



CITY OF WALLED LAKE
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Tuesday, May 13, 2025

The Meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance led by DDA Chairman Blair

ROLL CALL: Ackley, Blair, Johnston, Lublin, Marshall, McDonald, Mechigian,
Millen, Raleigh

ABSENT: Allen, Amin

OTHERS PRESENT: Mayor Pro Tem Woods, Council Member Ambrose, Council
Member Owsinek, Public Safety Deputy Director Shakinas,
Deputy Police Chief Kolke, Fire Chief Gonzalez, DPW
Superintendent Ladd, Finance Director Pesta, HR Director Sears,
and City Clerk Stuart

There being a quorum present the meeting was declared in session.

**DDA 05-01-25 MOTION TO EXCUSE DDA BOARD MEMBERS ALLEN AND
AMIN FROM TODAY'S MEETING**

Motion by Millen, seconded by Johnston: CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY: To excuse
DDA Board Members Allen and Amin from today's meeting.

REQUESTS FOR AGENDA CHANGES: *None*

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES:

1. Regular DDA Meeting of April 8, 2025

**DDA 05-02-25 APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE APRIL 8, 2025
MEETING**

Motion by Johnston, seconded by Millen: CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY: To approve the
minutes from the April 8, 2025 meeting.

CORRESPONDENCE: *None*

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION: *None*

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. Proposed Resolution 2025-03 Ladd Road thoroughfare sidewalk project budget amendment

City Manager Whitt explained that the sidewalk is complete, DPW is currently wrapping up the project.

DDA 05-03-25 MOTION TO APPROVE RESOLUTION 2025-03 A RESOLUTION FOR A BUDGET AMENDMENT TO ACCOMMODATE THE LADD ROAD THOROUGHFARE SIDEWALK PROJECT FROM MAPLE ROAD TO THE TRAILWAY

Motion by Lublin, seconded by Millen: CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY: To approve resolution 2025-03 a resolution for a budget amendment to accommodate the Ladd Road thoroughfare sidewalk project from Maple Road to the railway.

City Manager Whitt acknowledged that Mayor Pro Tem Woods played a key role in advancing this agenda and noted that the project has now been successfully completed. He further explained that significant progress has been made internally, with the Department of Public Works (DPW) carrying out extensive grading work to bring the project to completion. City Manager Whitt also mentioned that DPW Superintendent Ladd is coordinating with property owner Mr. Leith to remove the unsightly fencing at 850 Ladd E, which runs through the project area.

NEW BUSINESS: *None*

EXECUTIVE & MANAGING DIRECTOR REPORT:

City Manager Whitt announced that realtor Mr. Randy Thomas was present to provide updates on vacant parcels for sale within the city that he represents. City Manager Whitt also mentioned that he has met with several groups interested in developing the former school property located at 615 N. Pontiac Trail.

Mr. Randy Thomas provided updates on both the former Walled Lake School property and the downtown property. He noted that several development proposals have been submitted for the downtown property, including single-family one-story homes, retail establishments, and multifamily/live-work environments. Mr. Thomas explained that although retailers have evaluated the local market, in the years the property has been listed, it has not attracted significant commercial interest. Instead, the market has shown greater potential for multifamily residential use. Mr. Thomas explained that he has had numerous conversations with both City officials and downtown property owner Mr. Keisoglou, who is frustrated with the lack of progress for occupancy of this downtown property and is eager to see the property sold. Mr. Thomas encouraged the City to communicate any specific development vision it has for the downtown site. Mr. Thomas also remarked that market conditions are changing and emphasized that the site could present a strong opportunity for the City of Walled Lake to consider

purchasing the property. Mr. Thomas explained that Mr. Keisoglou expressed to him that he would be open to offering a land contract to facilitate a sale to the City.

City Manager Whitt explained that downtown property owner Mr. Abe Keisoglou has denied the city future use of his vacant downtown property and it will become fenced in shortly.

DDA Board Member McDonald asked about purchasing Mr. Keisoglou's vacant downtown property to create a parking lot there.

DDA Chairman Blair expressed the city could purchase and control this property, opining the city needs to control the property for the resident's benefit.

