

**CITY OF WIXOM  
49045 PONTIAC TRAIL  
CITY COUNCIL GOAL SETTING MEETING  
TUESDAY, MARCH 22, 2022**

The meeting was called to order by Deputy Mayor Rzeznik at 6:00 p.m.

**PRESENT:**

**City Council:** Thomas Rzeznik (Deputy Mayor), Peter Behrmann, Keenan Gottschall, Tia Gronlund-Fox, Peter Sharpe, and Robert Smiley

**City Staff:** Steve Brown, Drew Benson, Cathy Buck, Deanna Magee, Ron Moore, Tim Sikma, Marilyn Stamper

**ABSENT:**

**City Council:** Patrick Beagle (Mayor)

**Determination of Quorum:**

A quorum was present for this meeting.

**Changes or Additions to the Agenda:**

No changes were made to the agenda.

**Call to the Public:**

There were no comments from the public.

**Goal Setting Discussion Continuation:**

Mr. Brown stated that at the first Goal Session, we discussed a variety of goals that were submitted by Council and staff. Many goals have been discussed as a group and some have already been planned or are in progress. He provided a spreadsheet to the Council of all of the goals, noting the ones left to be discussed have been broken down by the Council's goals and the staff goals. It was agreed that we would start with the Council's goals first.

- **Additional School Police Officer**

Councilmember Gottschall indicated that this was one of Mayor Beagle's goals. He said there was an estimated cost of \$80,000 and he thought that might be a school district expense. Director Moore replied that to have a school resource officer for the middle school was unprecedented for the Walled Lake Consolidated School District. For the three high schools that fall under the jurisdiction of the Oakland County Sheriff's Office, he believed the district paid a portion of those three deputies' salaries. To have one here in Wixom, we would potentially split that officer's time between Sarah Banks Middle School, Wixom Christian School, St. Catherine's and our two elementary schools. Councilmember Gottschall said he wouldn't want the City to pay for the entire cost as he wasn't sure how necessary this was. He didn't agree with this being a City cost.

Councilmember Gronlund-Fox said she would be in favor of approaching the Schools because she believed it might be more important to have them in the middle school. She remembered having children in the middle school and some of the things they would tell her that happened there. She thought it was a great idea but agreed that it shouldn't be Wixom paying 100% of the cost.

Councilmember Behrmann asked Director Moore if this was something he would recommend as the Chief of Police. If he would recommend this, he wondered if he would rather that we budget an additional officer that could be a community resource officer that was involved in the school but not necessarily there 100% of the time. Director Moore said that there has been a lot of discussion

over increasing full time fire staff. It was also a desire of his to see another part time employee in the Police Department for the purpose of administering a body-worn camera program. If he had to prioritize the personnel request, he would say the full-time firefighters first, the part time clerk for the body-worn camera program second, and then the school police officer. Councilmember Behrmann said that we should determine if the cost would be covered. If it was not, we should put this as more of a wish and focus on some of the other goals.

Councilmember Smiley thanked him for mentioning the full-time firefighters, as that will affect our budget. He understood some of the points made about the idea of the police officer in the schools, but it felt to him this would be something the schools would take care of on their own. They spent quite a bit of money on updating their security. He didn't see this was our place to act. He didn't object to staff talking to the Schools to see if we could help them in some way, but he didn't see that as being a City issue.

Councilmember Sharpe agreed with Councilmembers Smiley and Gronlund-Fox regarding consulting with the Schools. They must have a position on this. He suggested that we find out what their current state is and bring this back to Council. Director Moore stated that he would be happy to do that.

Deputy Mayor Rzeznik remembered the \$26 million safety bond that was passed five years ago. Perhaps there was something already in the bond that might have been discussed. He thought Mayor Beagle may want to address this during the Budget Study Session when the Police Budget was discussed.

- **Extended Summer Concerts**

It was determined that this was Mayor Beagle's goal.

Deputy Mayor Rzeznik commented that the sun sets pretty early at the last concert of the season.

Ms. Magee said that would be one of their concerns. The sun sets early at the end of August, but we can do it if that was what the Council wanted.

