MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING OF THE DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY BOARD

Tuesday, April 21, 2026

6:30 PM

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

(248) 693-8391 ext. 102

1. Call to Order

The April 21, 2026 Downtown Development Authority Regular Meeting was called to order at 6:29 PM by Chairperson Burgess.

2. Roll Call and Determination of Quorum

PRESENT
Chairperson Debbie Burgess
Vice Chairperson Sam Caruso
Treasurer Matt Shell
Secretary Hank Lorant
Board Member Lloyd Coe
Board Member Alaina Campbell
Board Member Todd Garris
President Teresa Rutt

ABSENT
Board Member Chris Barnett

STAFF PRESENT
Executive Director Matthew Gibb
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 March 17, 2026

MOTION made by Treasurer Shell, Seconded by Secretary Lorant, to approve the Downtown Development Authority Board Regular Meeting Minutes of March 17, 2026.

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

4. Approval of Agenda

MOTION made by Treasurer Shell, Seconded by Secretary Lorant, to approve the Downtown Development Authority Board Regular Meeting Agenda of April 21, 2026, as presented.

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

5. Call to the Public

Council Member Alex Comparoni Jr. expressed appreciation for the DDA's work and noted positive improvements in the community. As a long-time resident, he shared concerns that the pace of growth and development feels overwhelming to some and questioned whether there is a point at which it can be limited. He acknowledged the DDA's constraints and thanked the board.

Chairperson Burgess acknowledged receipt of written communication dated April 21, 2026, from Cory Johnston.

Council Member Erik Papacek expressed appreciation for the DDA's work and the value it provides for the community, including improvements such as the Lumberyard project. He noted that some residents are feeling pressure related to growth and emphasized the importance of balancing the needs of the entire Village, including residential perspectives. He recognized the challenges of budget discussions and competing priorities and thanked the DDA for its efforts.

6. Consent Agenda

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

MOTION made by Treasurer Shell, Seconded by Secretary Lorant, to approve the April 21, 2026, Consent Agenda by one vote, as presented.

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

A. Financial Reports

MOTION made by Treasurer Shell, Seconded by Secretary Lorant, to receive and file the Financial Reports for March 2026.
VOTING YEA: Burgess, Caruso, Shell, Lorant, Coe, Campbell, Garris, Rutt
VOTING NAY: None
ABSENT: Barnett
MOTION: Carried

7. Financial Matters

A. Bill Approval

MOTION made by Treasurer Shell, Seconded by Secretary Lorant, to approve disbursements in the amount of $403,195.80 for March 2026.
VOTING YEA: Burgess, Caruso, Shell, Lorant, Coe, Campbell, Garris, Rutt
VOTING NAY: None
ABSENT: Barnett
MOTION: Carried

8. New and Old Business

A. Consideration of Capital Project - Atwater Basketball Court

Executive Director Gibb explained that the Atwater Basketball Court project is the first referral under the Village–DDA capital improvement funding framework established in 2022 and reaffirmed in 2024, which allocates TIF revenues for eligible public facility projects. He noted that funding is available and that the project, recommended by the Parks and Recreation Committee and Village Council, meets eligibility criteria as a public benefit and placemaking improvement, leaving approval at the DDA's discretion.

Board Member Coe questioned the cost and whether resurfacing was an option, to which President Rutt responded that the court is severely buckled and requires full reconstruction, adding that it has been a long-standing need and is heavily used, with potential increased demand due to the anticipated closure of Basketball America.

Board Member Campbell expressed strong support, emphasizing the importance of free recreational opportunities for youth and families. Vice Chairperson Caruso concurred, noting he frequently sees "tech neck" in children from excessive screen use and stressed the value of outdoor activity, adding the project supports community health and placemaking goals.

Council Member George Dandalides described the project as a strong example of Village and DDA collaboration under the 75/25 funding model and encouraged support as a worthwhile community investment.

MOTION made by Treasurer Shell, Seconded by Secretary Lorant, to adopt Resolution No. 2026-001, confirming the eligibility of the proposed basketball court project as a public facility improvement consistent with the DDA Tax Increment Financing Plan, and to authorize reimbursement to the Village of Lake Orion for verified project expenses in an amount not to exceed Fifty-Seven Thousand Nine Hundred Fifty-Seven Dollars ($57,957.00), payable from GL 248-260- 965-402, in accordance with the DDA/Village Capital Improvement Agreement and subject to standard documentation and invoicing requirements.

