

**CITY OF WIXOM  
49045 PONTIAC TRAIL  
REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES  
TUESDAY, AUGUST 27, 2024**

Mayor Beagle called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**Present:**

**Mayor:** P. Beagle  
**Deputy Mayor:** T. Rzeknik  
**Councilmembers:** P. Behrmann  
K. Gottschall  
T. Gronlund-Fox  
P. Sharpe (excused)  
R. Smiley

**AGENDA CHANGES:** (None)

**MINUTES:**

**CM-08-111-24:** Moved and seconded by Councilmembers Smiley and Gottschall to approve the Special City Council meeting minutes of August 13, 2024.

**Vote:**

**Motion Carried**

**CM-08-112-24:** Moved and seconded by Councilmembers Gronlund-Fox and Smiley to approve the Regular City Council meeting minutes of August 13, 2024.

**Vote:**

**Motion Carried**

**CORRESPONDENCE:**

- 1.) Notice of Hearing for the Electric Customers of DTE Electric Company - Case No. U-21662
- 2.) Steve Hartman Resignation from the DDA

**CITY MANAGER REPORTS:**

- 1.) Departmental Reports - July 2024

There were no comments or questions regarding these reports.

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

**CM-08-113-24:** Motion and seconded made by Deputy Mayor Rzeknik and Councilmember Smiley to approve the Consent Agenda as presented which included:

- 1.) Approval to Receive and File:
  - a. Parks and Recreation Commission Minutes - April 8, 2024
  - b. Library Board Meeting Minutes- July 22, 2024
  - c. Planning Commission Meeting Minutes- August 5, 2024
- 2.) September 2024 National Recovery Month Proclamation
- 3.) September 2024 National Suicide Prevention Month Proclamation

**Vote:**

**Motion Carried**

**CALL TO THE PUBLIC:**

There were no comments at this time.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** (None)

**NEW BUSINESS:**

- 1.) **Recommendation to Approve a Preliminary Site Condominium Plan from Pulte Homes of Michigan, LLC for the Development of 43 Single-Family Residential Lots on a 13.46 Acre Parcel Zoned VCA-Low Intensity at 3015 W. Maple, Parcel Identification #17-32-176-017, with Conditions as Recommended by the Planning Commission**

**CM-08-114-24:** Motion and seconded made by Deputy Mayor Rzeznik and Councilmember Gronlund-Fox to approve a Preliminary Site Condominium Plan from Pulte Homes of Michigan, LLC for the Development of 43 Single-Family Residential Lots on a 13.46 Acre Parcel Zoned VCA-Low Intensity at 3015 W. Maple, Parcel Identification #17-32-176-017, with Conditions as Recommended by the Planning Commission.

Mr. Benson stated that 3015 W. Maple was one of the remaining acreage parcels in the Village Center Area (VCA). He indicated that the Planning Commission reviewed this preliminary plan and approved it with conditions; therefore, the next step in the process was for Council to approve the preliminary site condominium plan.

Matteo Passalacqua, Planning Consultant for Carlisle Wortman & Associates specified the site plan presented contained 43 single-family condominium homes. He said the zoning for this parcel accommodated this type of use as the lots themselves would be around 5,500 square feet. He mentioned that the site would need to be clear cut to accommodate the development; but, there were some landscape waivers that were discussed between the Planning Commission and the applicant. Additionally, the Planning Commission wanted to make sure this development was accessible to its neighbors (existing family development to the west, Gunnar Mattala Park to the east and the Air Line Trail to the south).

Councilmember Gronlund-Fox said she wasn't a fan of clear cutting and would like to leave the trees that were worth saving. She thought incorporating mature trees would make the development look more appealing even though it would add more work for the developer. She reviewed the map of the development and noticed what appeared to be an entrance into the park.

Mr. Passalacqua said she was referring to what they called a stub street and it was placed there to establish a future connection into Gunnar Mattala Park.

