CITY OF WIXOM
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
49045 PONTIAC TRAIL
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2021

This meeting of the Wixom Downtown Development Authority came to order at 7:52 a.m. with the following individuals in attendance:

DDA MEMBERS:	Chairperson Vanessa Willett, Vice-Chairperson Kristin Rzeznik, Amanda Habbouche, Russell Meredith, and Patrick Beagle, Mayor
ABSENT:	Excused: M. Cheney, K. Fine, C. Serylo, C. Sheng Not Excused: W. 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 Vice Chair Rzeznik and second by Board Member Meredith to approve the Meeting Agenda.

VOTE: **MOTION CARRIED**

Public Comments:

No public comments

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Approval of Minutes:

MOTION by Mayor Beagle and second by Board Habbouche to approve the August 10, 2021, DDA Regular Meeting Minutes, as presented.

VOTE: MOTION CARRIED

Correspondence:

None

Executive Director's Report:

Director Cloutier provided highlights:

Block Party: The weather was perfect. She indicated she received very good feedback from the vendors on their survey. There were 30 vendors for the Block Party. There were approximately 300 adults who entered the raffle for the Taste of Wixom bag. Board Member Meredith was at the DDA table pretty much all day. Board Member Meredith commented there were probably twice as many people who did not take a raffle ticket. Director Cloutier gave thanks all of the Block Party Committee members which included: Board members Habbouche, Serylo, Meredith and Mayor Beagle.

Director Cloutier stated the DDA's social media continues to increase engagement and followers. She provided everyone with the analytics for the end of July through the end of August for the website. Traffic was up 22.2%.

There is a new business moving downtown. Dr. Hussein Berry is opening a dental office at the old Express Employment and State Farm building. Director Cloutier has been in direct communication with Dr. Berry and he is excited to join our business community and looks forward to participating in many DDA events and initiatives.

The Junction has been front and center and continues to move along in the planning. It is Director Cloutier's hope to have it open by Thanksgiving weekend. Supply chain issues are creating a delay in receiving quotes and delivery of items needed for the Junction to open.

The finances, especially the events and promotions, it looks like that the DDA has gone over budget, which it has not. Block Party was all donated sponsorship money; the vendor fees and the $5,000 that was moved over from Derby Day. The promotions portion does not come out as an expenditure. The expenditures come out of the events and promotions.

Chair Willett inquired about the co-marketing campaign with Parks and Recreation. The Parks and Recreation department used to send out their own sponsorship list. The DDA sent out their

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sponsorship campaign, as well. It was decided this past year in February to combine the sponsorship campaign. The sponsorship list was combined and sent out to those companies.

Old Business:

A. Wixom Block Party

Director Cloutier reported the Wixom Block Party was held on Saturday, September 18, 2021, and it was a beautiful day. The vendors, food truck operators and many people who attended were very complimentary of the event. The survey results, as of September 22, 2021, sent to the vendors, artists and food trucks operators, was provided to the DDA Board Members. Many people visited the DDA booth and 279 people entered the "Taste of Wixom" raffle.

Chair Willett commented this event is a big undertaking and it was discussed earlier this year whether there should be a Block Party held this year with the concerns of COVID. Chair Willet stated we are a small group of people, and we do not have a lot of volunteers. Many hours were spent on the planning for this event. Next year, we are going to have to incorporate some of the other committees or get additional help because there is a lot of work to take on with a small group. Director Cloutier indicated the volunteer participation was up from two years ago for the Block Party. There are seven additional volunteer applications.

City Manager Brown commented if the event brought in 1,500 people for a one-day event to the businesses in the downtown area, if this translates into a win for the businesses in the long run.

Board Member Meredith commented he did have a chance to talk to some of the business; the ones that he did talk to said they had a good day during the event.

Mayor Beagle commented if this event were to happen again, we needed to start planning in March, not August, because some of the problems when you plan an event like this in six weeks, you are going to have issues with food trucks, bands, getting volunteers, etc.

Chair Willett indicated the DDA should pick and finalize the dates for their events ahead of time, such as December, then transfer a copy over to Parks and Recreation. Director Cloutier indicated during the August DDA meeting; the Board voted on the dates through June.

Vice Chair Rzeznik commented the people she had spoken with, they indicated this was the best Block Party out of the last five years. She was happy to see people out and about the downtown. Drafting Table had a great day in sales, but then the beer tent, they did not do as good as last year. Vice Chair Rzeznik stated she sent her metrics in their increase in sales for that day. Their increase in sales was about 28% from a normal Saturday, which was great. It was very beneficial to their business because it was a reminder to people that the Drafting Table is still there.

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Director Cloutier commented the purpose of the Block Party, in the past, was to promote and give exposure to those businesses at that end of Pontiac Trail; everything was continuously happening down at the east end of downtown. Mayor Beagle commented the whole purpose of the block party is to bring people to Wixom to see what we have and have them come back.

