CITY OF WIXOM
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
49045 PONTIAC TRAIL
TUESDAY, MAY 27, 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: Carissa Osburn, Vice Chairperson; Board Members: Mark Garmo; Darby Hoppenstadt; Leslie Payment; Vanessa Willett

ABSENT: Excused: Jessica Buck; Russ Meredith; Mayor Beagle

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.

Changes or Additions to the Agenda:

MOTION by Board Member Willett and second by Board Member Payment to move Agenda Item #1 to Agenda Item #5.

VOTE: MOTION CARRIED

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.

Public Comments:

No public comments.

Approval of Minutes:

Approved 7/15/2025

MOTION by Board Member Willett and second by Hoppenstedt to approve the April 23, 2025, DDA Regular Meeting Minutes, as presented.

VOTE: MOTION CARRIED

Correspondence:

Resignation of DDA Board Member Kaitie Guzowski

Executive Director Cloutier shared that Kaitie Guzowski is moving to Las Vegas and has informed the Board by email. She thanked Kaitie for her valuable contributions and said she will be missed. Vice Chair Osburn also wished Kaitie and her husband well.

Executive Director's Report: May 2025 Report

Executive Director Cloutier's Monthly Report (May 2025) is enclosed in the packet.

Executive Director Cloutier indicated progress is being made on the HUD website and grant agreement, which is expected to go to City Council at their first meeting in June. A possible collaboration with Metro Publications is also being explored through South by Southwest Communities to feature downtown businesses across the state via an online platform. More details will be shared as they develop.

Derby Day was reported as a success.

A complaint about the Heath Building prompted a site visit by the City's Code Enforcement Officer, who met with the owner and realtor. Ongoing monitoring will be handled by both Executive Director Cloutier and Assistant City Manager Benson.

Executive Director Cloutier gave kudos to Wixom Bar, noting improvements since Carol took over, including themed nights and weekly specials that are expected to boost downtown activity. Executive Director Cloutier also assisted them with social media graphics.

Regarding the Renton project, Assistant City Manager Benson shared that the developer is still working on a purchase agreement with the City and refining their financial model. This effort will likely continue through the summer, with more concrete updates expected in August or September.

DTE responded to Executive Director Cloutier and Assistant City Manager Benson about design work for the Chambers to Wixom Road sidewalk project. Unfortunately, the update wasn't favorable. The plan involves burying power lines and possibly widening the sidewalk and adding lamp posts. This will be discussed further as it involves significant spending.

Approved 7/15/2025

Old Business:

1. Economic Vitality Committee Ambassador Program Discussion

DDA EV Ambassador Program Goals, Required Documents; Measuring Program Success and Plan Implementation is included in the packet.

Board Member Willett provided an update on the ambassador program, which was developed following the April meeting at Russ's request. The program has already proven valuable, producing more meaningful engagement and better information from businesses than before. She noted many businesses have outdated contact info on file—some haven't updated for over a year—and that volunteers are often more warmly received than City staff. The program aims to improve outreach and offer support, not just ask businesses to participate in events.

Caleb Sheng has joined the effort and provided pro bono legal, accounting, and marketing assistance. Examples include helping one business prepare for a sale, assisting another with marketing materials, and connecting a third with an accountant to improve their financial tracking. These types of services have been well-received.

The "scorecard" handed out by ambassadors is a flyer summarizing DDA activities and includes contact info. Board Member Willett emphasized that it helps shift the tone of visits from asking for help to offering resources.

So far, feedback from businesses has been positive. Some businesses have been busy during visits but never dismissive. Board Member Willett, Will, and Caleb are current ambassadors, and there's a need to recruit more to help distribute the workload, especially with Kaitie leaving. Each ambassador currently covers about 7–8 businesses.

Board Member Willett explained that while Executive Director Cloutier and Board Member Meredith also visit businesses, the volunteer approach seems more effective because business owners are more comfortable sharing information with non-City representatives. She committed to providing Laura with monthly reports and spreadsheets summarizing ambassador visits and updates.

