



CITY OF WALLED LAKE
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Tuesday, January 14, 2025

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

Pledge of Allegiance led by DDA Chairman Blair

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

ABSENT:

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

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

DDA 01-01-25 MOTION TO EXCUSE DDA BOARD MEMBER AMIN

Motion by Lublin, supported by McDonald, CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY: To excuse
DDA Board member Amin.

REQUESTS FOR AGENDA CHANGES:

None

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES:

1. Regular DDA Meeting of November 12, 2024

**DDA 01-02-25 APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE NOVEMBER 12,
2024 MEETING**

Motion by Millen, supported by Lublin: CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY: To approve the
minutes from the November 12, 2024 meeting.

CORRESPONDENCE:

None

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION:

None

*Board Member Amin arrived

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

None

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Proposed Resolution 2025-01 Ladd Road Resurfacing Budget Amendment

City Manager Whitt shared an update regarding the Ladd Road resurfacing project, which has been completed with lane striping. The project was originally approved by the DDA for fiscal year 2024 but was not carried out until fiscal year 2025. As a result, this resolution will facilitate the necessary budget amendments for accurate financial records. City Manager Whitt also noted that this matter will be presented to the City Council at their next meeting.

**DDA 01-03-25 MOTION TO APPROVE RESOLUTION 2025-01 A RESOLUTION
FOR A BUDGET AMENDMENT TO ACCOMMODATE THE
LADD ROAD RESURFACING PROJECT FUNDING
REQUIREMENT TO CURRENT FISCAL YEAR**

Motion by Millen, supported by Lublin: CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY: To approve the minutes from the November 12, 2024 meeting.

2. Proposed Resolution 2025-02 Boss Engineering Proposal for Civil Engineering & Landscape Design for Downtown Sidewalk Improvements

Finance Director Pesta provided an update on the downtown survey work, which was received from Boss Engineering at the end of 2024. The next step involves design work, including landscape architecture and layout options for the downtown area. She explained that Resolution 2025-02 seeks approval for a proposal from Boss Engineering to focus on the area along E. Walled Lake Drive, from Pontiac Trail to Hillcroft. Additionally, Finance Director Pesta mentioned that letters were sent to all business owners in the area requesting access to their basements for the project, and most have responded positively, though one business owner declined.

Chairman Blair asked who said no.

City Manager Whitt shared that Ms. Lisa Zerilli from Nino's Bakery had sent correspondence indicating that they do not have a basement to review, and therefore, the visit will not be necessary. He mentioned that another letter will be sent to request access, likely for clarification or further information.

DDA Board Member Millen pointed out that Nino's Bakery, the business that had indicated they do not have a basement to review, is the same business that previously filed a complaint against the city regarding ADA non-compliance. He highlighted the situation where the business is now denying access to the city to address the very complaint they had filed.

City Manager Whitt explained that Ms. Zerilli has declined access for the city to inspect their building, and this matter may need to be brought before the City Attorney to pursue legal action in court to gain access. He outlined that the City Attorney could file a lawsuit or take legal steps for construction or municipal purposes to secure the necessary access. City Manager Whitt emphasized that the city would obtain the authority to proceed, but the process will be delayed if Ms. Zerilli continues to deny access. City Manager Whitt mentioned that Ms. Zerilli regularly parks in valuable 30-minute parking spaces, which are meant for use by the patrons downtown. He noted that these spaces are intended for short-term parking but are being occupied all day and overnight by residents of nearby apartments as well.

DDA Board Member Millen said the parking downtown offers 30-minute, he has multiple pictures of cars being parked there overnight.

DDA Chairman Blair asked how a business receives a certificate of occupancy if they do not have enough parking.

DDA Board Member Millen opined the parking downtown must be resolved, this is a huge issue. There are current businesses and potential new businesses that need parking.

City Manager Whitt said he agreed there is a new business at 141 E. Walled Lake Drive, how does the city offer a certificate of occupancy if parking is an issue. City Manager Whitt said several entities have used the downtown parking spaces where its available. City Manager Whitt explained Boss Engineering will be at the next city council meeting to provide a presentation on the recent survey findings with proposals and invited all to participate and provide input.

DDA Chaiman Blair asked what the established cost for the engineering proposal is.

Finance Director Pesta said yes, it is outlined in proposal, just around \$54,000. She explained the focus of the first area is along E. Walled Lake Drive between Pontiac Trail and Hillcroft.

**DDA 01-04-25 MOTION TO APPROVE RESOLUTION 2025-02 A RESOLUTION
TO APPROVE BOSS ENGINEERING TO PROCEED WITH CIVIL
ENGINEERING AND LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE DESIGN
SERVICES FOR ACCESSIBILITY, STREETScape, AND
SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENTS ALONG E. WALLED LAKE
DRIVE IN THE DOWNTOWN AREA NOT TO EXCEED \$54,000**

Motion by Millen, supported by Johnston: CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY: To approve resolution 2025-02 a resolution to approve Boss Engineering to proceed with civil engineering and landscape architecture design services for accessibility, streetscape, and sidewalk improvements along E. Walled Lake Drive in the downtown area not to exceed \$54,000.

