CITY OF WIXOM
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
49045 PONTIAC TRAIL
TUESDAY, JANUARY 28, 2025

This meeting of the Wixom Downtown Development Authority came to order at 7:30 a.m. with the following individuals in attendance:

DDA MEMBERS: Chairperson Jessica Buck; Carissa Osburn, Vice Chairperson; Board Members: Mark Garmo; Kaitie Guzowski; Darby Hoppenstadt; Leslie Payment; Vanessa Willett; Patrick Beagle, Mayor

ABSENT: Excused: Russ Meredith

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.

Changes or Additions to the Agenda:

None

Public Comments:

None

Approved 2/25/2025

Approval of Minutes:

MOTION by Mayor Beagle and second by Board Member Payment to approve the November 19, 2024, regular DDA Regular Meeting Minutes, as presented.

VOTE: MOTION CARRIED

MOTION by Mayor Beagle and second by Board Member Payment to approve the November 20, 2024, DDA Strategic Project Planning Session Meeting Minutes, as presented.

VOTE: MOTION CARRIED

Correspondence:

None

Executive Director's Report: December, 2024/January, 2025

Executive Director Cloutier highlighted her report of December, 2024/January, 2025, which is included in the packet.

Executive Director Cloutier presented the second annual DDA informational presentation to City Council on December 10, 2024.

Candy Cane Lane took place on December 11, 2024. It was a fantastic event with many kids in attendance, and everyone loved Santa and Buddy the Elf.

Executive Director Cloutier has been meeting with Guide Studio, who is here today, for their sign design presentation. We've been receiving updates at the 60% and 90% stages.

Executive Director Cloutier attended the Main Street Oakland County Manager's meetings and kicked off the City of Wixom Master Plan. She participated in that discussion and completed the evaluation required by National Main Street a few weeks ago. This will position the DDA at the affiliate level, and there will be a presentation to City Council. Once the process with National Main Street is complete, we will receive a certificate, which will help us work toward Select Community status.

Wednesdays in Wixom have officially started. Thanks to everyone involved in making this happen.

Old Business:

1. Guide Studio Signage Presentation

Approved 2/25/2025

Guide Studio will present the 90% signage package that has been created as a part of the rebranding process. This work has been developing over the past year and multiple meetings have occurred between Guide Studio and the executive team of City Manager Brown, Assistant City Manager Benson, Director Magee, and Executive Director Cloutier. This process has reached the phase of 90% and is ready to be shown to both the DDA Board and City Council. Please take time to review the packet and be prepared to provide feedback, if necessary.

Presentation is in the packet.

Assistant City Manager Benson did a quick introduction of Kevin and Erica, Guide Studio. Back in May 2024, the 30% signage plan was presented which included locations, rough cost estimates, and signage designs. Since then, we've continued working with Guide Studio to refine the plans, including the specific placements, which is the focus of today's presentation.

The goal is to gather feedback to ensure that the DDA Board and City Council agree that these plans align with your vision for wayfinding and gateway signage. If the Board is satisfied with the designs, they will seek consensus to move forward with bidding.

Assistant City Manager Benson indicated in about six to eight weeks; they will bring the Board the actual costs to evaluate if they align with the budget discussions. They will not be asking for authorization to spend at this point but rather seeking consensus that the plans are appropriate and in line with what you would like to have installed later this year.

Kevin stated he responded to the request for a proposal, engaged in discussions with the client's floor team, met with the steering committee, and submitted it to the City.

The discovery session was a crucial step, as it allowed them to hear directly from the Board—the experts and members of the community. The input helped shape the brand, which the Board has all seen by now. With the brand now live, Guide Studio is extending it further through wayfinding, an essential component of the overall branding effort.

To guide this process, Guide Studio conducted a wayfinding assessment to strategically determine sign placements and identify needs without oversaturating the area with signage. Following this, Guide Studio developed a conceptual design, and the steering committee selected a direction. As Assistant City Manager Benson mentioned, they have moved from schematic design to a bid package. Once a decision is made on implementation, this package can be released either as a whole or in parts for fabricators to bid on the work.

This is a high-level overview of our strategy, ensuring that we keep our guiding principles in mind. Our top priority is driving traffic downtown.