City Manager Whitt explained his concerns that it will be a mistake to rely solely on the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) Board to determine what the City wants for the property. He emphasized that the City's vision should not be limited to the input of the DDA Board alone. City Manager Whitt noted that a Commercial Planned Unit Development (CPD) is a negotiated agreement with the City, and that this property remains a strong candidate for such an approach. He explained that using the site as a parking lot would not serve the best interests of the adjacent residential properties and would offer no significant benefit to the surrounding neighborhood. City Manager Whitt further stated that those who oppose the development of the site appear to be against any form of development, regardless of the proposal. He noted that in recent years, two or three prospective developments have withdrawn due to persistent community opposition. City Manager Whitt said that the market and economic conditions will ultimately dictate the most viable use of property. Again, he pointed out that converting the site into a parking lot for the beach would not benefit the City itself but rather serve individuals from outside the City and support nearby businesses that have not demonstrated strong corporate citizenship with the City.

DDA Board Member McDonald said there is huge lack of parking within the city, congestion in this area already exists, the city has other parking lots, but they are further away from downtown. DDA Board Member McDonald said he feels the best use of this piece of property is a parking lot. If there is a building constructed instead of parking, this will make the parking even worse for downtown.

DDA Board Member Lublin said the property can be utilized as it is zoned without a CPD agreement, if the city does entertain buying the property, we must have direction. DDA Board Member Lublin said we need to decide what path we will follow. DDA Board Member Lublin said someone will not be happy with any decision made.

City Manager Whitt said as individuals, we cannot make that decision. If there are votes from the board to purchase, that avenue can be reviewed. City Manager Whitt said the final decision lays with City Council.

City Council Member Owsinek asked why the board wished to take another piece of property off the tax roll. DDA Chairman Blair said he would like to see the city purchase the property and utilize for events.

City Council Member Ambrose said it is not appropriate to have this conversation without figures or a plan. Council Member Ambrose explained we must have a plan before discussions of this nature.

City Manager Whitt recommended a motion be made to instruct DDA Executive Director to enter discussions with property owner Mr. Keisoglou and his agent, regarding potential purchase and use of the properties. City Manager Whitt said he will report back to the board.

**DDA 05-04-25 MOTION TO INSTRUCT DDA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WHITT
TO ENTER DISCUSSIONS WITH PROPERTY OWNER MR.
KEISOGLOU AND HIS AGENT REGARDING POTENTIAL
PURCHASE AND USE OF HIS PROPERTIES FOR SALE
DOWNTOWN**

Motion by McDonald, seconded by Lublin, CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY: To instruct DDA Executive Director Whitt to enter discussions with property owner Mr. Keisoglou and his agent regarding potential purchase and use of his properties for sale downtown.

Mr. Thomas explained the property at 615 N. Pontiac Trail is for sale and has finally passed its remediation requirements, there is a "hot spot" with a restrictive covenant, a very defined restriction that the "hot spot" cannot be utilized, covered, accessed, or distributed in any manner. Mr. Thomas said the interested parties he has spoken with are aware of the "hot spot" and they recognize the environmental impacts. Mr. Thomas said the property was recently listed for sale in March 2025. They went through a call for offers, which is a very transparent process, a fair way to vet out who is in the market and who is not in the market. Mr. Thomas said there were six sincerely interested parties initially, however, three have pulled out, there are three remaining. Mr. Thomas explained there are two well-known developers, the third is more of an investor. Mr. Thomas explained six years ago there was a joint city meeting with the Planning Commission, DDA, and City Council on the potential development of this property. Mr. Thomas said a mixed use was where everybody's thoughts were. Mr. Thomas said he is meeting with the Walled Lake Schools superintendent on Friday to brief him and provide recommendations. Mr. Thomas asked to go before the City Council to the next meeting to provide an update as well. Mr. Thomas said the proposals he has seen provide residential use with 15-20 units per acre. Mr. Thomas said potential developers have done a lot of homework, they are excited about it even with the limitations of the "hot spot" there. Mr. Thomas said the school boards meet on June 19th.

DDA Chairman Blair said the investment option to buy, and hold concerns him, and he felt the buy and hold approach was not good for the city. Mr. Thomas said the buy and hold is not a long-term hold.