Councilmember Smiley asked when the last concert was normally held. Ms. Magee thought the last one would be August 17. Councilmember Smiley thought we might be able to add one more after that. Ms. Magee said that the schedule had been set for this summer but she would see if JAG Entertainment could add another one, if that was what the Council decided. If not, they could add one into next year's budget.

Councilmember Gottschall asked what time the concerts started and Ms. Magee replied 7:00 p.m. Councilmember Gottschall wondered if we could bump that up to 6:00 p.m. later in the season. He asked when the concert series starts and Ms. Magee answered that they begin on June 2 to get the daylight window. As far as moving the time, she said that the community was adjusted to the concerts beginning at 7:00 p.m. If we move them to 6:00 p.m., they might get lost. Councilmember Gottschall said it was just an idea if we decided to add one or two and the daylight became an issue. If it doesn't work, next year we could revert back. He said he would be in favor of it. The concerts are well-attended.

Deputy Mayor Rzeznik said this could be another item for the Mayor to discuss during the Budget Sessions.

- **Green Plan for Wixom**

Councilmember Gottschall knew that we had set an additional cost of \$15,000 because the Planning Study was being bid. To him this was more of an inhouse ordeal, not really causing any expense to the City. He suggested having every employee look at what they are doing on a daily basis and ways we might be able to cut waste or paper usage. It boiled down to a departmental analysis of procedures and looking for ways to save money, reduce waste, recycle, reduce toner and paper usage. He thought there might be some deal where we have City laptops for all the Council and Board members so we can stop printing large packets. He suggested that we look at all of our lighting to make sure that was green and efficient, getting away from fluorescent lights. The idling of patrol vehicles had been discussed already. He thought we could reduce plastic consumption, like getting the biodegradable cups for The Junction. He hoped we could address the items that are given during events to make sure they are all being used. We could also look at traffic flow and taking care of Beck Road would help that. He noticed that with the school pickup and drop off, parents get there 45 minutes ahead of time and they don't turn off their cars. He suggested we work with the schools, which was something we could do now. In the past, he brought up creating a permitting process for asphalt resealing and hopefully banning the use of coal tar-based sealants. He also encouraged us to work with our businesses on environmentally friendly take-away packaging. They make biodegradable material now. It might cost more so there may be a way to incentivize with that. He hoped we could be a greener City overall. He mentioned a City Clean Up Day to clean up the waste along our roads and parks. He didn't think we needed any studies, but rather look at what we could do inhouse to save money.

Councilmember Gronlund-Fox thought this was a great idea.

Mr. Benson noted that Oakland County did hire a sustainability officer within the last year. We could have a conversation with them to see how they may be able to help us as opposed to a third-party consultant.

Councilmember Behrmann said he was all for what would be realistic and feasible, like replacing the lights. He didn't want to overburden the City Manager's Office with hours of work a month trying to get a green plan together. He would like us to take a look at things as we go and slowly work at it. He agreed with the police cars idling, but he wouldn't want this to be a full-time job for someone. As for the school drop off and pickup, he thought we needed to put some pressure on the schools to develop a proper pickup and drop off location. Some of the other schools have rings around their whole building where the traffic can line up. At Wixom Elementary, there was no room. People get there early because they don't want to be stuck down Theodore. We could work with Wixom Elementary to utilize the property in front of the school to get the traffic off Theodore. It would make the residents happier and it would probably solve the problem that Councilmember Gottschall pointed out about cars getting there 45 minutes early.

Councilmember Smiley stated that parents with kids have good reason to pick up their children. The solutions that Councilmember Behrmann outlined would be a much better way to solve it than telling them to take the bus. He liked the idea of looking for guidance. It is always good to look at ways of being a little greener about things. In his household, he said he hated the big chunks of plastic that were one use. Some problems can't be solved here, but he would like to hit the ones we can.

Councilmember Gronlund-Fox commented that there was a nearby community that had a sustainability plan that we could get for free.

Councilmember Gottschall noticed at Loon Lake Elementary that it was the people in the ring that still have their cars running. The parking lot was half full so they could pull into the parking lot and

turn off their cars, but that doesn't happen. He didn't think this was a full-time job for anybody but more that every employee looking at what they are doing and how they can be more efficient.