There was further discussion on sharing grant opportunities and resources. While DDA cannot offer façade grants, Board Member Willett and Executive Director Cloutier suggested pointing businesses toward other available funding—like those from Main Street Oakland County. Executive Director Cloutier confirmed she regularly searches for and shares grant opportunities, but better methods may be needed to get businesses to notice and act on the information.

Assistant City Manager Benson noted the opportunity to improve communication by formatting monthly business updates in a more shareable way, which can be circulated through the Economic Vitality Committee.

New Business:

1. **Master Plan Community Engagement for Downtown by Carlisle Wortman**

Approved 7/15/2025

Memo from Megan A. Masson-Minock, AICP, Carlisle Wortman Associates dated May 21, 2025, regarding Master Plan Community Engagement for Downtown is included in the packet.

Ms. Masson-Minock from Carlisle Wortman Associates opened the discussion by explaining the opportunity to engage the public about downtown as part of the Master Plan process. She shared an example from downtown Howell and asked for feedback on key questions the community should be asked, geographic focus areas, and any limitations that should shape the conversation. She noted that some communities restrict discussion to grant-funded possibilities or specific contentious sites and emphasized the importance of defining boundaries up front to avoid wasted time.

Board Member Willett responded that while recreation is important, it's seasonal in Michigan and not comparable to year-round destinations like Traverse City. She supported focusing on walkable areas and improving existing parks. Ms. Masson-Minock confirmed that discussions could be limited to the DDA district. Executive Director Cloutier noted the DDA map includes areas like Gunnar Mettala Park.

Assistant City Manager Benson suggested thinking about the Master Plan in relation to future updates to the DDA Plan and identifying what kind of public input will help guide that. He raised questions about whether the focus should be on commercial, residential, or recreational aspects.

Board Member Willett emphasized the lack of retail downtown and how that perception impacts the area's identity. Executive Director Cloutier added that downtown may naturally evolve into more of an entertainment or restaurant district rather than a retail destination. Ms. Masson-Minock noted that public input could help clarify direction—whether downtown should prioritize events, function like an Ann Arbor-style food hub, or shift toward retail, which would require denser residential development to support it.

When asked about feedback received during Derby Day, Ms. Masson-Minock recalled strong support for events and restaurants, with people also praising the bike trail while requesting improvements. Kids shared playful comments about candy and bounce houses, reinforcing that families enjoy visiting downtown. Ms. Masson-Minock said more data would be shared with the Planning Commission and that a similar public input exercise would be repeated at the next concert event.

Executive Director Cloutier cautioned against focusing too much on recreation in public surveys, noting that calls for a splashpad dominate every time. Board Member Willett and Assistant City Manager Benson discussed limited residential growth due to available land, with future development potentially coming from the BP project, Renton, or Wixom Elementary areas. Ms. Masson-Minock noted hesitation about taller buildings and suggested that mixed-use density—typically requiring two to five stories—could be part of the public education and planning conversation.

Executive Director commented that residents often don't understand terms like "mixed-use," and education will be key. She closed by asking business owners, Board Members Osburn, Garmo and Payment what they would like to see asked of the public from a business perspective.

The Board continued discussion on challenges and opportunities in downtown as part of the Master Plan public engagement process.

Approved 7/15/2025

Board Member Garmo noted that burying power lines would improve the look of the area. He also raised a major concern about the train, explaining that it causes significant traffic backups during key hours, discouraging customers from visiting his store. He said this has a larger negative impact on his business than anything else.

Vice Chair Osburn mentioned that while parking is generally not a major issue, it can be confusing for customers, especially in winter when snow covers the lines, making it unclear where parking is allowed. She added that there is little awareness of available parking behind the building. Parking does become an issue on Thursday nights, which are critical for her business during the summer, and the lack of parking on those days has led to client cancellations. She also expressed concern that the downtown lacks offerings for the community's diverse demographics and that her business feels more like a destination rather than part of a walkable downtown mix.