Mike Knowles of Umlor Group, 49287 West Road, explained that the stub street would be similar to what they've seen before where the street just ends. He didn't think there would be a barricade as they didn't think those looked as nice as natural landscaping.

Councilmember Behrmann wondered if the Parks and Recreation Department wanted a connection from that development into the park. He would hate to install a stub street and it never be utilized. Mr. Benson said that connection was in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

Councilmember Behrmann wouldn't want to see the stub street become neglected and overgrown. He appreciated this development and felt it was a lot better than some of the other ideas presented in the past.

Deputy Mayor Rzeznik noticed there weren't any ranch style homes within the development and was curious as to why that was.

Mr. Knowles said this development was going to be appealing for young families. He noted that ranch style homes didn't sell like you would think because the price per square foot was much higher. It was in his experience that people did not want to pay more per square foot when they could use the second story for a den or office.

Councilmember Gottschall noticed that the Fire Department recommended denial based on the location of the fire hydrants within the development. Mr. Passalaqua said the applicant would be required to address that concern before anything was finalized with the Planning Commission.

Councilmember Gottschall asked if there would be any screening along the Air Line Trail on the southern end of the development. Mr. Knowles said it was proposed to be open but that didn't preclude homeowners from doing their own landscaping. Councilmember Gottschall would like to see it stay natural and avoid the probability of mixed fencing or having a long stretch of PVC fencing. He stated that he wasn't a fan of stub streets as they often become littered and unkept. He asked they look further into the stub streets and try to come up with an alternative.

Mayor Beagle didn't feel having a stub street going into Gunnar Mattala Park was necessary and supposed it should be addressed during the final site plan review.

Vote:

Motion Carried

**2.) Consideration of the Planning Commission Recommendation to Introduce an Amendatory Ordinance to Conditionally Rezone 7.2 Acres of the Property Located at 31201 Old Wixom Road, Parcel Identification Number 22-06-200-035 from Village Center Area - Core to Village Center Area - Transitional with the Conditions from the Application as Proposed**

**CM-08-115-24:** Motion and seconded made Deputy Mayor Rzeknik and Councilmember Smiley to approve the consideration of the Planning Commission recommendation to introduce an amendatory ordinance to conditionally rezone 7.2 acres of the property located at 31201 Old Wixom Road, parcel identification number 22-06-200-035 from Village Center Area - Core to Village Center Area - Transitional with the conditions from the application as proposed.

Mr. Benson said the property owners of 31201 Old Wixom Road had an interest in taking a portion of their 10-acre property and developing townhomes. He stated that the consideration before City Council wasn't to approve the development specifically, but to consider the zoning change on the parcel. The current zoning indicated that the only residential option was mixed use meaning retail on the lower level and living quarters above.

Mr. Passalaqua said it was the applicant's intent to have approximately 7-acres of the site broken off for a townhouse project. The applicant expressed that they would develop the remainder of the property as mixed in the future.

Councilmember Behrmann recalled a few years ago the applicant was looking to expand the BP Gas Station and move the Wixom Super Market. He knew there hadn't been any progress on that front as of yet. He questioned if the applicant still wanted to do that in addition to the townhome development.

Mr. Passalaqua stated that one of the conditions for the rezoning was that the transitional area would be developed within three years.

Marvin Poota of 31201 Old Wixom Road said the expansion of BP was approved in April 2020; however, due to the pandemic they were advised to hold off. Considering they still wanted to invest in that property, they've changed their desire to townhomes.

Councilmember Behrmann was aware the City couldn't move the retail space they owned in the downtown. He wondered if the applicant still felt the need to keep part of that property for retail. He asked if they thought about utilizing the entire property for townhomes.

Mr. Poota said the original intent was to have the entire property residential but the Planning Commission said they wanted to keep the VCA Core along Pontiac Trail as it was more conducive to the Master Plan.