One of the biggest challenges identified was encouraging travelers to bypass highway fast-food restaurants and instead visit downtown Wixom. The assessment revealed that most destinations are accessed via main roads. Therefore, Guide Studio is directing signage toward locations closest to key intersections along these main roads. This approach ensures a more seamless navigation experience, making it easier for visitors to find their destinations.

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Beyond navigation, Guide Studio aimed to enhance the downtown experience through placemaking. This means not only guiding people but also creating a sense of place that makes downtown feel special. They identified key impact areas—such as the water tower—where the brand can be prominently showcased. Additionally, they are incorporating pedestrian and bike signage to improve accessibility.

Furthermore, Guide Studio is standardizing signage across parks and facilities to maintain a consistent look and feel. Also discussed was developing a historical signage element to highlight Wixom's rich history.

Civic Center Signage and Wayfinding System: In the Civic Center, multiple signs appear to be layered on top of each other. However, it is important to note that these visuals are not to scale. The system is designed to work cohesively, with signs varying in size and placement—some larger and more prominent, while others are simple glass applications.

Guide Studio identified a set of special cases, categorized as Phase Two, which will be implemented at a later stage in coordination with Assistant City Manager Benson and the team. These decisions are based on ongoing construction projects to ensure strategic placement, avoiding unnecessary installations that might need removal within six months to a year.

Design Development: As previously mentioned, this phase moves the project from schematic concepts to detailed designs, ensuring accurate bids can be obtained.

Citywide Gateways**:** The signage system includes custom mesh patterns with an "X" design, allowing for transparency and preventing the signs from feeling too heavy. The materials incorporate modern elements alongside traditional masonry, striking a balance between contemporary aesthetics and the city's historical character.

Two styles of citywide gateways have been developed:

- Horizontal Gateway**:** Used in areas with sufficient space for a wider layout.
- Vertical Gateway**:** Designed for locations with space constraints, featuring a recessed "X" element for a carved-out effect.

Additionally, a third gateway style is planned for residential areas and lower-traffic zones. While not considered primary city entry points, these signs will mark jurisdictional boundaries in a cost-effective yet distinctive manner.

Vehicular Directional Signage: Federal guidelines dictate message limitations and type size requirements. The signage system maintains a consistent design, incorporating the custom mesh and separate message panels that allow for easy updates when needed.

- Standard Directional Signs**:**
  - Utilize the mesh design with interchangeable message panels.
  - Comply with federal text size regulations.
- Oversized Directional Signs**:**
  - Required for roads with speed limits over 35 mph, necessitating 5-inch text instead of 4-inch.

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    - Mounted on two posts for structural stability against wind and other environmental factors.
    - Used sparingly for high-speed roads.
- Single-Message Directional Signs**:**
    - Positioned at one-turn-off locations from main roads.
    - Designed in standard and oversized formats, following the same structural guidelines.

Downtown Directional Signage: For directing traffic downtown, a unique sign has been developed incorporating the downtown logo. This design retains the same structural and color scheme as the other signs but includes a red arrow for emphasis, clearly guiding visitors toward the downtown area.

Downtown Entry Signage: Currently, the Village Center sign marks the downtown entrance. Rather than replacing it entirely, a new sign will be placed over the existing masonry structure. This sign will maintain the system's visual language, incorporating the signature mesh pattern. However, because of the solid background, a light blue color will be used to create a dimensional effect rather than transparency.

Assistant City Manager Benson stated this is similar to what was looked to do at the West End Commons.

The committee discussed the implementation of signage to enhance navigation and identity within the downtown area. Various entry points from the east, west, and north were considered, with special attention given to the triangular area marking the primary entrance. Due to space constraints, a post-mounted sign design was proposed. Downtown signage will feature a dark blue background and black posts to create a cohesive and distinct aesthetic.

Downtown signage will incorporate a consistent design scheme, transitioning from city-wide signs that feature "Wixom" at the top to those that emphasize the downtown identity.

Signage Numbering and Placement**:** Board Member Willett inquired about the numbering of signs and how additions would be handled in the future. Assistant City Manager Benson explained that new signs would be assigned numbers out of sequence but would maintain their designated colors.

Board Member Willett noted that signage is categorized by color and number, raising concerns about potential inconsistencies when new signs are added.

Assistant City Manager Benson clarified that while numbers may not follow a strict order, the color-coding and category system will ensure clarity.