Board Member Payment, who owns an insurance agency downtown, shared that non-restaurant service businesses often feel overlooked. She suggested that more effort should be made to attract a broader range of people and bring more visibility to these types of businesses.

Ms. Masson-Minock summarized that much of the conversation was focusing on the downtown core within DDA boundaries, and Executive Director Cloutier confirmed that Gunnar Mettala Park, though technically within the DDA, might not be a helpful focus due to limited involvement and existing plans already in place. Board Member Hoppenstadt added that Gunnar Mettala is already heavily used and supported by the community. Board Member Payment pointed out that the trail near the park is a strong asset, often used by people accessing it for biking.

Assistant City Manager Benson noted that the City recently completed an update to the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, which already gathered extensive public input on recreational needs. He suggested using the Master Plan process to identify infrastructure project priorities and to ask the public which one or two projects they feel are most important if limited funding is available.

City Manager Brown suggested asking residents whether additional signage or wayfinding tools downtown would be helpful, and Ms. Masson-Minock proposed an open house with various stations, each covering specific topics such as recreation, signage, and overall downtown experience. She gave an example from Howell where a similar setup provided rich feedback.

Board Member Garmo reiterated that the train is a serious deterrent to downtown business activity, as it causes traffic congestion during critical hours and leads many customers to avoid the area altogether.

Board Member Hoppenstadt noted that successful downtowns like Northville draw people in with sports and entertainment options. The presence of TVs and games in local establishments keeps people coming back. Vice Chair Osburn added that some of her clients go to Wixom Bar just to watch TV programs like Dateline or 20/20.

Assistant City Manager Benson said this ties into the discussion about downtown as an event space and the types of activities that might attract more foot traffic. While Parks and Recreation handles five or six major events annually, the DDA focuses more on minor events, and public input could help guide which formats are most effective.

Approved 7/15/2025

Executive Director Cloutier asked Board Member Garmo about traffic impacts on Thursday evenings, and he responded that traffic typically backs up around 3 to 5 p.m., further limiting access to downtown.

Vice Chair Osburn shared that during large events like Plymouth's Art in the Park, some businesses such as salons close because of the overwhelming crowds. While she doesn't close during concert events, they make operations more difficult. However, she stays open and makes the most of the exposure by offering spray tan demonstrations outside her storefront.

Assistant City Manager Benson noted ongoing conversations about reimagining downtown's future look and function, especially since current design guidelines date back to 2004. There has not always been consensus among the DDA, Planning Commission, and City Council on the vision. He asked the business owners present whether they had faced design-related challenges and what questions might be useful to ask the public as part of the Master Plan from a regulatory standpoint.

Vice Chair Osburn asked for clarification on "regulatory." Benson gave signage as an example.

Board Member Payment said her business is currently navigating signage restrictions, and their building layout makes compliance difficult. She discussed the need for more open, comfortable public spaces—places where families and pedestrians can sit and relax. She believes West End Commons will help by creating a walkable area between the bar and other buildings and suggested using smaller connecting spaces more intentionally, such as the path between Backyard Coney and adjacent businesses. She noted that Wixom is a known bike trail destination but lacks convenient rest areas along the way.

Ms. Masson-Minock asked if there are specific times or places in the summer where the public naturally gathers, or if engagement activities would need to be planned and promoted.

Executive Director Cloutier responded that engagement activities would need to be intentionally hosted and advertised. She suggested that Drafting Table, Wixom Station, or possibly Wixom Bar could be effective venues. She noted that places like Dairy Queen on summer nights may also be good for casual public interaction, though there isn't typically a lot of spontaneous foot traffic downtown otherwise.