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

B. Request to Join Village Council Steering Committee

Executive Director Gibb explained that the item originated from Village Council's April 13 action, initiated by Council Member Dandalides, to establish a "steering" or communication committee to foster more regular and in-depth collaboration between the DDA and Council. He noted the intent is to create a more structured forum for discussing shared goals, beyond existing representation. Chairperson Burgess expressed support, noting she had previously invited such collaboration. Council Member Dandalides stated the idea arose from ongoing discussions and a need for more candid, consistent communication to better align efforts and maximize community benefit, and he expressed interest in participating. Vice Chairperson Caruso supported the initiative as a necessary and standard practice for effective governance, while Board Member Coe commended Council Member Dandalides' active downtown engagement.

Executive Director Gibb further clarified that the proposed six-month term reflects charter-related considerations discussed by Council, serving as a default timeframe that would continue if mutually agreed but expire if not extended. Chairperson Burgess questioned whether the term "steering committee" could create confusion and suggested "communication committee" for clarity. President Rutt responded that the group is intended solely for communication without decision-making authority, making terminology less critical, and added that the six-month duration also aligns with election cycles, as appointments cannot extend beyond current Council member terms and would require reconsideration after November.

Rosemary Ford asked how many members would serve on the committee. President Rutt explained it would include the Village Manager, Executive Director, Council President, one additional Council Member (Council Member Dandalides), an alternate (Council Member Alex Comparoni Jr.), and DDA representation. Deputy Clerk/Treasurer Blough asked who would be appointed from the DDA, and Executive Director Gibb clarified that the motion authorizes the Chairperson to appoint a second DDA member and an alternate, with names to be provided to the Clerk's Office. Chairperson Burgess stated she would follow up with that information.

MOTION made by Treasurer Shell, Seconded by President Rutt, that the Lake Orion Downtown Development Board approve participation in the Village Council-DDA Steering Committee, for six (6) months, or until mutually dissolved whichever is longer, further authorizing the Board Chair to appoint a member, in addition to herself, and an alternate to serve in her absence, forthwith.

VOTING YEA:	Burgess, Caruso, Shell, Lorant, Coe, Campbell, Garris, Rutt
VOTING NAY:	None

ABSENT: Barnett
MOTION: Carried

C. Watering Trailer Purchase

Executive Director Gibb explained that the Township has been accepted into the American Bloom organization following recognition for the quality of its downtown landscaping, flowers, and façade improvements. He noted that maintaining the extensive downtown flower program has become labor-intensive and currently requires improvised methods, and cannot be sustained in its present form. He recommended purchasing specialized watering equipment at a cost not to exceed $3,800, funded through reallocated existing budget savings, to improve efficiency, reduce staff time, and ensure consistent maintenance of downtown plantings. He added that the equipment would significantly reduce watering time from approximately four to five and a half hours to about three hours, improving operational efficiency and potentially offsetting costs over time through labor savings. Vice Chairperson Caruso supported the proposal, noting the expected reduction in watering time and associated cost efficiencies.

MOTION made by Treasurer Shell, Seconded by Board Member Coe, to authorize the Director to procure a 100 gallon tow behind, gas powered watering system at a cost not to exceed $3,800, with shipping, with funding from GL 248-730-975-011 – Capital Outlay Trail Head.
VOTING YEA: Burgess, Caruso, Shell, Lorant, Coe, Campbell, Garris, Rutt
VOTING NAY: None
ABSENT: Barnett
MOTION: Carried

D. 2026-27 Annual Budget - Receipt and Approval

Executive Director Gibb presented the proposed FY 2026–2027 DDA budget, explaining the required statutory process. He emphasized the DDA's intent to significantly prioritize its financial commitments to the Village, including contracted services (Police, DPW, PA-57 administrative fees), utilities, debt obligations, and the 75/25 capital contribution. To meet these obligations and maintain budget balance, he recommended substantial reductions in DDA operational spending, including staffing, administration, Main Street support, and promotional activities, and reducing reliance on fund balance transfers. He also noted this restructuring results in elimination of the Assistant Director position and a shift toward a leaner staffing model, while still maintaining core functions such as marketing, façade grants, and limited capital funding. He cited broader economic constraints, declining external revenue expectations, and reduced sponsorship/grant income as drivers of the conservative revenue forecast. The budget also assumes continued but modest grant funding and includes proposed increases to several Village service contracts.

