Meredith suggested combining with Parks and Recreation with Bark in the Park on the same day to draw people on both ends of downtown. Director Cloutier indicated she would approach Ms. Magee from Parks and Recreation for her input on this suggestion.

There was more discussion about starting to plan the the Block Party earlier, setting a date, and to revisit this topic in November.

B. Social District

Approved 11/15/2021

Director Cloutier indicated she received the lowest quote for signage from Signarama. If the Board approves the quote, it will go before City Council tonight.

The quote from Signarama is in the amount of $4,733.00. There was a reduction in the amount of signs. The money will come out of the approved budget for $13,300.

Vice Chair Rzeznik thanked Schonsheck, Inc. for their donation towards paying for the first round of cups for the Junction. She asked if the cups were biodegradable (which they are not) and if the Board could purchase a few recycling bins. Director Cloutier stated she would price out the recycling bins. Cards will also be handed out for the Junction rules.

MOTION by Board Member Meredith and second by Board Member Serylo to approve $4,733 out of the Junction budget for signage, etc., to be placed throughout the City.

VOTE: MOTION CARRIED

All in favor.
None opposed.

C. DA Chair and Vice Chair Nominations and Elections

Chair Willett stated she had a conversation with Mayor Beagle and some of the Board members that she would be willing to stay on as Chairperson. DDA Board members have to be on the Board for at least one year in order to be Chairperson or Vice Chairperson, so this limits who can be asked.

Vice Chair Rzeznik indicated there are certain things that have to be done for her business and she will have less time to spend for the DDA, but if the Board is okay with this, she would be willing to stay on as Vice Chairperson.

MOTION by Mayor Beagle and second by Board Member Serylo to nominate and approve Vanessa Willett as Chairperson and Kristin Rzeznik as Vice Chairperson.

VOTE: MOTION CARRIED

All in favor.
None opposed.

D. Wixom Business Summit

Approved 1/25/2022

Chair Willett indicated they have cancelled the Wixom Business Summit due to poor participation. They are hoping that they can have the business summit next year when people would be more apt to participate.

Chair Willett stated that the Economic Vitality Committee chairperson is a very important position in the upcoming transformation of the downtown and in the future. She thanked, Ms. Duggan, for her acceptance on becoming Chairperson of the Economic Vitality Committee.

Assistant City Manager Benson commented the partnering and leveraging the resources with the Chamber was a great idea. One of the conclusions was this may not have been the type of event that businesses are looking to do at this time. They are not taking the partnership idea off of the table but to think about this in a different way. The Chamber is also having issues with some of their business to business events, and it is not a unique situation.

E. Committee: Design

Vice Chair Rzeznik indicated the Committee meets the first Tuesday of every month at 5:00 p.m. There is a great group of people who are on the Committee.

Vice Chair Rzeznik stated she would like to add more flowers to the downtown for 2022. Flowers are lacking on the west side of downtown. The Committee proposed to add brackets and flowers to twelve more light posts. The additional cost of the brackets is $2,450.08.

Chair Willett indicated she was out of town and saw the setup where the City was watering the flowers with a poly-tote in the back of the pickup truck. Her thought was this would be a cost savings of the DDA to pay the City for the equipment for this setup for the flowers and the maintenance versus paying the exorbitant amount of money for the services to another company.

Assistant City Manager Drew stated the City struggles with season help, who would, primarily, do this service. City Manager Brown indicated 2022 would be a tough year to start this arrangement but to get the information on the equipment and setup costs for the future.

MOTION by Vice Chair Rzeznik and second by Chair Willett to approve the cost for 12 additional brackets (sets of 2) for flowers in the amount of $2,450.08.

VOTE: MOTION CARRIED

All in favor.
None opposed.

There was a discussion that the maintenance cost is currently $29,450 which does not include the 12 additional light posts with 24 baskets of flowers. Director Cloutier indicated she would contact the greenhouse for the additional cost for maintenance.

Approved 1/25/202

Bike Racks. Director Cloutier stated she is in the process of getting a new quote for six bike racks to be purchased for Sibley Park. She was informed by the company where they ordered the last round of bike racks that the cost of steel is going up again by another 15%. They will submit a quote this week to lock in the price, put in the order and on hold until we are ready to go.

F. Committee: Promotions

Director Cloutier indicated the Committee has discussed how to utilize the Junction to bring in families to downtown. They have Downtown Dazzle which is lighting the buildings and trees. The Committee thought to incorporate what they are calling, Candy Cane Lane. The DDA would purchase candy canes for each participating business and the kids would come around with a bag (donated by Ashgrove Marketing). This would be a registered event. The parents could get a drink at one of the social district establishments, prizes would be passed out at the end, have a raffle, making lollipop suckers out of pool noodles to be in the common areas for holiday flair, and have selfie stations around downtown for this event.

Director Cloutier stated the Committee suggests a budget of $1,500 from the Events and Promotions budget for this event. The total breakdown for the budget: $900 for candy canes; $50 for posters; $300 for banners; $50 for raffle items and $20 for photo stations.

There was a discussion on a date, which was not set.

MOTION by Mayor Beagle and second by Board Member Habbouche to approve $1,500 (out of the Events and Promotions budget) for the Candy Cane Lane event.

VOTE: MOTION CARRIED

All in favor.
None opposed.

G. Committee: Economic Vitality

Chair Willett indicated the first meeting is next week. The Committee will meet monthly.