DDA Board Member Marshall asked if the property bought by the city 15 years ago, where the market is hosted, are there any similarities of contamination to the 615 N. Pontiac Trail site.

City Manager Whitt said based on the board's motion, he has been instructed to meet with Mr. Keisoglou and talk. City Manager Whitt said he has spoken with the Mayor prior on this

property. City Manager Whitt said the DDA board does have the authority to purchase and if the desire to purchase exists after the discussions with Mr. Keisoglou, the request will need to ultimately go before the City Council.

DDA Board Member Lublin said buying the property is one action, but then developing it is another which includes cost, there is a bigger investment.

City Manager Whitt said the city loses revenue by not developing it.

1. Public Safety Activity Report

Public Safety Deputy Director Shakinas said there were two additional Flock cameras purchased. Deputy Director Shakinas said with the assistance of these cameras, he himself has made several traffic stops. He explained the most recent traffic stop; the driver was taken into custody and turned over to the City of Wixom Police Department due to an outstanding warrant. Deputy Director Shakinas said he is asking the DDA board to fund the Flock Camera Safety maintenance software for all the cameras.

DDA 05-05-25 MOTION TO APPROVE TO FINANCE THE FLOCK SAFETY CAMERA MAINTENANCE SOFTWARE

Motion by Lublin, seconded by McDonald, UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED: To approve the Flock Safety Camera maintenance software.

Deputy Director Shakinas explained that city Code Enforcement has issued notices for grass maintenance and those that do not comply will be cut and billed. Deputy Director Shakinas explained that the abandoned batting cages next to the Copper Mug establishment have been issued a demolition permit and those will be taken down. Deputy Director Shakinas explained that 1225 E. West Maple Road, where Husky envelope used to be, is under new ownership and they have been cooperating with the city to repair the dilapidated fence along the trailway area that abuts their property. Deputy Director Shakinas explained that the fire damage at the 14 Mile Road apartments has been wrapped up and completed.

DDA Board Member McDonald asked for the status on the repainting of the farmhouse.

City Manager Whitt said the city is moving forward with painting. City Manager Whitt said DDA Board member and business owner of Green House, Mr. Millen had agreed to fund the repainting cost at the prior City Council meeting.

DPW Superintendent Ladd explained the quotes obtained included washing, scraping, and repainting at a cost of \$3,500.

DDA Chairman Blair said while he appreciates Mr. Millen's generosity, he strongly believes the DDA should be paying for this, not Mr. Millen.

DDA Board Member Marshall said he agrees.

DDA Chairman Blair said the building as is stands is a disgrace, the playground is beautiful, and children should not be subjected to look at this eyesore.

**DDA 05-06-25 MOTION TO FUND THE REPAINTING OF THE BANKS
DOLBEER FOSTER FARMHOUSE**

Motion by Marshall, seconded by Lublin: UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED: To fund the repainting of the Banks Dolbeer Foster Farmhouse.

City Manager Whitt said it is unfortunate the businesses downtown do not contribute as Mr. Millen does, he is the sole business owner downtown that contributes and supports the city.

DDA Board Member Marshall explained he wants the business to support the city by paying their water bills unlike the Tiki Bar discussed at the last meeting.

City Manager Whitt said the Tiki Bar did provide a cashier's check to pay for the outstanding amount that was due to roll to their 2025 summer tax bill. However, that does not bring them current, it only relieves the delinquency being rolled on to the tax roll. City Manager Whitt opined the residents should not be paying for the water usage of the businesses that are delinquent or do not pay.

WARRANT REPORT:

1. April 2025

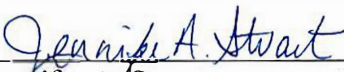
**DDA 05-07-25 APPROVAL TO RECEIVE AND FILE THE WARRANT FOR
APRIL 2025**

Motion by Lublin, seconded by Marshall: CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY: To receive and file the warrant for April 2025.

ADJOURNMENT:

DDA 05-08-25 ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Millen, seconded by Lublin: CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY: To adjourn the meeting at 5:10 P.M.



Jennifer A. Stuart
City Clerk

approval 6/10/25



Steve Blair
DDA Chairman