Board member Campbell discussed accountability for DPW and administrative services, with the Village Manager outlining a policy detailing cost allocations and noting revisions to include tax collection costs. Secretary Lorant stated he had reviewed the budget and believed the current approach was an improvement over prior years, conditionally pending Council workshop adjustments. Chairperson Burgess acknowledged the personal impact of staffing reductions as difficult financial decisions. The board considered the budget for approval subject to final refinements following Council review.

MOTION made by Treasurer Shell, Seconded by Secretary Lorant, to approve the budget as presented, subject to the adjustments to be made at the Thursday, April 23, 2026 budget workshop.

Executive Director Gibb made a request that the motion include language confirming compliance with statutory procedure, specifically the referral of the approved budget to the Village of Lake Orion governing body, to ensure the record reflects adherence to required statutory and policy processes.

MOTION made by Treasurer Shell, Seconded by Secretary Lorant, to amend the previous motion to approve the budget as presented, subject to adjustments to be made at the Thursday, April 23, 2026 budget workshop, and to follow statutory procedure to refer the approved budget to the governing body, the Village of Lake Orion.

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

Executive Director Gibb stated that the Assistant Director position is currently budgeted through June 30, 2026, and noted that the administrative position in the front office has remained unfilled to preserve funding. He recommended that any action regarding the timing of the position's termination be deferred until the Board's final adoption of the budget, anticipated at the June meeting.

He further stated that Ms. Bloom's contributions are recognized and that, in the interim, the organization would support any transition opportunities should she pursue other employment, and would continue to acknowledge her work through the budget adoption period.

MOTION made by Board Member Coe, Seconded by Treasurer Shell, to delay any action to eliminate the Assistant Director position until after final adoption of the FY 2026–2027 budget, with the position to continue in its current funded status through at least the June meeting.

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

Executive Director Gibb stated that the final motion related to the budget and reorganization would authorize him to proceed with posting updated job descriptions as part of implementing the approved changes.

MOTION made by Treasurer Shell, Seconded by Board Member Coe, that the Downtown Development Authority Board authorize the Executive Director to initiate the recruitment process for the newly established positions of Administrative Coordinator and Marketing

Coordinator, as reflected in the approved Fiscal Year 2026–2027 Budget and organizational structure.

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

9. Reports, Resolutions and Recommendations

A. Report - Legal Objection to Council Referral

Executive Director Gibb referenced a recent Council discussion regarding a proposal to dissolve and reformat the DDA as part of the Planning Commission. He noted that both a memorandum from his office and a legal opinion from Mr. Davis, included in the packet, conclude the proposal is not permissible under state statute. He stated that the intent of presenting the materials was to formally enter the legal memorandum and opinion into the public record, as they were not previously included in the Council record, and to ensure public accessibility. Erik Papacek stated he reviewed the legal opinion but offered an alternative interpretation of the statute's "created pursuant to" language, suggesting it may be descriptive rather than limiting changes to the time of formation. He argued the statute may not prohibit restructuring and suggested the issue may warrant further review, while acknowledging his view was offered for consideration.

MOTION made by Treasurer Shell, Seconded by Board Member Coe, to receive and file the Memorandum concerning the April 13, 2026, council motion seeking recommendation from the DDA Director dated April 21, 2026.

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

B. Report - Outside Attorney Opinion Requested by Council Committee

Executive Director Gibb stated that a memorandum was submitted clarifying the office's interpretation that 75-25 funds may be used for public infrastructure without amending the TIF plan. He noted that, following a request from the ad hoc committee, an outside legal opinion was obtained and transmitted to the Village Manager, and he requested that both documents be entered into the public record.

In response to a question from Vice Chairperson Caruso regarding the cost of the legal opinion, Executive Director Gibb stated that it was approximately $600 for about two hours of work, noting the attorneys' combined experience in the subject matter.