B. Social District

Director Cloutier commented the planning for the Junction is moving along. Due to a decrease and revision in the amount of signage, they are actively seeking new quotes. Director Cloutier provided the budget for the Junction based on the approved $13,300.00 at the August 19, 2021, DDA meeting.

Director Cloutier stated she had talked to Schonsheck, and they agreed to sponsor the first round of Social District cups, up to $1,000. The DDA received a $1,000 grant from Main Street Oakland County to reimburse participating business for the permit fees. Drafting Table and Wixom Station are the participants as of now. Director Cloutier is working with Alex's and Volare's for their participation.

C. Committee: Design

The Design Committee continues to meet and has been focusing on the furnishings for the Junction, expanding the flowers on the light posts for the next fiscal year, and preparing for Downtown Dazzle.

Vice Chair Rzeznik commented Downtown Dazzle will be starting the end of November. They need to reach out to all of the businesses regarding participation. Most of the businesses have already made the investment; it is getting the lights back up. Director Cloutier has been coordinating with Zorro's. Lynn from the Design Committee will be looking at the flowers for next year and Director Cloutier is working on the budget numbers.

Chair Willett inquired about the bike racks, if additional bike racks were in the budget and installed. Director Cloutier indicated they started with a partial order. They did receive a second quote, but she is working on getting another quote. The sidewalks across the street are not wide enough, so the racks were installed on the west end of Pontiac Trail. They would have to go into Sibley Park but cement would have to be installed. Assistant City Manager Benson indicated he would look into the installation of the concrete pads or asphalt when the pathway is installed.

Vice Chair Rzeznik indicated the city has a lot of picnic tables that they use for concerts/events. She inquired if the DDA could use the picnic table until the DDA budgets for furnishings. Then the following year, the DDA can work on a budget for tables.

D. Committee: Promotions

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The Promotions Committee continues to meet and has been focusing on programming around the Junction. The Committee would like to see many small year-round activities/events in the downtown.

It was suggested at the last Promotion Committee meeting to do a candy cane hunt for the families/kids. Candy canes could be available at every business, a different flavor at every business. As a parent, they could get their social district cup and walk with their children on a candy cane hunt with prizes.

E. Committee: Economic Vitality

Chair Willett commented the Economic Vitality Committee has not met; they have had a couple of tentative dates. The planning has come together well. They are trying to get a joint partnership with Lakes Area Chamber. The Summit is focusing on business to business.

Assistant City Manager Benson indicated advertisement goes out today, September 28th. The portal for registration was not active yet. The Chamber will send their invitations out tomorrow to their network. The anticipated numbers are approximately 200; they are looking for up to 40 vendor booths. It would be a mixture of networking, meeting each other and finding out about opportunities. There are ideas in terms of facilitating networking whether it is business card raffles, etc. It is free for people to attend. The goal is not have only businesses that are participating but other businesses coming in, walking around, checking out the vendors to see if they would fit into their business network, as well.

F. Committee: Organization

Director Cloutier indicated they have been gathering information from the Block Party, the two summer concert booths, reaching out to people that filled out the volunteer forms to see their interests.

Board Member Meredith asked if the volunteer meetings could be held, possibly, twice a year in the evening or set up to what is best for everyone's schedule. Director Cloutier indicated yes.

New Business:

A. DDA Chair and Vice Chair Elections Upcoming

The DDA annual elections will occur at the October DDA Board meeting. Both Chairperson Willett and Vice Chairperson Rzeznik terms will be expiring. If any board member is interested in either of these positions, please speak with Director Cloutier, Chairperson Willett and/or Vice Chairperson Rzeznik.

B. Sip n Stroll -- Ladies Night Out

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The next Sip n Stroll - Ladies Night Out is on Wednesday, October 20, 2021, from 5:00 to 9:00 p.m. The organization committee is busy securing popup shop vendors, coordinating with downtown businesses, producing marketing materials, etc. The Sip n Stroll continues to be funded by donated monies from Wixom businesses. Currently this event has a total of $1,136.90. The funds that are not spent from previous Sip n Strolls are carried over to the next year.

Director Cloutier indicated they had the idea of getting a supply of pumpkins delivered to line the street and storefronts with pumpkins to give a little fall flair for encouraging the ladies to dress in costume. There will not be any Bingo cards this year.

It was suggested to have the Halloween costume participants to get their photo taken. The photos would be uploaded onto the DDA Facebook page for a prize.

MOTION by Mayor Beagle and second by Board Member Meredith to approve $1,136.90 for the budget for Sip N Stroll/Ladies Night Out, to be held on Wednesday, October 20, 2021.

VOTE: MOTION CARRIED

C. Wednesdays in Wixom

Director Cloutier indicated they have about a $600 budget for this event, Wednesdays in Wixom. The dates have been set for Wednesdays starting January 5, 2022, and will end the last Wednesday in February, 2022.