Digital Signage and Trail Integration: Board Member Guzowski asked about the "Digital ID New" signage, which was confirmed to be for the fire station. Kevin discussed public parking signage, including the need for mesh-backed signs when mounted to utility poles. The committee explored the concept of trailhead and wayfinding signs for the Michigan Air Line Trail. While not all are traditional trailheads, these signs will direct visitors toward downtown Wixom. Assistant City Manager Benson confirmed that these signs are included in phase two of the implementation plan.

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Project Phases and Cost Considerations**:** The committee reviewed the split between phase one and phase two, acknowledging that not all signs will be installed immediately. Assistant City Manager Benson suggested bundling signage for cost efficiency, allowing adjustments based on budget constraints.

Board Member Willett proposed seeking sponsorships from local businesses to fund trail-related signage. Assistant City Manager Benson acknowledged potential challenges, including structuring sponsorships and ensuring long-term maintenance.

Coordination with Air Line Trail and Design Aesthetics: Board Member Guzowski emphasized the importance of aligning new signage with existing Air Line Trail signs.

Executive Director Cloutier noted that this consideration contributed to moving some elements to phase two. Board Member Guzowski advocated for prioritizing trail signage in phase one, highlighting the anticipated influx of visitors with the trail's completion. Board Member Payment supported this, emphasizing the need to distinguish Wixom through signage.

Kiosks and Historical Markers**:** Kevin introduced the concept of kiosks to provide detailed local information, including maps and business listings. These kiosks will feature interchangeable acrylic panels, allowing updates for seasonal events. Historical markers were proposed to educate residents and visitors about Wixom's history, encouraging exploration. Assistant City Manager Benson noted that historical markers would be part of phase two, as content development is required.

Sign Durability and Placement: Board Member Payment inquired about the sturdiness of signs and their potential to serve as protective barriers. Assistant City Manager Benson stated that while some signs may have concrete bases, they are not designed for high-volume placement. Board Member Payment suggested strategic placement for both informational and safety purposes, particularly along Pontiac Trail.

Facility and Park Signage**:** Facility signs will be updated with the correct fonts and aluminum finishes for improved readability. Glass-entry signs will use branded fonts and maintain consistent placement of operational details. Park signage will incorporate a lighter blue background for differentiation while maintaining a cohesive look with city-wide signage. Board Member Willett questioned the omission of green, previously associated with Parks and Rec branding. Executive Director Cloutier and Assistant City Manager Benson explained that green signage blended too much with natural surroundings, making visibility a concern.

Public Art and Branding Opportunities**:** Kevin presented a proposal for a large "WXM" sign as an interactive photo opportunity, featuring underlighting for nighttime visibility. The committee discussed potential locations, with Assistant City Manager Benson suggesting the civic center campus. Cost considerations will influence the final decision on implementation.

The presentation concluded with a review of all signage elements and their intended functions. The committee acknowledged the importance of cohesive branding while allowing flexibility for future developments. The discussion emphasized the need for effective placement, funding strategies, and coordination with existing infrastructure.

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The discussion revolves around the design and placement of signage for the city of Wixom, focusing on two main elements: gateway signs and informational kiosks.

The Gateway Signs: There was discussion about the style and visibility of the signs. Some members prefer the vertical signs for their distinctiveness, while others advocate for consistency across signs. The key point raised is the desire to make “Wixom” more prominent, especially at entry points, so visitors can easily recognize they are in the downtown area. Suggestions include swapping the signs' text to emphasize "Wixom" rather than just "downtown." Additionally, there’s discussion about lighting, especially for the police station sign, to ensure visibility. Some feel the city hall sign should be less emphasized in comparison to the police station.

Kiosk Signs: There’s concern about the maintenance of kiosks, as they require constant updates to stay relevant. The group wants to avoid them becoming outdated and neglected, as seen with other kiosks in the city. The idea is that kiosks would replace other city signs and offer updated information for events, but only if they can be effectively managed and maintained.

The discussion also touched on how signage should blend into the environment and be practical. The goal is to ensure that the signage enhances the City’s visibility and offers a clear sense of location for residents and visitors.

The next steps involve finalizing design details and discussing the schedules for installation.

2. Wixom DDA Strategic Project Planning Results

On November 20, 2024, the DDA Board met to review and discuss its Strategic Project Planning worksheet with the purpose of setting priorities for future projects to help direct administration for budget planning purposes. Each future project has been given a score passed on the overall responses from Board members. Please review and be prepared to discuss.

