CITY OF WIXOM
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
49045 PONTIAC TRAIL
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2020

This meeting of the Wixom Downtown Development Authority came to order at 7:38 a.m. with the following individuals in attendance:

DDA MEMBERS: Chairperson Caleb Sheng, Vice-Chairperson Kristin Rzeznik, Kailee Fine, Amanda Habbouche, John Smith, Vanessa Willett and Patrick Beagle, Mayor

ABSENT: Excused: Members Melanie Klebba-Cheney, Dino Grossi, Wes Umlor

STAFF: Steve Brown, City Manager, Sheryl Lucas, Administrative Assistant to City Manager, Laura Cloutier, Executive Director and Mona Freiburger, Recording Secretary

Determination of Quorum:

Quorum is 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 Vice Chair Rzeznik to approve the Meeting Agenda.

VOTE: MOTION CARRIED

Public Comments:

None

Approval of Minutes:

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MOTION by Vice Chair Rzeznik and second by Board Member Willett to approve the September 22, 2020, DDA Regular Meeting Minutes.

VOTE: MOTION CARRIED

Correspondence:

None

Old Business:

- Committee: Economic Vitality

Board Member Willett indicated they had another Economic Vitality meeting and set forth four additional dates. The Committee will be meeting every other week and continue with the downtown business visits. The Crowdfunding checks will be going out this week. Board Member Willett invited Mayor Beagle to help distribute the checks and to congratulate the local businesses.

In addition, Board Member Willett indicated due to the participation in the Crowdfunding, they would be receiving some additional funds from Oakland County. Those funds are to be utilized for additional economic help in the downtown. The Economic Vitality committee discussed using these funds for digital advertising to get people to come to the downtown businesses and to attract some additional businesses downtown. The additional funding is approximately $2,600. Board Member Willett thanked Ms. Cloutier for following up and for the team to help raise this money because it did bring in a total of over $10,000 to the downtown businesses.

Chairman Sheng stated there was a summary in the Oakland County Economic Outlook that they had a webcast on if anyone is interested and if they would like a copy of the summary. Chairman Sheng indicated it was an interesting article, not surprising of some of the negative things that happened but encouraging to see the forecast for rebound. Small businesses employ a lot of people, they also employ minority demographics, so we can help support our downtown as being a place where there are a lot of small businesses.

- Committee: Design

Vice Chair Rzeznik stated there are a few things going on with the Design committee. One being the bikes throughout downtown to promote the Airline Trail. Someone donated three new bikes. They are in the process of cleaning them up and painting them. Ms. Cloutier is talking to businesses to see if anybody is interested in putting them in front of their business. Ms. Cloutier is also working on revamping the sponsorship program.

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Ms. Cloutier indicated there was an interest of people wanting to sponsor a bike. A small fee of $50 would be charged to monies for the upkeep of the bikes, etc, and then being able to change out the signs when there are new sponsors. A resident from Milford drives through the area and comes to downtown Wixom to visit some of our restaurants, frequently. She and her sister loved the bikes and they were so excited to donate these bikes to us.

Vice Chair Rzeznik indicated a reminder email would be sent to all of the current sponsors to get them excited about the program because winter is right around the corner to decorate their bikes for the holiday season.

Vice Chair Rzeznik stated they were still working on the bike signage for the Airline Trail. They had a meeting with City Manager Brown and Tim from the City to talk about the process of getting bike racks in the downtown area. Ms. Cloutier is starting to work on the bid package.

Ms. Cloutier stated she received examples from a couple of the other DDA directors, bid packages and Ms. Deanna McGee provided her examples as well. Ms. Cloutier indicated she is going through and sorting to see the template and proceed from there. The engineering is fine, we need to move some of the bike racks, not to major locations, just where we thought we wanted to place them, specifically, in front of the Drafting Table.

City Manger Brown commented that they had a subsequent meeting with the Trailway Council, and they talked about different things, details related to bike racks. They were interested in having a larger capacity bike rack in the Country Corners, Drafting Table area because of the prior demand for it. The concept of having a temporary installation where these bike racks could be moved because of the location of the phase 2. City Manager Brown stated he would keep the DDA comprised of the information.

Vice Chair Rzeznik indicated they received approval first from the board and then later in the evening, approval from City Council on spending money to install lights on more trees at the intersection of Wixom Road and Old Wixom Road. The lights went up and we are waiting to turn them on closer to the holiday season.

