MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING OF THE DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY BOARD

Tuesday, October 21, 2025

6:30 PM

Village Hall – 21 East Church Street, Lake Orion, MI 48362

(248) 693-8391 ext. 102

1. Call to Order

The October 21, 2025 Downtown Development Authority Regular Meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM by Chairperson Burgess.

2. Roll Call and Determination of Quorum

PRESENT
Chairperson Debbie Burgess
Vice Chairperson Sam Caruso
Treasurer Matt Shell - arrived at 6:36 PM
Secretary Hank Lorant
Board Member Lloyd Coe
Board Member Chris Barnett
President Teresa Rutt

ABSENT
Board Member Sally Medina
Board Member Alaina Campbell

STAFF PRESENT
Assistant Director Janet Bloom
Village Manager Darwin McClary
Deputy Clerk/Treasurer Lynsey Blough

3. Approval of Minutes

A. Approval of DDA Regular Meeting Minutes of September 16, 2025

MOTION made by Board Member Barnett, Seconded by Secretary Lorant, to approve the Downtown Development Authority Board Regular Meeting Minutes of September 16, 2025, as presented.

VOTING YEA: Burgess, Caruso, Lorant, Medina, Barnett, Rutt
VOTING NAY: None
ABSENT: Coe, Campbell, Shell
MOTION: Carried

4. Approval of Agenda

MOTION made by President Rutt, Seconded by Secretary Lorant, to approve the Downtown Development Authority Board Regular Meeting Agenda of October 21, 2025, as presented.

VOTING YEA: Burgess, Caruso, Lorant, Medina, Barnett, Rutt
VOTING NAY: None
ABSENT: Coe, Campbell, Shell
MOTION: Carried

5. Call to the Public

Francesco Komandera, a resident of Oakland County, praised the Village Council President for handling of the previous meeting and proposed an off-campus AV program at the Ehman Center for students, focusing on special effects and CGI. He urged more support for youth and arts initiatives, better safety for downtown workers, especially those walking alone at night and suggested designated parking for late-shift employees. He also highlighted the hard work of those behind downtown events and called for better accommodation for them.

6. Consent Agenda

All items on the Consent Agenda are approved by one vote.

MOTION made by President Rutt, Seconded by Secretary Lorant, to approve the October 21, 2025, Consent Agenda by one vote, as presented.

VOTING YEA: Burgess, Caruso, Lorant, Medina, Barnett, Rutt
VOTING NAY: None
ABSENT: Coe, Campbell, Shell
MOTION: Carried

A. Financial Reports

MOTION made by President Rutt, Seconded by Secretary Lorant, to receive and file the financial reports for September 2025.

VOTING YEA: Burgess, Caruso, Lorant, Medina, Barnett, Rutt
VOTING NAY: None
ABSENT: Coe, Campbell, Shell
MOTION: Carried

7. Financial Matters

A. Bill Approval

MOTION made by Board Member Barnett, Seconded by Treasurer Shell, to approve disbursements in the amount of $217,424.31 for September 2025.
VOTING YEA: Burgess, Caruso, Shell, Lorant, Medina, Barnett, Rutt
VOTING NAY: None
ABSENT: Coe, Campbell
MOTION: Carried

8. New and Old Business

A. Holiday Lights Installation - Award of Contract

Assistant Director Bloom provided a comparison of three bids for holiday lights and decorations from Santa's Light Crew, Timberland, and Eradico, with Santa's Light Crew offering the lowest bid.

MOTION made by Treasurer Shell, Seconded by Board Member Barnett, to award Santa's Light Crew the contract for the installation, maintenance, and removal of holiday lights and garland for the Lake Orion DDA during the 2025-2026 holiday season, at a total cost not to exceed $11,100. The funding will come from GL 248-726-883-000 for $6,100 (for banners and holiday lights) and the remaining $5,000 from GL 248-729-880-012 (Sing-and-Stroll Tree Lighting).
VOTING YEA: Burgess, Caruso, Shell, Lorant, Medina, Barnett, Rutt
VOTING NAY: None
ABSENT: Coe, Campbell
MOTION: Carried

Assistant Director Bloom presented two bids for roofline lighting. The DDA suggested covering 10% of the cost for businesses interested in participating, with pricing based on linear footage. There was discussion on whether to gather more information from businesses before moving forward, particularly about costs and interest in year-round lighting versus seasonal. Concerns were raised about electric bills, potential price changes with fewer participants, and the need for a more comprehensive understanding of the project before making a decision. Some board members felt this might be better suited as a project for next year.

MOTION made by President Rutt, Seconded by Secretary Lorant, to direct DDA directors to investigate further the roofline lighting to get more clarity.
VOTING YEA: Burgess, Caruso, Shell, Lorant, Medina, Barnett, Rutt
VOTING NAY: None
ABSENT: Coe, Campbell
MOTION: Carried

9. Reports, Resolutions and Recommendations

A. Executive Director Report

Board Member Barnett expressed frustration over delays and lack of cooperation between the DDA and the Village. Village Manager McClary attributed the issues to the DDA's side, particularly Executive Director Matt Gibb's overwhelm and lack of delegation. Board Member Barnett urged Village Manager McClary to take a more active role, scheduling regular meetings with Executive Director Gibb to address the problems. Village Manager McClary agreed but emphasized the need for direct communication from the DDA to resolve issues effectively.

George Dandalides echoed concerns about communication problems between the DDA and the Village. He proposed giving the DDA Executive Director a regular spot on the Village Council agenda to improve transparency and communication. He committed to addressing issues raised by the DDA and supporting better collaboration.