2. **City of Wixom/Wixom DDA Memorandum of Understanding for Cost Sharing for Fiscal Year 25/26:** Recommendation for Approval of the Cost Sharing Memorandum of Understanding Between the City of Wixom and the Wixom DDA for Fiscal Year 2025/2026 as proposed

Memorandum to Wixom Downtown Development Authority from Drew Benson, Assistant City Manager & Director of Economic Development; and Executive Director of DDA, Laura Cloutier dated May 27, 2025, regarding Consideration of City/DDA Memorandum of Understanding for Cost Sharing for Fiscal Year 25/26 is included in the packet.

Assistant City Manager Benson explained that the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been in place for a few years, with mostly consistent language. This year, they made some adjustments to clarify the public works service level for the DDA, addressing concerns that had

Approved 7/15/2025

come up. The City Council is expected to approve adding another heavy equipment operator to increase overall capacity, which will help especially during heavy snow events or busy summer event times when staffing needs overlap.

Assistant City Manager Benson also added more detailed bullet points, developed with the public works director, outlining seasonal services included as part of the DPW employee contribution. He emphasized that many tasks are handled without overtime costs, and the DDA is not billed hour for hour, which benefits event support. To improve transparency, Assistant City Manager Benson and Executive Director Cloutier created a tracking sheet for managing and reporting monthly activities, with Laura taking the lead on managing the checklist and reporting back.

Board Member Willett asked if the program had already started, and Executive Director Cloutier clarified it will begin with the new fiscal year, as aligned with the MOU. Board Member Willett suggested starting sooner due to spring issues like pathway mowing. City Manager Brown noted improvements in department head meetings to address such oversights, mentioning ongoing brush cutting on the Air Line Trail that has been happening for several months.

Vice Chair Osburn pointed out an inconsistency between the memo and the MOU regarding the financial summary years, and Benson explained that the difference likely comes from fiscal versus calendar year reporting.

Assistant City Manager Benson reassured that proposed shared costs are consistent with prior years and noted the DDA's role as a presented sponsor for Parks and Recreation events, which ensures promotional recognition. Executive Director Cloutier confirmed the DDA was the sole sponsor listed for events like BBQ and Blues and one of the few sponsors for Lights of the Night.

Board Member Willett asked about event recognition and whether anyone publicly acknowledges the DDA's sponsorship. Executive Director Cloutier said typically the Mayor, or a councilperson makes announcements. Board Member Willett suggested adding a brief mention thanking the DDA, and City Manager Brown said they could prepare talking points for the Mayor to include.

Board Member Payment proposed enhancing public recognition of board members by introducing them via event slides or displays and suggested creating pop-up boards with photos to improve public familiarity. Board Member Willett recommended posting board member photos and bios on the website for easy access.

Board Member Willett then inquired about whether the budget approval includes the additional funds under discussion for special services. Assistant City Manager Benson confirmed that the budget item on the agenda incorporates those updated figures, and Board Member Willett clarified they were voting on the cost-sharing agreement at that moment.

MOTION by Board Member Willett and second by Board Member Payment to approve the Cost Sharing Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Wixom and the Wixom DDA for Fiscal Year 2025/2026, as proposed.

VOTE: MOTION CARRIED

APPROVED 7/15/25

3. **West End Commons Design Engineering Budget Update:** Consideration of Approval for an Updated West End Commons Design Engineering Budget in the amount of $77,300 from Special Studies Account #248-729-956.481 and Approval of the Associated Budget Amendment.

Memorandum dated May 27, 2025 to Wixom Downtown Development Authority from Drew Benson, Assistant City Manager & Director of Economic Development, Laura Cloutier, regarding Consideration of Approval for an Updated West End Commons Design Engineering Budget to permit an additional $70,000, for a total project budget of $110,110 from Special Studies Account #248-729-956.481 and Approval of the Associated Budget Amendment is enclosed in the packet.