- Event: Sip N Stroll - Ladies Night Out

Ms. Cloutier indicated she was asked to have a survey sent to our businesses to see who might be interested in Sip N Stroll. She stated she sent out a digital survey and did not get much of a response. Ms. Cloutier stated she went out and visited the businesses in person and only picked up two more businesses that said they were interested. Last year, almost every downtown business participated. Ms. Cloutier did not think seven businesses willing to participate is enough at this point. Board member Willett has been working with Ms. Cloutier on Sip N Stroll and they had been talking about possibly delaying this event to be closer to Downtown Dazzle when the lights turn on.

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Vice Chair Rzeznik thought it was a great idea to delay the event, maybe the next weekend. A lot of businesses right now are in a gray area to where they don't know what is going to happen once the weather starts cooling off. This is very concerning.

Ms. Cloutier stated, just like everything in the last six months, there are so many unknowns and must go day by day and go with the flow. At this point, the board is in agreement to delay this event towards when the lights turn on for Downtown Dazzle.

Ms. Willett indicated she was in agreement. We need to try and keep something going and since this event is more of an individual or a couple of friends going out event, maybe closer to November people would be more interested in shopping and eating out.

Vice Chair Rzeznik indicated even if it is cold out, we could encourage the participants to dress up in their winter finest and go downtown; it could be fun and businesses would be able to support this event.

Ms. Cloutier stated she was not so concerned about people coming out in the cold because last year's event was the first Wednesday in October and it was cold, pouring rain, and did not stop the 300 ladies participating.

Vice Chair Rzeznik asked when the downtown businesses were going to have their lights up to coordinate that all of the lights are up. Ms. Cloutier stated she has not told the businesses anything as of yet. If they were told to coordinate Downtown Dazzle and Sip N Stroll, the businesses should have them up by November 21st.

Vice Chair Rzeznik indicated Saturdays are probably already a popular time to go out, so a day where it might be a little bit slower and those people could come in and enjoy the inside.

City Manager Brown suggested to not proceed with the October 14, 2020 date, to give them a little more time. Vice Chair Rzeznik stating Drafting Table would rather have it during the week because Fridays and Saturdays are really busy.

Chair Sheng asked the Board members if anyone was opposed to letting, Vice Chair Rzeznik and the committee to pick a date and accept whatever date they pick within the next week to be the date that it is moved. Communication has not be sent out regarding the date of this event.

MOTION by Chair Sheng and second by Vice Chair Rzeznik to cancel Sip N Stroll on October 14, 2020 and to have Board Member Willett, Vice Chair Rzeznik and Board Member Smith will unanimously select a new date.

VOTE: MOTION CARRIED

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- Executive Director Review

Chair Sheng stated the DDA, kindly, received from City Council budget of $50,000 for Executive Director. The DDA hired Ms. Cloutier at $45,000. Day one was day one of the first COVID dine in shutdowns. Chair Sheng indicated Ms. Cloutier has done a great job, and she has worked far more than the expected hours per week than anticipated and she has had to do a lot of things at a moment's notice. The proposal last month was to bring Ms. Cloutier's salary per annum up to the original projected amount of $50K. Chair Sheng asked for the Board members' thoughts.

Mayor Beagle indicated he had a problem with this as everybody knew going in that this position was expected to take more hours to get things going and get used to the routine, etc. Mayor Beagle stated we are at a point now where we should set some parameters. Mayor Beagle indicated he had looked over the spread sheets and working an hour on Sundays updating the website, etc., are things that can be done during the hours scheduled to work. City Council approved this position as a part time position. Mayor Beagle stated he has worked for the government for 25 years prior to this and nobody in the City of Wixom has received a 10% raise on a job. Mayor Beagle stated he could not approve this request. Mayor Beagle stated he did not think anyone at this meeting has gotten a 10% raise at one time or another especially during times like this. Mayor Beagle indicated he thought Ms. Cloutier was doing a great job. The job was accepted at 45K, we all knew it was going to be a lot of work especially this is the first time for this. Number two, even if this gets approved here today, since this position was approved by the City, there may be and the salary was approved by City Council, if there is a pay increase, it has to go back to City Council for approval on the pay increase.

Board Member Willett stated she agreed with Mayor Beagle with some of what he said. She indicated Ms. Cloutier has done a great job. Board Member Willett indicated the Board didn't really have a lot of parameters set up due to the nature of the position being a contract position. Working weekends, she thought was could be avoided. The reason for the increase is that we did hire her at a lower rate than approved wherever the other candidates, if we had chosen them, had obviously asked for the full amount. Ms. Willett thought this was a partnership of her waiting to participate and show that she could do the job. Ms. Willett suggested an annual review. Mayor Beagle indicated he could not speak about approval by City Council, but he thought that way would be more logical. Mayor Beagle indicated Ms. Cloutier has done a great job but we haven't had a formal job review on this yet, Mayor Beagle stated it has nothing to do with the person and the job they are doing, it is the position and salary position.