Francesco Komandera expressed concern about transparency and accountability within the DDA, noting confusion over who is in control of ongoing projects. He said it appeared that the DDA director was acting independently without coordination with the Village or Township leadership. He emphasized the need for clearer oversight and communication to ensure the community understands who is responsible for decision-making.

MOTION made by Board Member Barnett, Seconded by President Rutt, to receive and file the Executive Directors Report for October 2025.

VOTING YEA:	Burgess, Caruso, Shell, Lorant, Medina, Barnett, Rutt
VOTING NAY:	None
ABSENT:	Coe, Campbell
MOTION:	Carried

B. Resolution - Lumber Yard Project Authorization

Assistant Director Bloom presented a resolution to authorize the Lumberyard at Paint Creek Public Market to submit application materials for zoning and permitting, contingent on the formation of a nonprofit board. Treasurer Shell confirmed the nonprofit has been formed but emphasized the board must be appointed before moving forward.

MOTION made by Treasurer Shell, Seconded by Secretary Lorant, to approve this resolution subject to a board being appointed for the nonprofit corporation.

President Rutt expressed hesitancy, requesting more details on the legal framework and operations of the entity before proceeding. The board discussed tabling the resolution or calling a special meeting to gather more information, ensuring the right people and answers are present for a more informed decision.

MOTION made by Treasurer Shell, Seconded by Secretary Lorant, to amend the motion to table and request a special meeting to be planned once Executive Director Gibb returns from vacation.

VOTING YEA:	Burgess, Caruso, Shell, Lorant, Medina, Barnett, Rutt
VOTING NAY:	None
ABSENT:	Coe, Campbell
MOTION:	Carried

C. Assistant Director's Report

Assistant Director Bloom recapped recent and upcoming downtown events, including a successful Movie Night, Halloween Extravaganza, and the America in Bloom. She highlighted strong community engagement, partnerships, and merchant participation. Upcoming events include Witches Night, the Storybook Stroll, holiday festivities, and the removal of the DIA art installation. She also announced a new sponsorship portal, recognized two local businesses for winning county grants, and invited merchants to an Oct. 27 meeting to discuss downtown needs and involvement.

Treasurer Shell suggested coordinating with local elementary schools next year to avoid scheduling conflicts, noting that one school held a trunk-or-treat event on the same night as the downtown Halloween parade. While the overlap may not be entirely avoidable, early communication could help. He also acknowledged the parade's success despite missing it himself.

MOTION made by Treasurer Shell, Seconded by Board Member Barnett, to receive and file the Assistant Director's Report.

VOTING YEA:	Burgess, Caruso, Shell, Lorant, Medina, Barnett, Rutt
VOTING NAY:	None
ABSENT:	Coe, Campbell
MOTION:	Carried

10. Board Comments and Training Feedback

President Rutt praised the Halloween event for drawing over 800 attendees, many from outside the area, and highlighted its success. She joked about donut consumption, suggested featuring Wes as Bluey in the next newsletter, and emphasized continued teamwork to improve downtown.

Vice Chairperson Caruso praised the Halloween event's vibrant, magical atmosphere and strong turnout, highlighting downtown's welcoming vibe. He strongly supported the Lumberyard project as a major step forward, emphasized the board's transparency, and defended Executive Director Gibb's alignment with board direction. He expressed enthusiasm for future downtown developments.

Treasurer Shell acknowledged Executive Director Gibb's overwhelm due to ongoing, unwarranted public attacks and FOIA requests from a Village Council Member despite DDA approval. He called for these actions to stop, citing wasted time and hindered progress, though he doubted they would.

Secretary Lorant shared similar concerns about disruptive behavior from a Council Member during a recent meeting but praised the Village President for restoring order. He also complimented downtown's appearance and the Halloween event's turnout and efforts by the Orion Arts Center.

Board Member Medina expressed disappointment over unprofessional behavior and a Council Member walking out on a speaker at a recent meeting. She emphasized the value of volunteer time, shared personal motivations for joining the board, and highlighted positive community events. Despite frustrations, she expressed love for the town and hope for moving past conflicts to achieve great things.

Board Member Barnett voiced frustration over meetings marked by deception and disrespect. He stressed that Board Members volunteer out of love for downtown, condemned false accusations, praised local business owners, and called for accountability for officials who lie or violate their oath. He appreciated the Executive Director's efforts and urged collaboration to support a thriving downtown despite challenges.

Chairperson Burgess thanked the board for their dedication and stressed teamwork's power to achieve more. She expressed optimism about the Lumberyard as a community comeback, highlighted family participation and community spirit at Halloween, and urged respect, accountability, and positive examples for future generations. She encouraged focusing on successes, owning mistakes, and working together, ending with excitement for upcoming downtown events.

11. Next Regular Meeting - Nov. 18, 2025

12. Adjournment

MOTION made by Treasurer Shell, Seconded by Secretary Lorant, to adjourn the October 21, 2025 Downtown Development Authority Board Regular Meeting.

VOTING YEA:	Burgess, Caruso, Shell, Lorant, Medina, Barnett, Rutt
VOTING NAY:	None
ABSENT:	Coe, Campbell
MOTION:	Carried

The October 21, 2025 Downtown Development Authority Board Regular meeting adjourned at 7:40 PM.

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Debbie Burgess
Chairperson

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Lynsey Blough, CMC
Deputy Clerk/Treasurer

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Sonja Stout
Village Clerk/Treasurer

Date Approved: as presented on November 18, 2025