Assistant City Manager Benson gave an overview of the West End Commons project budget. The project was originally designed as a smaller $500,000 effort based on expected Oakland County funding, but after receiving federal funding, the scope expanded, leading to increased costs due to more reviews and meetings. He acknowledged that a budget update should have been requested earlier. The expanded budget also reflects federal requirements for environmental and historic preservation assessments, including the need for an archeologist, which was unforeseen. Board Member Willett questioned why such assessments had not been done previously, and Assistant City Manager Benson explained the area was historically just a road with utilities dating back decades. Executive Director Cloutier noted that approval from five local tribes is required to confirm there are no burial grounds at the site. The environmental assessment is estimated to cost up to $17,500, though the final amount may be less. Since the project has exceeded the original budget of $40,110, Assistant City Manager Benson requested approval for a budget amendment. Most of the additional costs can be covered this fiscal year from leftover funds, with some added to next year's budget.

Board Member Payment asked about the likelihood of unexpected issues arising from the required studies. Assistant City Manager Benson responded that it is very unlikely. Board Member Willett noted that the area had been significantly disturbed before. Board Member Willett raised concerns about the increased engineering costs, asking for the total expected cost. Assistant City Manager Benson estimated the combined design and construction engineering costs to be about $180,000 plus the environmental assessment. Executive Director Cloutier confirmed the total project cost is approximately $1.2 million. Board Member Willett expressed concern about managing the project in-house given the costs. City Manager Brown noted that despite having a project manager, much of the fieldwork and construction management would still rely on the engineering firm HRC. Board Member Willett acknowledged there was no choice but to proceed due to available funds. City Manager Brown pointed out that the project cost more than doubled from the original $500,000 estimate. Board Member Payment inquired about the schedule for the land investigation. Assistant City Manager Benson and Mr. Mike Darga, HRC, responded that the work is expected to start within a couple of weeks and that the project remains on track for a fall bid.

MOTION by Board Member Willett and second by Board Member Hoppenstedt to approve an Updated West End Commons Design Engineering Budget to permit an additional $70,000.00, for a total project budget of $110,110.00 from Special Studies Account #248-729-956.481 and Approval of the Associated Budget Amendment.

VOTE: MOTION CARRIED

4. **Final Wixom DDA Budget for Fiscal Year 25/26:** Recommendation for Approval of a $50,000 budget for Power Line Burial Design Work from DTE for the Chambers to Wixom Road Sidewalk Project from Special Studies Account #248-729-956.481

Memo to Wixom Downtown Development Authority from Drew Benson, Assistant City Manager & Director of Economic Development; and Laura Cloutier, Executive Director, Wixom DDA, dated May 27, 2025, regarding Consideration of Final Wixom DDA Budget – FY 25/26 is included in the packet.

Assistant City Manager Benson explained that the budget approved in March was before the City Council reviewed their budget in April, and some numbers were not finalized at that time. It is common to come back with minor adjustments to reflect the final numbers approved by City Council. The biggest changes include an additional $177,000 in anticipated revenue for the coming fiscal year, updated service costs already approved, and moving the Loop activation project to a different capital budget line. The most significant update is an increase in special studies expenses due to unexpected costs related to the DTE project, which was not included in the earlier budget because DTE had not disclosed those costs. Funds are also being shifted from signage assistance to cover some expenses like West End Commons engineering. Despite these changes, the budget still balances well, and the fund balance remains healthy.

Board Member Willett asked if the budget approval would cover these new funds even if the DTE project was not approved, noting some line items are uncertain. Assistant City Manager Benson confirmed that funds can be moved later, if needed.

Board Member Payment asked for clarification on the unexpected DTE costs. Assistant City Manager Benson explained that DTE never informed them they would have to pay for design engineering, which was surprising given the long history of discussions. Board Member Payment asked if they could have disputed this charge, and Assistant City Manager Benson said they tried but DTE refused. DTE is used to working with private developers who accept such charges quickly, but in this case, the City has been trying to finalize approval before incurring costs, which DTE struggled to understand. Mr. Mike Darga confirmed that negotiations involved years of emails. Executive Director Cloutier added that every meeting repeated the need for DTE to provide pricing so the City could approve it, but DTE did not grasp the process.

