



MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING OF THE DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY BOARD

Tuesday, February 17, 2026

6:30 PM

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

(248) 693-8391 ext. 102

1. Call to Order

The February 17, 2026 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
Secretary Hank Lorant
Board Member Alaina Campbell
President Teresa Rutt

ABSENT

Treasurer Matt Shell
Board Member Lloyd Coe
Board Member Chris Barnett
Board Member Todd Garris

STAFF PRESENT

Executive Director Matthew Gibb
Assistant Director Janet Bloom
Village Manager Darwin McClary

3. Approval of Minutes

A. Approval of DDA Regular Meeting Minutes of January 20, 2026

MOTION made by President Rutt, Seconded by Board Member Campbell, to approve the Downtown Development Authority Board Regular Meeting Minutes of January 20, 2026, as

presented.

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

4. Approval of Agenda

MOTION made by President Rutt, Seconded by Board Member Campbell, to approve the Downtown Development Authority Board Regular Meeting Agenda of February 17, 2026, as presented.

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

5. Call to the Public

None.

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 February 17, 2026, Consent Agenda by one vote, as presented.

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

A. Financial Reports

MOTION made by President Rutt, Seconded by Secretary Lorant, to receive and file the financial reports for January 2026.

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

B. Notice of Appointment - Board Member

MOTION made by President Rutt, Seconded by Secretary Lorant, to receive and file Notice of the Appointment of Todd Garris with thanks.

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

MOTION: Carried

7. Financial Matters

A. Bill Approval

MOTION made by President Rutt, Seconded by Secretary Lorant, to approve disbursements in the amount of \$20,588.98 for January 2026.

VOTING YEA: Burgess, Caruso, Lorant, Campbell, Rutt

VOTING NAY: None

ABSENT: Shell, Coe, Barnett, Garris

MOTION: Carried

8. New and Old Business

9. Reports, Resolutions and Recommendations

A. Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Gibb highlighted recent activities and updates for the DDA. He praised Assistant Director Bloom for securing professional photography of Ice Fest and the Rotary Ice Golf event, noting the high level of community engagement. He reported that the office has been actively preparing for the budget, with discussions already underway with the Village Manager and plans for budget adjustments and a preliminary adoption in March. He also noted the budget will remain focused and targeted, particularly in relation to the Lumberyard project, and highlighted alternative revenue sources, including net-positive revenue from EV charging stations, with a proposal to replace outdated equipment under the current contract. He also noted that Christmas decorations will soon be taken down and provided general updates on ongoing operations, FOIA matters, and other administrative items.

MOTION made by Secretary Lorant, Seconded by President Rutt, to receive and file the Executive Director's Report.

VOTING YEA: Burgess, Caruso, Lorant, Campbell, Rutt

VOTING NAY: None

ABSENT: Shell, Coe, Barnett, Garris

MOTION: Carried

B. Lumber Yard Progress Report

Executive Director Gibb reported that the DDA has submitted its Planned Unit Development (PUD) pre-eligibility application for the Lumberyard project and will formally appear before the Planning Commission on March 2. He explained that the detailed submission aligns with the Village's master plan and outlines project components, including approximately two acres of open public space on the 4.2-acre site. He also emphasized that the project is being "reverse engineered," with the DDA self-managing construction to reduce costs and reinvest savings into the project. He directed the public to the DDA website, which provides project narratives, renderings, updates, videos, and reports for transparency and ease of access. He also outlined

next steps, including lighting and electrical planning, contractor RFPs, and continued coordination with DTE, with proposals expected for board consideration in March. Board members expressed appreciation for the website's accessibility and ongoing project updates.

MOTION made by Board Member Campbell, Seconded by President Rutt, to receive and file the Progress Report dated February 17, 2026.

VOTING YEA: Burgess, Caruso, Lorant, Campbell, Rutt

VOTING NAY: None

ABSENT: Shell, Coe, Barnett, Garris

MOTION: Carried

C. Assistant Director's Report

Assistant Director Bloom reported on the success of Ice Fest, highlighting strong volunteer participation, expanded event offerings including the new chili cook-off, bingo, scavenger hunt, and warming hub and significant media coverage from multiple outlets. Despite extremely cold weather, the event was well attended, with nearly all 60 volunteer shifts filled and positive feedback from businesses and attendees. Sponsorship support was strong, though staff identified opportunities to grow single-block sponsors and chili ticket sales next year. The event generated nearly \$2,000 in positive revenue, and post-event surveys are underway to gather additional feedback. She also promoted upcoming events, including the March 26 Main Street Open House, May 9 Spring Cleanup, ongoing Shop OC programming, business training, and the Downtown LO Down meeting. Vice Chairperson Caruso praised the chili cook-off as a standout addition and noted the strong attendance and lively atmosphere at Wine Social.