Mr. Passalaqua indicated that Carlisle Wortman & Associates agreed that VCA Transitional was a better zoning designation for that site from a development perspective.

Deputy Mayor Rzeknik was in favor of the rezoning and liked the townhome concept. He thought it would be a great addition to that area considering the West End Commons would be developed.

Councilmember Smiley was also in favor of the rezoning and liked the idea of townhomes in that area of Wixom.

Councilmember Gottschall thought this was an interesting area of the VCA as it didn't fully feel transitional as it's surrounded by commercial/industrial properties. He asked if there was any green space requirements within VCA Transitional for residential developments.

Mr. Benson didn't believe that zoning required green space along the road. If anything, it's designed to mirror the look of what they already had along Wixom Road, just north of the Genesis Credit Union.

Mr. Passalaqua would need to look into it further as you had general standards for any development, but he imagined the green space would be limited.

Councilmember Gottschall recognized that the VCA Core wasn't designated toward industrial type buildings. He thought this lot was unusual because it wasn't their desire to build another industrial building however, industrial was what populated that area. He was uncertain how it would look having townhomes along Pontiac Trail with balconies facing the road. He supported the interior lot becoming townhouse but the road frontage was concerning.

Mr. Benson said the Planning Commission discussed that at length and ultimately agreed unanimously to have it be VCA Transitional as opposed to VCA Core.

Councilmember Gottschall did not foresee that area being like Country Corners but he was concerned about the appeal of a residential development backing to that amount of traffic. He felt having a green space garden as an entry to the neighborhood would be more desirable rather than buildings. He would not want units along Pontiac Trail sit vacant because of the lack of appeal of having their balcony looking out toward cars and semitrucks going by.

Councilmember Behrmann liked what was proposed but wasn't sure if the remaining property would be able to become retail. He would rather have an analysis completed to determine if that property should also become residential.

Mr. Poota said they were willing to take the risk. He did not believe during this current climate that developing retail made sense. They did not want to lock themselves in when they could always come back to City Council and ask for the rest of the property to be rezoned VCA Transitional. He said not having enough rooftops had always been the main drawback whenever they've approached a national tenant for business. He mentioned they

had more property in the area that they could have for retail if that were to be desired down the road.

Councilmember Gronlund-Fox supported the rezoning but asked what the significance of three years was when it came to the development.

Mr. Poota said that was just an arbitrary number that they came up with to give them a timeline for any unforeseen items. He said it was their hope to break ground in the Spring of 2025.

Mayor Beagle said that he supported the rezoning and liked the proposed development.

Vote:

Motion Carried

**3.) Recommendation to Approve the Introduction of an Amendatory Ordinance to Amend Title 18.00, Zoning, Chapter 18.16, Signs, Sections 18.16.020 and 18.16.070 to Clarify and Update Definitions, Sign Design Standards, Prohibited Signs and Appeals and Variances in the Village Center Area (VCA) Zoning Districts**

**CM-08-116-24:** Motion and seconded made by Councilmember Smiley and Deputy Mayor Rzeznik to approve the introduction of an amendatory ordinance to amend Title 18.00, Zoning, Chapter 18.16, Signs, Sections 18.16.020 and 18.16.070 to clarify and update Definitions, Sign Design Standards, Prohibited Signs and Appeals and Variances in the Village Center Area (VCA) Zoning Districts.

Mr. Passalacqua said the Planning Commission, Assistant City Manager Benson and Carlisle Wortman & Associates worked together to better define signs within the VCA. After the review of some signs that may or may not have met the intent of the original ordinance, they've decided to work with the Planning Commission to better define what they wanted, did not want, colors, lighting and include pictures within the ordinance. He said that pictures really helped the applicant because they could see physical examples of the types of signs that were permissible. The intent was to improve the City's ability to administratively approve signs and give clearer direction to the applicant.