Board Member Payment wondered if the City is asking the right questions or approaching this differently than others. City Manager Brown commented that many cities stop negotiations early with DTE due to their high costs and reluctance to cooperate, implying the City has been unusually persistent. Board Member Payment asked if challenging the extra cost would be productive. Executive Director Cloutier and City Manager Brown agreed DTE is unlikely to budge and may simply halt the project if challenged.

Board Member Willett noted the DTE issue would be discussed further in the next agenda item. City Manager Brown emphasized that if the budget includes these costs, approving the budget essentially approves these expenses.

Assistant City Manager Benson acknowledged this was not ideal but explained that the current budget before the Board is the version submitted to City Council, and they recommend approval for timing reasons. City Manager Brown expressed support for including the Loop activation project in the budget, believing it will positively impact the city and create a destination.

Approved 7/15/2025

MOTION by Board Member Willett and second by Board Member Payment to approve the updated budget for fiscal year 2025-2026 as presented and recommend adoption by the Wixom City Council.

VOTE: MOTION CARRIED

5. **Power Line Burial Design Work from DTE Energy:** Consideration for Approval of a $50,000 budget for Power Line Burial Design Work from DTE for the Chambers to Wixom Road Sidewalk Project from Special Studies.

Memorandum to Wixom Downtown Development Authority from Drew Benson, Assistant City Manager & Director of Economic Development; and Laura Cloutier, Executive Director, Wixom DDA dated May 27, 2025 regarding Consideration of Approval for a $50,000 budget for Power Line Burial Design Work from DTE Energy for the Chambers to Wixom Road Sidewalk Project from Special Studies Account #248-729-956.481 is included in the packet.

Assistant City Manager Benson explained that since the Board authorized the design work, progress has been delayed because they have been waiting on DTE to clarify their requirements. After a year of back-and-forth, DTE recently informed them that $41,400 is needed to complete the design and move the project forward. This cost was not previously budgeted, so Assistant City Manager Benson recommended adding it to next fiscal year's budget, noting that even if approved now, the expense wouldn't be incurred until then. He also highlighted that while the project on the north side of Pontiac Trail involves three poles, DTE's work affects six poles because removing the poles on one side requires removing those on the other side as well. This includes poles in the Wixom Station parking lot and near the Wixom dentist, which must also be buried. Assistant City Manager Benson acknowledged the larger scope of work but expressed frustration that DTE had not communicated these details sooner.

Board Member Willett raised concerns about whether easements can be secured and questioned if the city will bear all additional costs, noting the $41,000 figure could increase. She worried about unexpected utility work that might add hundreds of thousands to the project. Benson clarified that water and sewer are city responsibilities, but stormwater shouldn't be affected, and Consumers Energy utilities might be on the other side of the road. They also discussed the frustration with easement negotiations and confirmed that burying power lines will be paid for by the City. Board Member Willett acknowledged the aesthetic benefits but emphasized the significant costs, which could reach up to $1 million for a short distance.

The Board discussed if the undergrounding project could be combined with future DDA façade improvements, but Assistant City Manager Benson noted the design costs with DTE would still apply. Board Member Willett expressed distrust of DTE, citing hidden costs and the difficulty others have had dealing with them. Assistant City Manager Benson explained the project is budgeted for fiscal year 2027/28 partly due to cost uncertainties and said while the Board wants to proceed within the current DDA plan, they can pause and reallocate funds if they decide not to move forward now.

Board Member Payment asked about placing a contract cap on DTE's costs. Assistant City Manager Benson recommended approving a budget not to exceed $50,000 to allow flexibility. He has requested a cap agreement from DTE but has not received a response yet. He suggested

Approved 7/15/2025

that if costs approach the cap, DTE would notify them before exceeding it. Board Member Payment indicated the cap should be firm rather than open-ended.