Chairperson Buck stated the results are in the packet.

Assistant City Manager Benson commented Executive Director Cloutier and himself would take this and use the worksheet to prepare a budget which would be presented to the Board and then fine-tuned.

Board Member Payment indicated it seemed that the Board Members were in line with the priorities on the projects.

Board Member Guzowski commented the downtown sidewalks are not getting plowed. Executive Director Cloutier stated she has been in communications with Tim Sikma, DPW, regarding the agreement and the agreement states 72 hours; DPW does not come out on the weekend because it is overtime. Director Cloutier commented she is continually addressing this subject with DPW.

Assistant City Manager Benson commented 48/72 hours also depends on the snow system, and in full transparency, sidewalks are one of the later things done. The priorities lie in plowing the streets.

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Chairperson Buck stated she appreciated DPW's efforts. The review of the DPW maintenance section is a top priority, and she would like Mr. Sikma to attend one of the DDA meetings to review this as a Board.

3. POW! Strategies Strategic Plan Matrix

In October, 2024, the DDA Board held a Strategic Planning Session with a consultant from POW! Strategies. This process took the DDA through many areas such as SWOT analysis, projects to complete in downtown, creating new mission and vision statements, and more. The given outcome to this process was a 3-to-5-year Strategic Plan that would help guide the work the DDA is currently doing and help prepare the DDA for future work. In your packet is the matrix that POW! Strategies provided us. This matrix will be used for planning purposes, committee work, status check of projects, and overall guide. Please review and prepare to discuss.

Board Member Willett indicated she had two comments. She asked, when did the Board approve the new Mission and Mission Statement? Board Member Payment stated this was a culmination of all the Board's ideas through the strategy session, but she did not think there was a formal vote. She agreed some of the words being used could be defined better or changed.

Chairperson Buck asked if the Board should have a vote at the next meeting so everyone could review the strategic planning, the vision and mission statement. Board Member Willett commented there is a lot of information in the packet today. One concern on the POW! Strategies is that the DDA struggles with getting committee members, which are all volunteers. Executive Director Cloutier stated these were recommendations from Christina at POW! Strategies; she is presenting to the Board her findings.

Assistant City Manager Benson commented the Board would like the POW! Strategies document brought back for review. This was summarized to try to make it more visually understandable. The summary can be put on the DDA's agenda to have a vote, specifically, regarding the Mission and Vision Statement.

New Business:

1. 2025 Hanging Baskets Vendor and Maintenance with Eckert Greenhouse and Worry Free

In November 2023, an RFP was published to seek proposals for a three-year contract for hanging baskets and maintenance services with the hopes of finding a less expensive option. Through this process, only one response came in from the current provider of the past five years, Landscape Design and Associates. At that time, Executive Director Cloutier had brought before the DDA Board and City Council a three-year contract with current provider Landscape Design and Associates of Bright, Michigan. Both parties agreed and approved only a one-year contract with the contingency of exercising the second and third years, if needed.

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The task was given to find a less expensive option for the 2025 season. Staff researched many options such as providing the necessary equipment for DPW to take over the services, seeking out new quotes, to eliminating the program all together. The most cost effective is to partner with a company that provides the hanging baskets and maintenance. From the research, Eckert Greenhouse of Sterling Heights, Michigan and Worry-Free Outdoor Services were found and provided quotes that fulfill the task with a total cost of $46,148.00. This would be a savings of $3,727 compared to the 2025 quote from Landscape Design and Associates, LLC per the agreement signed in 2024. A comparison is provided in the Memorandum dated January 28, 2025 from Assistant City Manager Benson and Executive Director Laura Cloutier.

It is recommended that the DDA Board approve a one-year quote for annual Downtown Flower installation and Maintenance with Eckert Greenhouse of Sterling Heights, Michigan and Worry-Free Outdoor Services of Royal Oak, Michigan for the amount of $46,148.00 for 2025 from the Downtown Flowers account.

Executive Director Cloutier indicated Eckert's Greenhouse proposed a more efficient flower basket system featuring specially designed pots with built-in reservoirs, reducing daily maintenance. They would handle planting, storage, installation, and takedown, eliminating DPW's involvement. Existing brackets can support the new pots, avoiding additional costs.