Mr. Benson said the images within the ordinance were given so it could show the specific design material standards. For example, the materials they had to choose from included ceramic, tile, wood, metal, brick or stone. In addition, they needed matching or stylistically similar awnings and projecting signs, a sign package or high-quality composite materials. He stated that the applicant had to meet two of those items in order for the sign to be approved administratively.

Councilmember Smiley thought that some cities had strict sign design guidelines while others were too loose. He felt this ordinance was right in the middle and therefore he was in favor of this.

Councilmember Gottschall noticed that one of the changes was to prohibit flat one-dimensional signs; however, there was a photo of La Casita which he believed to be a one-dimensional sign. He asked if there was wording within the ordinance that indicated that it wasn't a flat one-dimensional sign if the lettering was a ½" extruded.

Mr. Passalacqua said he did not believe they've added a specific measurement but there was a requirement that all signs shall have a clearly distinguishable dimensional effect to the sign.

Councilmember Gottschall understood that the images were going to be part of the sign ordinance but he would like to see the picture of the La Casita sign be removed. He understood why the sign was originally approved, but he did not think it needed to be advertised that we'd let you have a flat sign if you erected an awning.

Mr. Benson said that image was just an example, but he would look into it further and hopefully find an alternative image to insert into the ordinance in its place.

Vote:

Motion Carried

**4.) Recommendation to Authorize an Interlocal Placemaking and Public Spaces Program Agreement with Oakland County for Local Fiscal Recovery Fund Distribution as a Grant for the West End Commons Project and Authorize the Mayor to Sign the Agreement**

**CM-08-117-24:** Motion and seconded made by Deputy Mayor Rzeznik and Councilmember Gronlund-Fox to approve the authorization of an Interlocal Placemaking and Public Spaces Program Agreement with Oakland County for Local Fiscal Recovery Fund Distribution as a grant for the West End Commons Project and authorize the Mayor to sign the agreement.

Mr. Benson explained that this was for an interlocal agreement with Oakland County for a placemaking grant. He asked them to keep in mind that this was only one part of a larger combination of funding sources related to the West End Commons project. The other granting opportunity was a much larger grant funding project from the Department of Housing and Urban Development. He stated that the intent tonight was only to get Council's authorization to enter into an interlocal agreement and accept the grant funds; however, they were not obligated to spend the funds until Council gave authorization. He gave praise to DDA Executive Director Laura Cloutier for staying persistent in the grant funding opportunities to secure a total budget of 1.23 million dollars for this project. He said this project allowed them the opportunity to create a space in a downtown location that's been undesirable and undevelopable.

Laura Cloutier, DDA Executive Director said they wanted to bring two site plan concept drawings to the Council tonight in order to retain their feedback. The first concept drawing showed circular seating, a stage area with shelter and a gas firepit. They've also included the new branded "X" in front of the stage and the back of the property would be a bocce ball court. The second concept drawing takes away the bocce ball court and opens that spot to utilize in other ways. She stated that both concepts included a pad for a public restroom even if it was a temporary or permanent restroom.

Mr. Benson pointed out that a decent portion of the budget for this was also intended for gateway signage of that corner considering it was the entry way to the downtown. In addition, they've been very intentional how this project would harmonize with the architecture textures in that area.

Mayor Beagle was excited to see this project underway and for the City to secure so much funding for it. He said a few weeks back while he was in Ann Arbor, he noticed they were utilizing Throne Restrooms and thought it was a great alternative to a permanent restroom.

Councilmember Behrmann supported the interlocal agreement. He said if they were looking for feedback he wouldn't support the bocce ball court. He thought it may be unique in the beginning but after a while it could lose its appeal.

Deputy Mayor Rzeznik was in favor of more grass instead of a fixed bocce ball court. He figured having grass meant that you could use it for a variety of things. He would like to see

some bench seating incorporated into the wall. He was very much in support of this and was looked forward to seeing the progress.

Councilmember Smiley thought they should omit the bocce ball court and incorporate more grass. He was pleased with the funding they've secured for this project.