City Manager Brown emphasized that this DDA has more resources than most, which allows it to undertake projects that might not happen otherwise. He encouraged taking advantage of these resources to improve the downtown area, making it more attractive and walkable, especially since the current sidewalk is uncomfortable for pedestrians. He acknowledged concerns about cost but reminded the group the project is budgeted for fiscal year 2027/28. Assistant City Manager Benson added that securing easements can happen in the meantime, and if they are not obtained, the project can be halted.

Executive Director Cloutier noted that some City Council members also see sidewalk improvements as a priority. Board Member Willett cautioned against setting a precedent where the DDA is expected to pay for all pole burying projects downtown, stressing that while the sidewalk needs work, responsibility should be shared with the City. Executive Director Cloutier responded that sidewalk maintenance in the downtown area is the DDA's responsibility, but Board Member Willett reiterated that some responsibilities lie with the City and that cooperation is necessary rather than placing all the burden on the DDA.

MOTION by Board Member Garmo and second by Board Member Willett to approve not to exceed $50,000.00 budget for Power Line Burial Design Work from DTE Energy for the Chambers to Wixom Road Sidewalk Project from Special Studies Account #248-729-956.481 and recommend approval to City Council.

VOTE: MOTION CARRIED

Approved 7/15/2025

Information:

1) Committee Reports

   A. Design Committee: This Committee meetings on the 1st Tuesday of each month with a duration of 90 minutes to 120 minutes.

The Design Committee met and discussed the alleyway project. Executive Director Cloutier met with Dave Vanderhovel, owner of the Klebba Building, to discuss the project and he is in favor of it and all that DDA is doing to bring vibrancy to downtown. Board Member Meredith met with Carol at the Wixom Bar to discuss the project. Carol, who is the new owner of the Wixom Bar, is in favor of the project and is also considering the possibility of the DDA pay for a mural on the side of her building facing the alleyway.

Items such as café lights, benches, and planter boxes will be ordered in the next week or so; once items are delivered, the Committee will organize the installation and work together to complete.

Executive Director Cloutier indicated that she spoke with Dave Vanderhovel, owner of the Klebba building, about the alleyway improvements. He supports enhancing the area to make it more attractive. They also spoke with Carol from the Wixom Bar, who is interested in the idea of painting a mural on her building but wants some time to consider it. The plan to add artwork using planter boxes in the alleyway is on hold while they await her decision about the mural.

Board Member Payment noted that the Klebba building has two owners with equal shares. Executive Director Cloutier said Dave Vanderhovel would discuss the proposal with the other owner.

Executive Director Cloutier gave an update on the landscaping project, noting that work is expected to start within the next two to three weeks. Tim from DPW has been coordinating the water tap, which needs to be completed first and is expected to happen this week.

B. Economic Vitality Committee: This committee meets on the 4th Monday of every month with a duration of 90 minutes to 120 minutes.

The EV Committee has been working on drafting and implementing an Ambassador Program to help promote B2B opportunities as well as gain better insight from the downtown businesses on a variety of topics. The EV Committee initiated site visits in April, dividing the businesses, so each committee member had around the same number of visits. The group is setting up visits with the LAC – Caleb Sheng to offer free assistant from current chamber members. This will be completed over several days due to the availability of both Caleb and the Committee members.

1. The information and key contacts concurrently for the businesses, is missing or incorporate in many cases. Asking the right questions and getting the owners/operating members.
2. While on the stops with Caleb, we were able to gain some valuable insight on real issues with several businesses, for example, a business valuation for a potential sale, beer and wine liquor license process and confusion, marketing struggles- need for marketing assistance, and labor concerns – quality.

The program will take several months to gather data and implement some professional assistant through the LACC, but it was well received.