Eckert's Greenhouse, based in Sterling Heights, MI, partners with Worry-Free Outdoor Services for water and fertilizer management. Their total cost for planting, installation, delivery, and fall cleanup is just over $4,600, with a full maintenance proposal of $41,500 for service three days a week. Executive Director Cloutier indicated Eckert's is purely a greenhouse with flowers, potted plants, etc.

Vice Chair Osburn commented she looked up Eckert's Greenhouse website and Google states they are permanently closed. Executive Director Cloutier stated she talked to Carl from Eckert's, and they walked around downtown to discuss the flower baskets and services. She has not been given any information about him retiring, etc. Executive Director Cloutier stated she has talked with Royal Oak DDA and the other communities who indicated Eckert's work is great and she did not hear a bad thing.

Chairperson Buck commented she liked the change, and it is less expensive than what was paid to the prior vendor; but the cost still seems extravagant, and we do not have any other option.

Executive Director Cloutier stated if this contract was approved today, it would go before City Council at their first meeting in February. The flower order would then be placed by the middle of February.

There was a discussion regarding other possible options including estimating the cost for DPW to outfit their truck with watering equipment, and total number of employees to manage all the work. City Council would likely have to consider additional staffing arrangement that's not going to be related necessarily to the DDA and would be a larger total cost than just the flowers.

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Assistant City Manager Benson summarized a key point of $50,000 being a lot of money. In context to the DDA's budget, it is 3.5% of the total budget of the Wixom DDA. Board Member Willett stated the Board has a fiduciary responsibility to make sure that anything the DDA changes is researched, to do the homework and due diligence. Also, the Board does not have a choice at this point but to put this on the ballot because we are in a time crunch, or we are not going to get flowers. Next year, Board Member Willett suggested this should be presented in November.

Vice Chair Osburn commented that she loved the flowers downtown. Digging deeper, she did see online that there are pictures of the City of Wyandotte who has used Eckert's Greenhouse and the services.

Assistant City Manager Benson commented the DDA Board has done their due diligence and explored other options regarding pricing for the flower baskets and services for the downtown area. This was put out to bid with only one proposal received. The flower baskets and watering services with Eckert's is a $3,000 decrease in last year's vendor. Eckert's will water the flower baskets three times a week: Monday, Wednesday and Friday as opposed to last year's company watering five times a week.

MOTION by Board Member Willett and second by Board Member Guzowski to make a recommendation to City Council to approve and renew Landscape Design and Associates contract in the sum of $49,875 commencing on June 1, 2025 through November 1, 2029 for flower maintenance and $7,400.00 would be paid for the flowers and installation at the time of installation.

Discussion: This would be going with last year's company as opposed to the new company, Eckert's Greenhouse. The $3,000 reflects a reduction in service, as well, with taking the six flower baskets off of the bikes, and watering three days a week. Chairperson Buck commented she did like the idea of going with a new company; she felt there were some problems with Landscape Design and Associates. Board Member Guzowski stated she was not comfortable saving $3,000 to, potentially, taking the brunt of the non-services.

Roll Call Vote:
Ayes: Guzowski, Payment, Willett
Nays: Buck, Osburn, Beagle, Hoppenstedt

VOTE: MOTION DENIED 3-4

MOTION by Vice Chair Osburn and second by Chairperson Buck to approve a one-year quote and recommend to City Council for annual Downtown Flower Installation and Maintenance with Eckert Greenhouse of Sterling Heights, Michigan and Worry-Free Outdoor Services of Royal Oak, Michigan for the amount of $46,148.00 for 2025 from Downtown Flowers Account.

Discussion: Board Member Willett commented we are not good at managing contractors and new vendors; there have been struggles in the past. Her concern is if there are problems or concerns, who would handle them. Vice Chair Osburn indicated this is a separate topic, and should be addressed at a different time.

Approved 2/25/2025

Roll Call Vote:
Ayes: Buck, Osburn, Beagle, Hoppenstedt
Nays: Guzowski, Payment, Willett

VOTE: MOTION IS CARRIED: 4-3

2. Wixom Road Landscaping Project

The purpose of this agenda item is for the DDA Board to discuss its interest in working on an unbudgeted landscaping project this fiscal year. Specifically, the DDA Design Committee reviewed a landscaping plan for the eastern side of S. Wixom Road, just south of the Pontiac Trail intersection and expressed an interest in pursuing this year.