Board Member Smith stated Ms. Cloutier has done a fantastic job and he appreciated Ms. Cloutier's work. Mr. Smith asked if $45K or $50K for a part time position compared to other DDA directors.

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Chair Sheng indicated he heard their comments and that it is the position, itself, versus the fact that we all acknowledge that Ms. Cloutier has done a great job. He reminded everyone that this is an Independent Contractor position, it is not an employee position. Ms. Cloutier has done a great job and factors much more heavily when you are talking about Independent Contractor. This is more from a business standpoint than a government standpoint which is that if someone does a good job, you incentivize them more frequently and more directly based on their performance. From a worker standpoint rather than the employee standpoint, having gone through a period where competing for a position, offering to go 10% under what is already budgeted for the position and then working much harder than was anticipated to meet the demands of the situation that were exceptional does deserve an exceptional and irregular reward in compensation for it. Chairman Sheng indicated it could be a flat-out bonus, not a budgetary raise. He stated whatever we don't spend on making Ms. Cloutier's compensation 50K per annum is going to be a bonus to ourselves because we did not give that to her. We acknowledge she has done a great job and that should factor into whether we pay her more or not because she is an Independent Contractor and not an employee.

Chair Sheng stated there seems to be two points here that do not have agreement among the Board. One is how heavily performance should weigh into the immediacy of compensation and then, secondly, whether there should be a compensation raise at all.

Chair Sheng proposed that the Board give something immediately even if it is not up to $5K, specifically, tied to the fact that there was an exceptional, and unprecedented challenge. Then, perhaps we can make an actual voting decision.

Ms. Cloutier indicated she understood the circumstances and she knows it is nothing personal.

Chair Sheng stated he would like to have a decision on exactly how the Board would proceed and make a decision soon. He stated he would like to make sure that the Board has something clear to give to Ms. Cloutier about the decision-making process, if they can't give her something in terms of compensation now.

New Business:

- Committee: Promotions

Board Member Smith stated he recently had a meeting with the Promotion Committee and in their discussion quickly realized that under the COVID circumstances, closures and inconsistent openings, our best approach is to have a digital emphasis and, of course, that is the way things are going anyway from a marketing standpoint. The biggest thing that came out of the meeting is to have business spotlights. Ms. Cloutier has been working on this in the past and we want to really dig in and emphasize the businesses. The Committee felt that there would be a dual threat, if you will, of not only highlighting the businesses but using our channels and our methods to show

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what we are doing to support businesses in the community. This would include having a YouTube channel where we could host the business spotlight, recordings, videos., etc. The Committee would also set up an Instagram channel that would allow us to have posts as an extension of the business spotlights as well as telling the rest of our story. We know our audience; Facebook reaches a certain demographic and Instagram reaches an even younger audience; millennials and Gen Z's are getting older and having more discretionary income. That is where we would have additional social channels to tell the story. Additionally, Board Member Smith talked about the website, continuing to add those features and highlight the businesses on our website. Also, to further highlight what we are doing as a DDA to put an emphasis on Ms. Cloutier, what she is doing and that we have an Executive Director, to highlight what we are doing and that we have a dedicated DDA director.

Chair Sheng stated this is, essentially, creating a YouTube channel, you host everything on there and then YouTube is so big that other platforms such as Facebook and such, they will allow embeds of video. You do not have to recreate the content, again. Then you drive traffic over to the channel.

Board Member Smith stated, in addition, you want to keep driving traffic back to your website. You are optimizing the video and the posts to, ultimately, drive people back to your main platform where you are telling your story.

Ms. Cloutier stated they also talked about partnering up with the historical society. She has talked to Ms. Laure Dorchak, the director of the historical society to highly some of the historical destinations.

- Event: Wednesdays in Wixom

Ms. Cloutier stated the Board needs to vote if they would like to continue with this event. This event has been a very successful program. The event would start on January 6, 2021 and go very week from thereon. Last year, $600 was budgeted but not all was spent. There is $167.11 left over from Wednesdays in Wixom last year. Ms. Cloutier asked the Board to move $500 from the raised money from Derby Day to Wednesdays in Wixom for the $600 budget.

MOTION by Mayor Beagle and second by Vice Chair Rzeznik to approve the continuation of Wednesdays in Wixom and a fund transfer of $500 from the Derby Day account to Wednesdays in Wixom.

VOTE: MOTION CARRIED

- Event: Derby Day

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Ms. Cloutier indicated she needed to get the contract with Trivium Racing. The Kentucky Derby as of right now is scheduled for May 1, 2021. Ms. Cloutier asked the Board if they would like to proceed with this event.