Councilmember Gottschall asked for more information regarding attachment #3 in their packet as it related to a sign quote. Ms. Cloutier explained the DDA would like to erect a sign to advertise what was coming in that location. They hoped to have it done before the Block Party in September.

Mr. Benson added that the sign would also become an engagement opportunity to get feedback from the community on what they'd like to see at that location.

Councilmember Gottschall did not think they should be spending that much money on a sign. He questioned if the "X" in front of the stage would be natural material. Mr. Benson said that it wasn't finalized yet but their main goal was to be able to see the "X" from an aerial view. Councilmember Gottschall would like to see the "X" be a natural color and not red and blue. He liked the firepit but questioned if it was safe and would be covered under the City's insurance. He thought they should look into the traffic noise as it related to the stage position. He wouldn't want it to be difficult to hear the entertainment on the stage because the traffic noise polluted the sound. He even questioned if the stage should be rotated.

Councilmember Gronlund-Fox said she was excited for the plan. She would like it to have more green space so they could probably do without the bocce ball court.

Councilmember Gottschall told them to look at references like the Maggie Daley Park where they had a good combination of park space, gathering areas, natural plantings and seats with planters.

Deputy Mayor Rzeznik knew of communities that funded projects by selling walkway brick pavers. He suggested they may want to look into something along those lines for a project such as this.

Ms. Cloutier thanked the Oakland County Commissioners for approving the grant funding through Main Street Oakland County.

Vote:

Motion Carried

- 5.) Recommendation to Authorize the Purchase of a Single-Axle Freightliner Truck Chassis from Wolverine Freightliner-Eastside of Mount Clemens, MI in the Amount of \$107,125 and the Purchase of Related Snow Fighting Equipment from Truck and Trailer Specialties of Dutton, MI in an Amount Not to Exceed \$126,130 from Dump Truck and Equipment Replacement Account #401-441-973.392 and Authorize the Associated Budget Amendment**

**CM-08-118-24:** Motion and seconded made by Councilmembers Behrmann and Gronlund-Fox to approve the recommendation to authorize the purchase of a single-axle freightliner truck chassis from Wolverine Freightliner-Eastside of Mount Clemens, MI in the Amount of \$107,125 and the purchase of related snow fighting equipment from Truck and Trailer Specialties of Dutton, MI in an amount not to exceed \$126,130 from Dump Truck and Equipment Replacement Account #401-441-973.392 and authorize the associated budget amendment.

Mr. Sikma explained that this truck would be used for plowing smaller subdivisions and dead-end streets as its size made it feasible to maneuver in smaller areas. He said this truck included an 8-yard salt bed and 225-gallon tank for brine. He felt this truck would be a great addition to their fleet which included 3 wing-plow trucks.

Mayor Beagle asked when the truck would be delivered should it be ordered this week. Mr. Sikma had hoped it would be delivered by the winter 2025.

Vote:

Motion Carried

**6.) Recommendation to Adopt a Resolution to Approve an Interlocal Agreement between the City of Walled Lake, the City of Wixom, the Village of Wolverine Lake, White Lake Township and the Oakland Community Health Network for the Mental Health Co-Response Team and Authorize the Mayor to Sign the Agreement**

**CM-08-119-24:** Motion and seconded made by Councilmembers Behrmann and Gronlund-Fox to adopt a resolution to approve an Interlocal Agreement between the City of Walled Lake, the City of Wixom, the Village of Wolverine Lake, White Lake Township and the Oakland Community Health Network for the Mental Health Co-Response Team and authorize the Mayor to sign the agreement.