The area for discussion is characterized by the CSX Rail Platform, and the lack of any discernable landscaping or sidewalk elements. The City owns two parcels along the road frontage in this area as remnants from the realignment of Wixom Road back in the 2000's. Given this ownership, there is an opportunity to make relatively inexpensive improvements that will dramatically improve the aesthetics of the area.

Project landscaping plan and pictures are included in the Memorandum dated January 28, 2025 from Assistant City Manager Benson, and Executive Director Cloutier in the packet.

It is recommended that the DDA Board discuss the proposed Wixom Road Landscaping plan and provide consensus to staff of its interest in pursuing this project in the current fiscal year.

Assistant City Manager Benson commented he was not asking for a vote on this matter; rather, he is seeking a consensus from the DDA Board. The DDA Design Committee has previously discussed this project.

The City owns several parcels along South Wixom Road, just south of Pontiac Trail. At one point, they collaborated with the landscape architects from Carlisle Wortman Associates to develop design concepts, which are included in the packet. Initially, it was attempted to obtain a quote from the existing landscaping contractor, but that effort was unsuccessful, resulting in a delay. Given the challenges, Assistant City Manager Benson decided to move forward with an alternative approach.

This project was not included in the current fiscal year's budget. However, there are two options moving forward: One, we can proceed with the bidding process now, and Assistant City Manager Benson can bring the results back to the Board. If the cost is acceptable, a budget amendment could be considered and recommend it to City Council or two, alternatively, we can plan for this in the next budget cycle and aim for implementation in the fall or next spring.

Board Member Willett inquired if there was extra budget in one of the line items to use. She would like to see the costs because this is a good time to get an estimate and if the contractor needs

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the work, they may do the work for less. Chairperson Buck commented she liked the pictures. Assistant City Manager Benson stated there would not be sidewalks or knee walls. This is purely for trees, bushes and irrigation at this point.

The consensus of the Board Members is to proceed with the bidding process now and bring the results back to the Board.

Information:

Chairperson Buck commented since we are late on time, she would like to do the committee reports but to have the Board Members review the packet because everyone did a nice job with the reports. If there are any questions, the Board Members should reach out to the Committees.

1) Committee Reports

A. Design Committee – Meets the 1st Tuesday of every month at Drafting Table Brewing Company at 5:00 p.m.

The design committee met on January 7, 2025 to review and discuss the Wixom Road Landscaping project and Hanging Baskets quotes for flowers/baskets and maintenance from Eckert Greenhouse and Worry-Free.

B. Economic Vitality Committee – Meets the 1st Monday of every month at 5:30 p.m.

1. The EV committee is working on implementation of the Business Ambassador Program starting with site visits over the next few weeks. We are partnering with the Lakes Area Chamber to initiate B2B assistance for our downtown businesses with mentor businesses in the Chamber. We have assigned businesses to each of our committee members so relationships can be developed further. We are creating a DDA scorecard document that will highlight our achievements and future ideas and areas of focus that the DDA is considering promoting and grow the downtown.

2. We have discussed several additional target initiatives including digital advertisements on billboards at the freeways, gift card program (joint initiative with Promotions), and additional business and community workshops/events. We also have suggested adding a link to the City job board to our DDA website to assist downtown businesses with their hiring needs as that was a main area of concern across many of the businesses.

C. Promotions Committee – Meets every other Thursday at Backyard Coney at 8 a.m.

1. We held a successful Candy Cane Lane event. Everyone loved Santa and Buddy the Elf.

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2. Wednesdays in Wixom is in full swing. Make sure to sign up for a slot or two, if you haven't already.

3. Derby Day and Block Party planning has begun. We held a successful $10 off registration fees over the holidays. We received 95 registrations during that time. Derek Kevra for Fox 2 Detroit will be back as our Emcee this year. For Block Party, Executive Director Cloutier is working with JAG Entertainment on the bands and other entertainment. We will open vendor registrations in May.