MOTION by Vice Chair Rzeznik and second by Board Member Habbouche to proceed with Derby Day, the 5K and 10K race on Saturday, May 1, 2021.

VOTE: MOTION CARRIED

Information:

- Wixom Business Forum Events (7:30 am)

City Manager Brown stated they have decided not to proceed with the business forum events. We are still subject to the indoor restrictions at 10 or less which is still prohibitive. City Manager Brown indicated he would like to speak to a couple of members of the DDA offline in terms of whether they would like to see the forum events start again and under what circumstances.

Vice Chair Rzeznik thought instead of having a forum format, if they would highlight some of the other businesses throughout the City of Wixom; maybe businesses who are doing a great job, either they have had to pivot their business or now in manufacturing of PPE, just to keep the feature of the local businesses alive.

- Downtown Business News/Events

City Manager Brown indicated he wanted to talk about something briefly, big news on the city front at the former Ford Wixom plant property, currently owned by ICP, there is, potentially, something that is going to be dropped on in terms of the plans for the development this week. It would be a major development that would really change things on Wixom Road.

Public Comments:

Mr. Tim Colbeck, Oakland County, stated he notified Ms. Cloutier on Friday, he heard discussion of a couple of projects that are being worked on, either expanding the bike racks or the Downtown Dazzle light installation. The Flagstar program that is a place making grants that could go up to $1,000. Typically, the $1,000 is paid as a reimbursement, depending on the project. It is eligible for both private and public entities. It is a maximum of $1,000 but the community is eligible to apply multiple times.

Executive Director's Comments:

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Ms. Cloutier indicated Governor Whitmer declared Saturday, September 26, 2020 as downtown day throughout the State. This is to help promote and generate people into downtown areas to support our small businesses. Many of the restaurants have decided to have specials on that day. For instance, Trail's Edge is having 10% off of hand scoop ice cream. Wixom Station is going to have $5 off of selected appetizer to celebrate downtown day. The Facebook page started promoting downtown day.

Board Members' Comments:

Mayor Beagle stated he drove through Lyon Township and their downtown merchants have a new slogan called, Show Your Love for Lyon and it is to spur businesses in their business area. They have installed banner flags that say, Eat Local, Buy Local, Shop Local. Mayor Beagle asked the Promotions Committee to look into doing something like this because it certainly caught his eye as he was driving through.

Board Member Willett stated she goes through Lyon Township quite a bit and she had talked to Ms. Cloutier about the flags as well. The flags are great, they are narrow, and simple but get the point across. Another type of advertisement.

Board Member Smith indicated from a promotion's standpoint, he agreed. There has been a lengthy banner discussion over the last few years. New rules have been established with the city as far as developing banners. Board Member Smith stated he would love to revisit this and be able to use banners to signify that we have a designated downtown area.

Board Member Smith stated he felt that Ms. Cloutier is doing a wonderful job, she truly hit the ground running especially during the pandemic. Ms. Cloutier's presence in the downtown by going out to all of the businesses, they know who she is, they reach out to her and she has kept us all so informed on changes, financial opportunities at both the local and state levels. Board member Smith thanked Ms. Cloutier for everything she has done.

Board Member Smith indicated he loved the video spotlight for promotions. He asked if Board members should take stock photos for social media with words on it, it does not hit as many people but if you do photos of products or people, or videos that hits so many more people on both Facebook and Instagram. Board Member Smith encouraged the members to gather the stock photos so that Ms. Cloutier could pull photos when she needs them, if she doesn't have time to go out and take photos.

City Manager Brown indicated there is a local resident that loves to take pictures and does a great job. The City uses a lot of his pictures to create photos on the website. He does a great job of keeping his services very reasonable and he does nice work as well. If the Board members are interested to contact his office for this information.

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Board Member Smith indicated as part of Josh's retainer, he does video and editing. If an additional resource is needed, it is a great idea to explore.

Vice Chair Rzeznik indicated the Lake Area Community Coalition is doing an event on Sunday, a formal bike ride event that will be on our Airline Trail. The yard signs are posted. She encouraged anybody who is available and if they have time, to participate in this event. There is a special discount at Drafting Table for participants. Vice Chair Rzeznik asked everyone to be cautious of increased bike traffic at this time.

Adjournment:

MOTION by Mayor Beagle to adjourn the meeting. Board Member Smith second the motion. This meeting of the Wixom Downtown Development Authority was motioned and adjourned at 8:45 a.m.

Mona Freiburger
Recording Secretary

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