Chief Langmeyer was excited to talk about a program that law enforcement knew they've needed for years. He thought everybody could agree that there was a mental health issue going on across our country and the City of Wixom wasn't an exception. He indicated that the police officers were very good at de-escalating a scene, but they did not have the capacity to address the problems that some of these people were going through. The solution they've come up with was to share a social worker in a partnership between the area police departments and the Oakland County Health Network. He was proud to be part of this program when it was introduced in Bloomfield Township in 2021, and it's been so successful in Oakland County that it's being copied across the state. He added that the first year of funding of the program would be covered by America Rescue Plan Act while the Michigan Commission on Law Enforcement Standards issued a grant to fund year two through four.

Mr. Brown noted that they hoped in the future to use funds from the Opioid Settlement Act to help offset any City costs this program may entail.

Representatives from Oakland Community Health Network were present and gave a brief description on their services and what the program entailed.

Mayor Beagle was excited that Wixom was taking part in helping those individuals that were suffering from mental health concerns in a timely manner.

Deputy Mayor Rzeznik supported this program. He asked if there would be any relationship where the social workers would be present with the school district. Chief Langmeyer said the social worker would work with the school liaison officer and/or school social worker if there was such a need.

Councilmember Gronlund-Fox thanked Chief Langmeyer for bringing this program to our community. She was happy to hear that the Oakland Community Health Network worked with the Lakes Area Youth Assistance.



Councilmember Smiley thought this was a worthwhile program and was aware that mental health calls were increasing every year.

Vote:

Motion Carried

### **CALL TO THE PUBLIC:**

Ajay Raman, Oakland County Commissioner District 14 presented some highlights from Oakland County. He mentioned that the County was trying to fund various resources for our residents and our first responders. He indicated that the County recently received a AAA bond rating and the Grand River construction should hopefully becoming to an end soon. He said that Road Commission of Oakland County had a study out there for upcoming improvement projects so if you had an interest in taking partaking, please log onto [www.rcocweb.org](http://www.rcocweb.org) for more details. He mentioned that property taxes were due and if you were having difficulty paying your taxes, please reach out to the Oakland County Treasurer to set up a hardship payment program. He said that Oakland County met with DTE and expressed the frustrations with the amount of power outages in the area. He hoped to come back to Council with some type of resolution in the future.

### **CITY MANAGER COMMENTS:**

Mr. Brown congratulated the employees that were celebrating their work anniversary in the month of September. They had employees ranging from 2 years to 18 years. He thanked them for their service as he believed that Wixom would not be the community it was today without the great work from the City employees. He mentioned they've hired an Account Clerk in the Finance Office, a part-time Code Enforcement Officer, a Patrol Officer and were in the process of hiring Police Service Aides, Paid on Call Firefighters and a full-time Firefighter. He thanked those members of Council, staff members, Merge Live and audience members for braving the weather and power outage to make it to the Council meeting tonight. He appreciated their flexibility and rolling with the punches in pulling this meeting together when they didn't have power in the building.

Mr. Benson had no comments.

### **COUNCIL COMMENTS:**

**Councilmember Gottschall** had no comments.

**Councilmember Behrmann** wished the DPW well as they were going to be busy cleaning up from tonight's storm.

**Councilmember Smiley** hoped all of his neighbors had power back soon. He reminded everyone that kids were back in school so be cautious while driving. He wished everybody a great holiday.

**Councilmember Gronlund-Fox** congratulated every employee celebrating their work anniversary in September. She thanked the DPW for taking care of some low hanging tree limbs in her neighborhood. She was impressed for they responded immediately to her call.

**Deputy Mayor Rzeznik** gave praise to the Parks and Recreation staff as Hot, Blues and BBQ turned out to be another great event, the concerts had been really good this year and the new pickle ball courts at Gunnar Mattala Park were first class. He appreciated the County Commissioner's support in trying to work with DTE regarding the power failure issues in our area. He was aware of some folks that lost appliances due to the recent power outages and expressed how frustrating it was for everybody.

Mayor Beagle congratulated those employees celebrating work anniversaries and thanked them for their service.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:07 p.m.

Crystal Opalko  
City Clerk

APPROVED:  
September 10, 2024