D. Organization Committee – Meets the 3rd Tuesday of each month at Wixom Station at 6:30 p.m.

1. 11/19/24 meeting: The November meet was held at Drafting Table Brewing Company. Committee members present included: Laura Cloutier, Russ Meredith, Jess Buck, and Darby Hoppenstedt. The Committee discussed several organizational items including the development of a DDA sponsorship packet, refreshing the DDA binder materials and creating a volunteer management plan outline. The Committee had a really great discussion about the role of the Committee and how we can better utilize the strengths/skills of board members to help us be more effective and efficient.

2. 12/17/24 Meeting: The December meeting was held at El Camino. Committee members present included: Laura Cloutier, Russ Meredith, Jess Buck, and Darby Hoppenstedt. The Committee reviewed the sponsorship packet and will work on some minor tweaks to the document before it is shared with Parks and Recreation and City staff. The team looked at an organizational draft meeting schedule for the new year and are good with moving forward with the dates as presented. Candy Cane Lane has been scheduled for December 10, 2025. There is high interest in having the elf and Santa back as they added a lot of joy to the event. The Committee discussed the DDA binders and plan to have members bring their binders to the January meeting. The binders will be updated with materials and returned at the February meeting. This includes a Board Member Commitment Agreement which was recommended in our strategic planning process. The Committee will create a google form for members to complete. The google form will include information on emergency contact(s) and a skill/strength, professional background questionnaire in an effort to match members to tasks that match their area of strengths and experience. The Committee also discussed the Volunteer Management Plan outline and have committed to having that document completed by May, 2025. Finally, we discussed adding on Earth Day event as a service project for the community.

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2) Downtown Business News/Events

- 2025: January 8th – February 26th: Wednesdays in Wixom
- 2025: February 17th – March 17th: Food Fight on Main Burger Battle
- 2025: May 3rd: Derby Day Races
- 2025: September 20th: Wixom Block Party

Public Comments:

None

Executive Director's Comments:

Executive Director Cloutier commented there was a great discussion today. She thanked everyone for all that they do and their commitment to the Downtown.

Assistant City Manager Benson thanked everyone who responded to the invitation for the joint meeting with City Council, the Planning Commission and the Zoning Board of Appeals next Tuesday. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the "Plan to Plan" meeting, focusing on key areas as we prepare to update our five-year Master Plan. He linked the current Master Plan for reference if the Board would like to review the document under discussion.

Assistant City Manager Benson stated this update will be different from the previous one, as Carlisle Wortman Associates did not develop the last plan. This meeting is an opportunity to focus on your specific areas of interest, particularly aspects related to downtown. The Board will have a chance to discuss these priorities with other boards and commissions, as well as listen and engage in the broader conversation. While the primary focus is land use, the discussion will also provide insights into zoning and planning and how they impact downtown. If the Board has any questions beforehand, please feel free to reach out to him.

Additionally, Assistant City Manager Benson shared that Hawaii Fluid Arts would be hosting a ribbon-cutting ceremony on February 20th. While they are already open, this event will serve as their official grand opening, which will continue over the weekend of February 21st. He indicated he could forward the details if anyone is interested, and hoped some of Board members would be able to attend.

Board Members' Comments:

Board Member Willett stated the website has so many new things. She commented under board members, Executive Director Cloutier is listed as a board member and to put her as executive staff. Also, she asked if someone could correct the spelling of her last name, Willett; and Steve Hartman to be removed.

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Board Member Willett commented the Planning Commission approved a preliminary development which will go to City Council. The development is behind the BP gas station, which would be another DDA Tiff fund development. It is 70 units. The developer did a really nice job on the updates asked by the Planning Commission. Also, Timberside Reserve will be a family neighborhood of 43 houses located on the old horse farm off Maple Road. This development was approved by City Council, at their last meeting and will probably break ground for infrastructure in the summer. Then as a side note, Board Member Willett indicated in the Planning Commission packet with regards to the master plan, there was talk about 2027, the DDA removing the power lines for $8 million dollars. She stated the DDA did not agree to an $8 million spend on burying the power lines. Assistant City Manager Benson stated it was communicating the estimate cost.

Vice Chair Osburn commented she was excited to be accepted to the Golden Sachs 10,000 small business program, which started last week and will go through April. She indicated it is an amazing opportunity and would love to tell the Board members about it.

Adjournment:

MOTION by Mayor Beagle, second by Board Member Willett to adjourn the meeting. This meeting of the Wixom Downtown Development Authority was motioned and adjourned at 9:30 a.m.

Mona Freiburger
Recording Secretary

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