Mr. Brown said his takeaway was to try to come up with some greater focus of thinking of ways to do a better job. He liked the idea of the Community Pickup Day and he will start looking at that.

Mr. Benson commented that the DDA has talked about that and they have scheduled a Downtown Pickup Day on Earth Day. They have allocated funds to help carry out that program.

Councilmember Gottschall said he was prompted last year when he was walking along Wixom Road between Loon Lake Road and Charms Road. There was so much litter on the west side of Wixom Road. It was not becoming of a nice City.

Deputy Mayor Rzeznik commented that we used to do this on the first Saturday in April. The sponsorships for the individual roads would recruit people. It would be a good practice to get back into.

- **Develop Trailhead**

Deputy Mayor Rzeznik said he would like to see a trailhead in Wixom where people would park their cars, stage their bicycle trips, and stay in downtown to eat at a restaurant. When he first brought this up, there was a lot of recreation grant opportunities available, but we needed our Redevelopment Ready status for some of them. He knew it was costly and would require grant funding.

Ms. Magee stated that with the Phase 2 development of the Trail, there was a trailhead planned at Mack Park. It was being designed so it would be attractive coming from east or west. Deputy Mayor Rzeznik said that as part of the Michigan Airline Trailway Council planning, one was underway. Ms. Magee confirmed that was correct. She said they have initial designs and they are refining them.

Mr. Benson added that the intention was to accentuate the Trail. Any proposed developments that we would do with the rest of the Renton property that the City owns might include a parking lot that would allow for that staging. As Phase 2 goes in, the trailhead goes in. He was optimistic about developers being interested in this project. It might even be privately funded. It would take longer in that scenario.

In regard to Mack Park, Mr. Brown said that they have had discussions with the Historical Society about what we would want to retain and how we want to incorporate it. We are pretty far along as far as coming up with a structure. We have some nice designs and we are looking to finalize those projects.

Councilmember Smiley commented that he would love to see those designs and asked if they could be emailed to the Council. Ms. Magee said she would do that. He asked if parking was part of the design. Ms. Magee said that they haven't gotten quite that far yet. The initial start was to get a nice pavilion design.

- **Employee Merit Raises**

Councilmember Sharpe stated that he was in favor of merit increases. Last year, the City did what was budgeted. A 3% salary increase went to everybody. Merit wasn't considered. He was hoping we could avoid that. He thought we should do merit increases and establish a number for merits. Last year, the 3% was a substantial increase. This year it will not look like much because of inflation. He wondered if there was a balance or a rolling average. He would like to see some effort put into what the increases are for our salaried workforce versus 3% sounded good. He knew we

had to do a budgetary number but that didn't mean it had to be the raise that everybody got. Merit is great, but Wixom has chosen not to do merit. If we are going to keep doing that, he would like to see data employed as to what that number is. He said that he did read in the Assistant City Manager's Report that he has started that process by completing a wage and salary survey.

Mr. Benson said that he has completed a preliminary draft. It allows us to compare how our non-union employees compare to other communities of similar size. It doesn't directly tell us how communities increased their wages over the last five years or what they have planned for next year. It was to make sure we are in the right range.

- **Maple/Pontiac Trail Connector**

Councilmember Smiley said he didn't want to spend money on this yet. He knew a lot of data and thought had been put into this in years past. He wanted to revisit the idea for relieving some of the traffic and getting access out of that area without having to come down Wixom Road. He would like to gather ideas internally without any expense before we decide if it is worth the expense of going deeper.

Councilmember Behrmann said that we have already spent a lot of money on that because the fire hydrants are already in for the street that doesn't exist. He lives near there and he thought it would be nice if the extension was there. He also understood why some people who live even closer to that spot would not want that street going through their backyards. He would support it if it was cost effective, meaning the industrial property behind it was willing to carry some of the expense. He didn't know that he would be in favor of us paying completely to put that road in if the industrial property that was there would benefit and wouldn't be contributing.

Councilmember Gottschall knew that we talked about this a number of years ago. He asked if we had discussions then about giving tax abatements to the developer. Mr. Brown didn't remember anything about tax abatements being part of the development. He said that there were prospects on the horizon that things could move along more quickly than they have in the past. This was something that we are very aware of and have talked about incorporating into the development of the Ford Wixom Plant site. We could tie into their roadways to keep some traffic off Wixom Road.