H. Committee: Organization

Director Cloutier indicated they have set up a monthly meeting for the first Monday of every month at Wixom Station at 4:30 p.m. The Committee is looking at putting a campaign together for recruitment of volunteers.

Vice Chair Rzeznik made a suggestion to have another call out for volunteers, giving them dates on when the Committees meet on the Facebook page.

Approved 1/25/2022

Chair Willett commented the Committees need more volunteers. It is difficult when there are only one to three people on each committee. As we move forward, it is going to require a lot more structure to do some of these projects.

New Business:

A. 2022 DDA Meeting Dates

Director Cloutier submitted the 2022 DDA Meeting dates.

MOTION by Board Member Meredith and second by Chair Willett to approve the 2022 DDA meeting dates.

VOTE: MOTION CARRIED

All in favor.
None opposed.

B. 2022 DDA Partnership Agreements

Director Cloutier indicated the Partnership Agreements are renewed every year. She asked the Board Members to submit the agreements to her no later than January 25, 2022.

C. MDA Conference Attendees

Director Cloutier indicated the annual, State-wide MDA Conference is November 4 and 5, 2021. The early bird registration is closed on October 28, 2021. Vice Chair Rzeznik, Board Member Serylo and Director Cloutier responded and indicated they are interested in attending the conference. Vice Chair Rzeznik indicated if any other DDA members would like to attend, she would forego attending. Board Member Meredith indicated he was interested in attending. The Conference has some great breakout sessions, it is a great networking event for the Board members to meet people from around the state and other DDAs, as well.

Chair Willett stated this Conference is a good thing to get involved with this year. If there is something to gain, great; if not, do not attend next year. She suggested to approve three spots and the Board members can discuss who will be attending.

MOTION by Vice Chair Rzeznik and second by Chair Willett to approve the cost of $585.00 for three attendees to the annual MDA Conference to be held on November 4-5, 2021, in Detroit, MI.

VOTE: MOTION CARRIED

Approved 1/25/2022

All in favor.
None opposed.

D. Executive Director Quarterly Review

Chair Willett stated the quarterly review was attended by Mayor Beagle, Vice Chair Rzeznik, City Manager Brown, Assistant City Manager Benson, Director Cloutier and herself (by phone). Part of the update this year was to gauge performance and effectiveness of Director Cloutier's contract in quarterly reviews. Several KPI's were put together earlier this year and this platform was followed for the reviews.

Chair Willett indicated they had seen some improvements in certain areas and some areas could not be gauged until the end of the year. Overall, we are, definitely, moving in the right direction. The quarterly reviews will continue because her contract will end in March, 2022.

Vice Chair Rzeznik stated some things came up during the review such as putting together the budget for 2022-23 to be sent over to the City in March. Chair Willett suggested doing another working session to discuss detailed line items, not just bulk amounts of money. She indicated she would prefer everything documented well because this is public money. Assistant City Manager Benson indicated for operating and general expenses, you want the flexibility in a lump sum amount. There is always backup documentation and receipts in case there are any questions.

Director Cloutier indicated she would schedule a budget working session to be held in January/February, 2022.

Assistant City Manager Benson indicated one of the things talked about in the review was having conversations with the City about the cost of services and reimbursements because, historically, it has been repaying bond debt.

Vice Chair Rzeznik stated another item that came up in the review was the amount of time Director Cloutier might spend on social media. She asked if there is a service to hire (outsource) to help alleviate the time spent on social media by Director Cloutier, in order for her to focus more on getting new businesses to the downtown and helping out the current businesses.

Vice Chair Rzeznik commented to have all of our processes documented so there are no questions. For instance, spending within a budget; the budget was approved for a bulk amount, is a quote then needed to be approved again for specific items by the Board. Looking back at the DDA Minutes from February, 2020, this is how it was set up. Chair Willett indicated she would prefer it this way, and also to get multiple quotes before it is decided to spend money.

Approved 1/25/2022

Vice Chair Rzeznik indicated there are some expenses that come out and she believes there should be a budget or spending threshold for Director Cloutier.

Vice Chair Rzeznik stated Director Cloutier is doing a good job, and moving in the right direction.

Director Cloutier indicated she gave a new handbook with more information to new Board Members Meredith and Serylo. It is her goal to have a new handbook for all of the Board Members.

Information:

A. Downtown Business News/Events

- 2021: November 4th - Business Summit - Cancelled
- 2021: November 24th - Downtown Dazzle: The tree lighting is Friday, Dec. 3, 2021.
- 2021: December 10th - Candy Cane Lane

Public Comments:

No public comments.

Executive Director's Comments:

Director Cloutier thanked the Board Members in everything they do; it is making a difference in the Downtown and the City. There were a lot of comments at Sip N Stroll in people seeing changes for the good.

Board Members' Comments:

Board Member Meredith also thanked his wife, who volunteered to help with the events.

Assistant City Manager Benson commented there is always a lot of interest with east retail in the downtown. They have talked about a new tenant but there is not a signed lease. He is optimistic that a lease would be signed.

Assistant City Manager Benson the Wixom dentist is in the process of getting permits with work to be done. They should be ready to open early next year. The City has been spending a lot of time with the Air Line Trail Phase 2. October deadlines with MDOT to submit paperwork to start moving forward for early 2022 and completed in 2022.

Approved 1/25/2022

Adjournment:

MOTION by Board Member Meredith, second by Chair Willett to adjourn the meeting. This meeting of the Wixom Downtown Development Authority was motioned and adjourned at 9:20 a.m.

Mona Freiburger
Recording Secretary

Approved 1/25/2022