EXECUTIVE & MANAGING DIRECTOR REPORT:

1. Decker Road Developments

City Manager Whitt provided several updates on ongoing developments. He shared that Starbucks with retail development at 14 Mile and Decker is moving forward, with coordination underway with the Oakland County Road Commission. He also noted that the 7-11 Speedway development at Decker and E. West Maple is currently under plan review. Additionally, City Manager Whitt mentioned that the new Taco Bell is now up and running, describing it as a nice facility with a different layout than the prior site, seating is limited and is more of a drive-thru and mobile app ordering. He also explained that the property owner, Mr. Keisoglou, had been issued a fence permit for his three lots located at 307 E. Walled Lake, 323 E. Walled Lake, and 335 E. Walled Lake. City Manager Whitt explained these sites are under contract for future development.

DDA Board Member Blair said what he has seen of the proposal there are a lot of outstanding items.

DDA Board Member Millen said we need to move the city forward, if we do not start development downtown, people will walk away or avoid doing business with the city. DDA Board Member Millen said we need to work with these developers.

DDA Board Member Amin said she will be bringing her team to talk to the city council about the proposal at the next meeting with a presentation. DDA Board Member Amin said there is no reason for a three-story building, that's extreme. She said the developer can offer offices and second story residential, meeting the height and parking requirements of the city. DDA Board Member Amin expressed three stories is greedy.

DDA Board Member Millen asked if the developer would be able to make a profit on a two story. DDA Board Member Millen said the downtown has sat this way for the 8 years he has been here. Mr. Millen said the city has had several proposals for these parcels, none of them were approved, people are going to stop coming to Walled Lake. Mr. Millen said if the vacant lots owned by Mr. Keisoglou are fenced off, the parking downtown will become even more of a problem.

DDA Board Member Amin said there are developers that she has approached who would provide a two-story proposal with engineering and that they will testify a two-story is possible. DDA Board Member Amin said past proposals were turned down because they always wanted to do apartments, so they are using the commercial thing as an excuse to build apartments. DDA Board

Member Millen asked why these other people are not coming forward to build that kind of building. DDA board member Amin said when these developers are done.

DDA Board Member Millen said the city shuts developers down, it is frustrating. We have people who want to build, and the city pushes them away.

DDA Board Member Lublin said if developers work with the city then things can move forward. Communities must look out for the neighboring properties.

City Manager Whitt addressed recent speculation, stating that the proposal in question is not yet complete, and that there are still presentations and significant conversations to be had. He dismissed the rumors being spread by individuals speculating about the situation, calling it "nonsense." City Manager Whitt said if there is an agreement that is worked out, the city has not sent the contract. City Manager Whitt said Mr. Keisoglou is going to fence in all three parcels that he owns whether it is due to discussions with developer or on his own. City Manager Whitt said the city must be careful as anybody else in preventing development.

City Manager Whitt said the vacant property located at 615 N. Pontiac Trail, remains vacant and will likely continue to do so, as the school district that owns it is "on autopilot" with its administration. He expressed frustration, stating that there is no one in charge, and as a result, nothing is being done to address the property's development. City Manager Whitt further criticized the school district, noting that despite recently having their millage approved, they seem uninterested in pursuing any development for the site.

2. Public Safety Activity Report

Deputy Director Shakinas provided an update on a couple of significant issues. He reported that 31 vehicles were stolen from the LaFontaine dealership last year, noting that vehicle theft is a nationwide problem, with cars being relatively easy to steal. While LaFontaine has implemented some improvements to address the issue, Deputy Director Shakinas stated that these efforts have not yet proven sufficient. He also updated the board on a fatal accident that occurred in December on Pontiac Trail. Deputy Director Shakinas explained that the city's Police Detective is actively pursuing all charges related to the incident, including reckless driving and causing the deaths of two passengers who tragically passed away. He added that the driver involved is currently in custody of the Michigan Department of Corrections.

City Manager Whitt reported that Fire Chief Gonzalez, after conducting a site inspection, found pallets of boxes containing marijuana stored outside at 850 Ladd Rd, Building A. He noted that further details will be provided when permissible but emphasized that there are serious issues with this site. City Manager Whitt clarified that this is the first instance of significant violations encountered with marijuana facilities in the city. City Manager Whitt mentioned that electricians were found working on site without the necessary permits. He expressed concern over the lack of responsibility exhibited by this group, highlighting the seriousness of these violations. City Manager Whitt also confirmed that a criminal investigation has been initiated in relation to the matter.

Deputy Director Shakinas said the city inspects all sites for marijuana, the processing facility at 850 Ladd Rd Building A has had numerous violations including outside storage of marijuana, equipment and machines that were not approved, portions of the building that did not receive certificate of occupancy had storage of bags and boxes of marijuana.

DDA Board Member Millen asked about the abandoned batting cages next to 1760 E. West Maple Rd.

Deputy Director Shakinas said Code Enforcement Officer Barch is actively working on several sites with code violation issues within the city.

DDA Chairman Blair said Officer Barch does a good job as Code Enforcement Officer.

WARRANT REPORT:

1. November/December 2024

**DDA 01-05-25 APPROVAL TO RECEIVE AND FILE THE WARRANT FOR
NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2024**

Motion by Lublin, supported by McDonald: CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY: To receive and file the warrant for November/December 2024

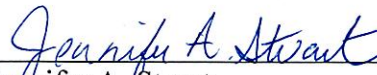
DDA BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS:

None


ADJOURNMENT:

DDA 01-06-25 ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Millen, seconded by Lublin: CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY: To adjourn the meeting at 5:05 P.M.



Jennifer A. Stuart
City Clerk



Steve Blair
DDA Chairman