Mr. Sikma commented that in our ten-year capital we have that portion of Landrow in the system. Whether or not we fund it was still a question. We are working with the property owners there and they have come up with several renditions. Some have connectors or easements for the road. It depended on how they develop that property. It does make sense to have that north/south road along the western portion of our City. He keeps pushing this project out a year because it doesn't seem right quite yet.

Councilmember Gottschall recalled the land owners being at the meeting and walking through the plans. It seemed like they were ready to go then and that was why we were having the meeting with them. Mr. Sikma said they had setbacks with the wetland issues on the property. He thought they were very close to resolving those issues with the State. One of the owners passed away over the last year, so that changed the dynamics again. The Toyoda property was a key area. If we do work with them to help with that easement to go directly south, we would have to move their property one way or the other to make it work. There was one rendition that we would go into Milford Township and we would have to work with them. Councilmember Gottschall asked if this could be a dirt road to provide some relief and then pave it when we can or want to. Mr. Sikma replied that we don't have equipment for maintaining gravel roads. Councilmember Gottschall asked what would prevent us from getting the easements now. He knew that Landrow was still trying to figure out their development plan. Mr. Sikma said that Landrow was still trying to figure out how they can best fit the most out of that property. At one point, they had seven different buildings and then one big building. Mr. Brown added that subject to that, plans could change.

Toyoda was very problematic on the west side. We would have to shift the road. As the developer comes forward with more detailed plans, we will try to get that road accomplished next.

- **Hotel Tax**

Councilmember Gottschall said this was something that we acted upon previously, but due to COVID, it fell off the radar for the Committee (Councilmembers Smiley, Gottschall and Mayor Beagle). They had been working on getting support at the State level to amend the accommodations tax. The Committee talked about meeting with Senator Runestad and it was about the Committee picking that back up.

Mr. Brown commented that they were starting to have some discussions on the potential funding of Beck Road at the State level. He indicated that he would mention this to Senator Runestad and Representative Berman.

Councilmember Smiley said that before COVID, there was some legislation that was going to help what we were trying to accomplish. He was trying to figure out what happened to it. There was something finally done that would contribute to what we were trying to accomplish. He said that the Committee would continue to chase it down and contact our legislators.

- **Body-Worn Cameras for Police**

Councilmember Sharpe said that the State of Rhode Island has issued a \$3,000 stipend for each trooper who wears a body-worn camera because it was viewed as additional responsibility of duty that they have to have. It was part of their labor contract. It was something to think about. It is a capital expense, administrative expense and potentially salary expense of some kind. We have all expressed interest in having that. This was something we should keep in mind when budgeting for next year.

At this time, Deputy Mayor Rzeznik suggested that the rest of the goals be discussed at another Goal Session meeting, or they could be talked about during the Budget Sessions.

**Call to the Public:**

There were no comments from the public.

**City Manager's Comments:**

Mr. Brown had no further comments.

**Council Comments:**

**Councilmember Behrmann** thought most of the remaining goals could be addressed during the Budget Sessions. He didn't think we needed to schedule a special meeting.

**Councilmember Smiley** had no additional comments.

**Councilmember Sharpe** thanked the staff. It was good to hear each Councilmember's views. These have been good sessions.

**Councilmember Gronlund-Fox** preferred to discuss the rest of the goals during the Budget Sessions instead of scheduling a special meeting.

**Councilmember Gottschall** asked if we were planning to have the mini study sessions that were started a few years ago before we got to the Budget Sessions. Mr. Brown said he would have to see what the Mayor's thoughts were on that. He said that the Council can also let him know what

their preferences were. Councilmember Gottschall said he liked them. It gave them the ability to study the bigger items.

**Deputy Mayor Rzeznik** commented that his preference would be to continue the rest of the goal discussions as part of the Budget Sessions.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

This Goal Setting meeting of City Council was motioned and adjourned at 6:51 p.m.

Catherine Buck  
City Clerk

Approved 4-12-2022
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