MOTION made by Treasurer Shell, Seconded by Secretary Lorant, to receive and file the Opinions of the Director and Legal Counsel as provided to the Village pursuant to the recommendation and request of the Village Ad Hoc Committee on Alternative Funding.

VOTING YEA:	Burgess, Caruso, Shell, Lorant, Coe, Campbell, Garris, Rutt

VOTING NAY: None
ABSENT: Barnett
MOTION: Carried

C. Executive Directors Report

Executive Director Gibb reported on a successful DDA open house with approximately 100 attendees and noted continued recognition of the organization's Main Street accreditation. He stated that the event will become an annual engagement opportunity.

He provided an update on the Lumberyard project, noting ongoing permitting and planned unit development preparation, and continued coordination with Orion Township staff, consultants, and contractors. He reported progress on infrastructure repairs and site preparation, with additional construction phases expected over the coming months.

Executive Director Gibb indicated that project timelines are dependent on the planned unit development approval process and stated that contracts with potential site users are being finalized for future presentation. He noted that budget planning is ongoing and will be adjusted based on updated project costs and partnerships.

MOTION made by Treasurer Shell, Seconded by Secretary Lorant, to receive and file the April 21, 2026 Executive Director Report.
VOTING YEA: Burgess, Caruso, Shell, Lorant, Coe, Campbell, Garris, Rutt
VOTING NAY: None
ABSENT: Barnett
MOTION: Carried

D. Assistant Director's Report

Assistant Director Bloom reported on a successful Main Street Oakland County event, including strong participation from new Illuminators and completed business training sessions with Oakland Thrive. She highlighted upcoming events including Spring Cleanup Day (May 9), the Boutique Chic fashion fundraiser (April 27), and the Lake Orion Summer Concert Series beginning July 8.

She provided updates on Shop OC Main Streets, noting continued support for downtown businesses, as well as efforts to resolve e-newsletter delivery issues and ongoing growth in social media engagement. She announced upcoming ribbon cuttings, Downtown Lowdown events, and regional training opportunities in partnership with Main Street Oakland County and Oxford DDA.

Assistant Director Bloom also shared highlights from the Main Street Now conference in Tulsa and noted coordination with Sunrise Rotary to replace downtown flags in advance of America's 250th celebration.

MOTION made by Treasurer Shell, Seconded by President Rutt, to receive and file the Assistant Director's Report.

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

10. Board Comments and Training Feedback

Board Member Garris had no comment.

Secretary Lorant thanked the Village Council Members for attending and encouraged continued participation and engagement at future meetings.

Treasurer Shell thanked Executive Director Gibb and Assistant Director Bloom for their work during the transition.

Vice Chairperson Caruso thanked Assistant Director Bloom for her professionalism and contributions over the past two years. He also expressed appreciation for Village Council Members attending and noted the value of in-person participation in understanding DDA operations. He indicated interest in attending future Council meetings when scheduling allows.

Board Member Campbell thanked Assistant Director Bloom for her service as Interim Director and acknowledged her performance during a period of transition. She spoke to the ongoing partnership between the DDA and the community, referencing collaborative efforts including the 75-25 agreement and the basketball court capital project. She expressed pride in the Board's work and noted upcoming community engagement opportunities, including an Illuminator informational event on April 28 at Cookies and Cream.

President Rutt highlighted Ms. Bloom's contributions and leadership during her tenure. She also spoke about community initiatives such as the Illuminator program and ribbon cutting events, emphasizing continued community engagement and support for local businesses.
Member Coe expressed appreciation for Ms. Bloom's responsiveness and support. He also thanked Village Council members for attending, noting the significance of their participation.

Chairperson Burgess thanked Village Council Members for attending and expressed support for continued collaboration through the upcoming communications committee. She extended appreciation to Ms. Bloom for her service as Interim Director and contributions to the DDA during a period of transition, and thanked the Board for their continued commitment, particularly during the budget process.

11. Next Regular Meeting - May 19, 2026

12. Adjournment

MOTION made by Treasurer Shell, Seconded by Board Member Coe, to adjourn the April 21, 2026, Downtown Development Authority Board Regular Meeting.

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

The April 21, 2026 Downtown Development Authority Board Regular Meeting adjourned at 8:07 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 May 19, 2026