MOTION by Vice Chair Rzeznik and second by Mayor Beagle to approve $600 for the budget for Wednesdays in Wixom, 2022.

VOTE: MOTION CARRIED

D. Membership to Michigan Downtown Association

The Michigan Downtown Association is an organization that provides resources and support to DDAs and municipalities across the State. They host workshops in many areas such as economic and business development, DDA specific trainings, and more. Also, advocate the importance of downtowns and the funding through TIF with policy makers at the country and state levels. The City of Wixom has had a membership in the past but has encouraged the DDA to become a member. The membership is $225.00 for a yearly membership.

Chair Willett asked what the benefit is of the City for the membership. City Manager Brown indicated the membership has been maintained for a few years, started in the early stages of the Downtown Development Authority. The whole idea was to be in association with the DDA. It is low impact in terms of expense but may be worth maintaining the membership for another year

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to see the benefit. Assistant City Manager Benson commented you get what you put into it. He indicated, it is up for debate, but there is usually a lobbying organization for this. They were probably involved with social districts, the legislation that allowed it, and the extension. There are educational opportunities, as well.

MOTION by Chair Willett and second by Board Member Habbouche to approve $225 for 2022 Membership to Michigan Downtown Association.

VOTE: MOTION CARRIED

E. Michigan Trails Magazine Advertisement

The DDA was approached by Michigan Trails Magazine to place an ad to promote downtown Wixom. The last time the DDA placed an ad with them was in 2020. This publication provides detailed maps, photos and information on Michigan's non-motorized trails. The Michigan Trails Magazine use has tripled in the past two years according to the Michigan DNR. With an ad in the Michigan Trails Magazine, it not only promotes the Michigan Airline Trail, but downtown Wixom, as well.

Director Cloutier recommended to the Board to purchase an eighth of a page ad in the Michigan Trails Magazine at a cost of $375.25 from the Marketing and Branding account.

Vice Chair Rzeznik commented the Drafting Table advertises in this magazine; people love flipping through the magazine. It shows every bike trail in Michigan. A presence in the magazine would be beneficial to continue especially since the start of Phase 2 of the trail would be soon to promote Wixom.

Chair Willett commented to advertise the downtown and the Junction; promote people riding their bikes, walking around town, etc. Also, to mention the Michigan Air Line Trail. It was suggested to purchase a bigger space for advertisement from 1/8 page to 1/4 page. Assistant City Manager Benson indicated he would contact the Air Line Council to see if they would like to participate/to be a partner for the advertisement.

MOTION by Vice Chair Rzeznik and second by Board Member Meredith to approve $736.25 for one quarter (1/4) page advertisement in the Michigan Trails Magazine.

VOTE: MOTION CARRIED

Information:

A. Downtown Business News/Events

- 2021: October 20th - Sip n Stroll - Ladies Night Out

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- 2021: Wixom Business Forum

Assistant City Manager Benson indicated everyone should have received an email that morning advertising both the business forum and the business summit. The next business forum is on October 12, 2021 at 11:30 a.m. It will be held at Bluewater Technologies. They will be meeting with Ms. Amanda Eisbrenner, Sr. Business Development Manager from the MEDC (Michigan Economic Development Corporation), talking about the different incentives and programs they have for businesses. Teriyaki Madness will likely be the food provider for this event.

Assistant City Manager Benson stated they met with the library board and Oakland County. The initial inclination, the library will likely opt out and they will have the opportunity to do so as soon as the plan is extended. That's approximately $50,000 a year that could, potentially, go away. They will have the opportunity to opt out as soon as their next millage renewal which would be 2026, one year before the current plan expires.

- 2021: November 4th - Business Summit

Public Comments:

No public comments.

Executive Director's Comments:

No additional comments.

Board Members' Comments:

Board Member Meredith commented there could be another COVID variant; it is not big yet, but the probability is there. Assistant City Manager Benson indicated there are a lot of ways for outdoor dining to happen, could be challenging but should be a non-issue.

Mayor Beagle commented the Block Party was a huge success. One disappointment was, Adopt a Pet. The City had, Bark in the Park. He indicated that we need to be very considerate of other events and work together to not have this happen again.

Chair Willett indicated she appreciated the comments. She spoke with Ms. Deanna Magee at Parks and Recreation to find the best course at the last moment. Chair Willett indicated she would like to get the event dates ahead of time to be aware of everything and conflicts. They are working towards joint sponsorship and looking for other departments to work towards collaboration in making this the best city. Chair Willett apologized, and indicated she was not aware of the conflict.

Adjournment:

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MOTION by Chair Willett, second by Mayor Beagle to adjourn the meeting. This meeting of the Wixom Downtown Development Authority was motioned and adjourned at 9:10 a.m.

Mona Freiburger
Recording Secretary

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