Executive Director Cloutier commented the Ambassador Program was discussed earlier in the meeting. Board Member Willett and Executive Director Cloutier have been doing research on the billboard campaign and getting more information. They are hoping to have more information for the Board in June for approval.

The last EVC meeting was cancelled. The next meeting will be held on June 2nd, and meet at the end of June, as well.

C. Promotions Committee: This Committee meets every other week for a duration of 90 minutes.

The Promotions Committee put on an amazing event for Derby Day Races on May 2nd. The event had a record breaking 453 registrants, 101 over the previous year. There was incredible feedback from runners, volunteers and businesses. This event keeps getting bigger and better. Thank you to all the volunteers who come to help make the event run smoothly. The Placer Ai data from MSOC shows that we had a total of 1,200 people in downtown Wixom during the event. Derby Day Races 2026 will be on May 2nd, and we will celebrate its 10-year mark!

The Committee has turned its focus to the Wixom Block Party, which will be held on Saturday, September 20th from 3:00 to 8:00 p.m. Vendor applications are being accepted and are coming

Approved 7/15/25

in as we already have 20 vendors confirmed. Food vendors have been contacted and one, so far, is confirmed. JAG Entertainment is working on the rest of the music and entertainment for the day. All is falling into place, and we expect this to be a great event again this year.

Executive Director Cloutier commented Derby Day was amazing with a record breaking 453 registrants; 101 participants over the previous year. Out of the 453 participants, the race company expected 10% no shows, but there were only 19 participants who did not show up.

The Promotions Committee is moving onto the Block Party plans.

D. Organization Committee: This Committee meets on the 4th Tuesday of each month for a duration of 90 minutes.

The Organization Committee will meet on May 27th. The Committee will have Board Member agreements for adoption at the June DDA Board meeting.

Board Member Hoppenstadt commented there was a meeting scheduled for this evening, but the meeting was cancelled. The next meeting is scheduled for June, and she will give an update at the next Board meeting.

2) Downtown Business News/Events

- 2025: June 5th to August 21st: Summer Concert Series/Family Fun Nights
- 2025: June 12th: City Employee, Boards and Commissioners Picnic
- 2025: June 12th: Main Event 25 Years of Main Street Oakland County
- 2025: June 26th: Lite the Night Fireworks
- 2025: September 20th: Wixom Block Party

Public Comments:

No public comments.

Staff Comments:

Executive Director Cloutier thanked everyone for attending the meeting the day after a holiday. Assistant City Manager Benson mentioned there are two open seats on the DDA. Executive Director Cloutier explained that the by-laws allow for a board size of eight to thirteen members. Board Member Payment shared that two of her neighbors are interested in joining.

Executive Director Cloutier clarified that according to state law, most board members need to have a vested interest, meaning they must be a business owner, an employee, or a downtown resident. Residents can fill some seats, like Board Member Willett and Board Member Hoppenstadt currently do, but it's important to maintain a balance to ensure a majority have a downtown connection.

Board Member Payment asked if these are by-laws or state law, and Laura confirmed it is state law. Board Member Payment further clarified that residents who are neither business owners nor employees may face restrictions based on whether they live downtown.

Approved 7/15/2025

Executive Director Cloutier gave an example of Board Member Meredith, who is a Wixom resident downtown but not a business owner or employee. She emphasized the importance of maintaining the correct balance on the Board and noted they are currently not at risk but need to be cautious.

City Manager Brown added that the City Council will likely ask about applicants' downtown ties. Executive Director Cloutier encouraged interested individuals to apply through the volunteer form on the DDA or City websites.

Board Members' Comments:

Board Member Payment asked to put the Mission and Vision statement on the next Board meeting's agenda item for comment.

Adjournment:

This meeting of the Wixom Downtown Development Authority was motioned and adjourned at 9:05 a.m.

Mona Freiburger
Recording Secretary

Approved 7/15/2025