MOTION made by Vice Chairperson Caruso, Seconded by Secretary Lorant, to receive and file the Assistant Director's report.

VOTING YEA: Burgess, Caruso, Lorant, Campbell, Rutt

VOTING NAY: None

ABSENT: Shell, Coe, Barnett, Garris

MOTION: Carried

D. Minute for Mission - Promotion Strategy/Reporting

Executive Director Gibb introduced a new "Minute for Mission" segment that will be included at each meeting to better align the DDA's work with Main Street best practices. He reported that the organization has been verbally informed it will receive accreditation for the 19th consecutive year, placing it among the top 5% of Main Street programs nationally. He outlined a new tiered system for ranking events (Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3) to clarify the DDA's level of involvement, prioritize resources, strengthen sponsorship efforts, and better track financial and community impact. Signature events such as Ice Fest will include formal work plans, sponsorship strategies, and post-event reports, while other events will be evaluated based on purpose and return on investment. Board members expressed strong support for the structured approach and emphasized early sponsor outreach and impact reporting to encourage renewals. Assistant Director Bloom confirmed that sponsor packets are included in the annual work plan.

MOTION made by President Rutt, Seconded by Secretary Lorant, to receive and file the Minute for Mission report.

VOTING YEA: Burgess, Caruso, Lorant, Campbell, Rutt

VOTING NAY: None

ABSENT: Shell, Coe, Barnett, Garris

MOTION: Carried

E. Committee's Minutes

Assistant Director Bloom explained that committee meeting minutes are being included in the board packets to ensure transparency and keep board members informed about ongoing committee activities.

Motion made by President Rutt, Seconded by Secretary Lorant, to receive and file the Committee's Minutes.

VOTING YEA: Burgess, Caruso, Lorant, Campbell, Rutt

VOTING NAY: None

ABSENT: Shell, Coe, Barnett, Garris

MOTION: Carried

10. Board Comments and Training Feedback

Secretary Lorant commented that it was enjoyable to see the positive feedback and photos from the Ice Fest event. Although he was out of town that weekend, he observed their event as well and felt that Lake Orion's event appeared to be a few steps ahead in comparison.

Vice Chairperson Caruso praised the Ice Fest event, noting that despite the very cold weather, attendees had a great time. He highlighted the fun atmosphere, smiling participants, the Wine Social reception, and the chili competition as particularly enjoyable. He emphasized that the event is a valuable wintertime activity for downtown, providing residents with outdoor entertainment during a harsh winter.

Board Member Campbell expressed enthusiasm for the Light Up Lake Orion Illuminators event, thanking the committees, staff, and volunteers for their work in hosting a successful event attended by 92 people, and encouraged community members to get involved with the volunteer group. She also praised the Lumberyard project, emphasizing that the community's purchase of the property allows it to guide development in a way that benefits residents, contrasting it with private data center developments, and commending the DDA and community for their vision.

President Rutt echoed support for the Light Up Lake Orion event, noting the need for a larger space next year if attendance trends continue. She highlighted the positive impact of youth volunteers at Ice Fest, emphasizing how engaging young people fosters community investment and strengthens Lake Orion's sense of place. He also reflected on the value of winter events, which bring joy and economic vitality despite cold weather, and praised their broader role in making the downtown vibrant and attractive. She expressed excitement about upcoming spring events and the Lumberyard development.

Chairperson Burgess thanked all community volunteers and praised the Ice Fest and Rotary Ice Golf Challenge for their success, noting high community and business engagement and increased downtown activity, including busy restaurants. She highlighted youth participation and suggested creating more opportunities for students to get involved next year. She also acknowledged the DDA's detailed planning, tiered event strategy, and reporting as valuable tools for future success, and expressed appreciation for board members' attendance and support at events.

11. Next Regular Meeting - March 17, 2026

12. Adjournment

MOTION made by Board Member Campbell, Seconded by Secretary Lorant, to adjourn the February 17, 2026 Downtown Development Authority Board Regular Meeting

VOTING YEA: Burgess, Caruso, Lorant, Campbell, Rutt

VOTING NAY: None

ABSENT: Shell, Coe, Barnett, Garris

MOTION: Carried

The February 17, 2026 Downtown Development Authority Board Regular Meeting adjourned at 7:40 PM.

Debbie Burgess
Chairperson

Janet Bloom
DDA Assistant Director

Lynsey Blough, CMC
Deputy Clerk/Treasurer

Sonja Stout
Village Clerk/Treasurer

Date Approved: as presented on March 17, 2026