



MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING OF THE DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY BOARD

Tuesday, March 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 March 17, 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 Alaina Campbell

Board Member Todd Garris

Board Member Chris Barnett – arrived at 6:36 PM

ABSENT

Board Member Lloyd Coe

President Teresa Rutt

STAFF PRESENT

Executive Director Matthew Gibb

Assistant Director Janet Bloom

Deputy Clerk/Treasurer Lynsey Blough

3. Approval of Minutes

A. Approval of DDA Regular Meeting Minutes of February 17, 2026

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

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

VOTING NAY: None

ABSENT: Coe, Rutt, Barnett (not present for vote)

MOTION: Carried

4. Approval of Agenda

MOTION made by Treasurer Shell, Seconded by Secretary Lorant, to approve the Agenda of March 17, 2026 with the addition of 8C. Social District License.

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

VOTING NAY: None

ABSENT: Coe, Rutt, Barnett (not present for vote)

MOTION: Carried

5. 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 March 17, 2026 Consent Agenda by one vote, as presented.

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

VOTING NAY: None

ABSENT: Coe, Rutt, Barnett (not present for vote)

MOTION: Carried

A. Financial Reports

MOTION made by Treasurer Shell, Seconded by Secretary Lorant, to receive and file the financial reports for February 2026.

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

VOTING NAY: None

ABSENT: Coe, Rutt, Barnett (not present for vote)

MOTION: Carried

6. Call to the Public

None.

7. Financial Matters

A. Bill Approval

MOTION made by Board Member Campbell, Seconded by Secretary Lorant, to approve disbursements in the amount of \$27,974.07 for February 2026.

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

VOTING NAY: None
ABSENT: Coe, Rutt, Barnett (not present for vote)
MOTION: Carried

8. New and Old Business

A. Public Parking Overview and Recommendations

Executive Director Gibb provided an overview of the DDA's public parking system, emphasizing its ongoing role in meeting community needs, particularly during peak seasons. He reviewed several parking lots, outlining past DDA investments, current conditions, and recommended actions. Key points included maintenance needs such as re-graveling the Slater Street lot, repairing a hazardous apron at the Whiskey's lot, and renewing or updating lease agreements for properties including the State Farm and Tarr Properties lots. He also recommended discontinuing the School Administration lot lease due to its redevelopment into residential use. He noted minor outstanding lease payments to be resolved and requested Board approval to proceed with maintenance work, lease renewals, and necessary expenditures, with actions to be considered individually.

Chairperson Burgess requested clarification on payment amounts for the Caruso and Tarr Properties lot leases in preparation for a roll call vote. Executive Director Gibb confirmed the amounts and explained that the Caruso payment reflects two years of missed payments, while the Tarr payment reflects current obligations and increased property values.

Treasurer Shell questioned whether a motion was necessary, while Executive Director Gibb clarified the need to formally document the payments. Vice Chairperson Caruso inquired about recusal due to a potential conflict of interest, and Executive Director Gibb advised that recusal is at the member's discretion, suggesting he consult the Board if unsure.

MOTION by Board Member Barnett, Seconded by Secretary Lorant, that Vice Chairperson Caruso abstain from voting on the Caruso parking lot due to a conflict of interest.

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

MOTION by Treasurer Shell, Seconded by Secretary Lorant, to authorize the Executive Director to procure gravel for the Slater Street Lot at a cost not to exceed \$1,000 from account 248-726-975-002 (Capital Outlay – Streets), and to rent necessary equipment at a cost not to exceed \$700 from account 248-260-940-000 (Equipment Rental), with gravel delivered, installed, and spread prior to May 16, 2026.

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

Council Member Dandalides requested that the DDA consider the Village's potential implementation of paid parking when entering into future parking lot lease agreements, emphasizing the importance of avoiding lease terms that could restrict flexibility for future parking policies and encouraging consistency across DDA and Village-managed lots.

Council Member Campbell sought clarification regarding whether DDA-funded and maintained lots could be converted to paid parking without DDA approval, citing maintenance responsibilities.

Council Member Dandalides clarified that his intent was to encourage foresight rather than impose requirements, and Vice Chairperson Caruso noted that his lease contains no such restriction, with agreement that the matter should be considered in future agreements.

MOTION by Treasurer Shell, Seconded by Secretary Lorant, to authorize a new, renewable lease for the State Farm lot with the new ownership group, at \$1,200 per year, under terms consistent with other active DDA parking lease agreements including maintenance, snow and ice removal, and signage responsibilities.

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

MOTION by Board Member Barnett, Seconded by Secretary Lorant, to authorize this year's payment for the Tarr Properties lot not to exceed \$2,475 and to offer renewal of the lease under the same terms.

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

MOTION by Treasurer Shell, Seconded by Secretary Lorant, to authorize the Executive Director to secure services for the repair of the South Apron at the Whiskey's lot at a cost not to exceed \$8,000, with funding from account 248-730-975-006 (Capital Outlay -Parking).

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

MOTION by Treasurer Shell, Seconded by Secretary Lorant, to allow the lease for the School Administration lot to remain expired, to provide notice to the new property owners, and to remove existing signage.

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

MOTION by Board Member Barnett, Seconded by Lorant, to authorize payment of \$2,400 for the Caruso parking lot from account 248-728-801-000 (Contractual Services), as previously approved by the Board.

VOTING YEA: Burgess, Shell, Lorant, Campbell, Garris, Barnett

VOTING NAY: None

ABSENT: Coe, Rutt

MOTION: Carried

Vice Chairperson Caruso abstained from voting due to a conflict of interest.

B. Downtown Electrical Overview and Recommendations

Executive Director Gibb presented an update on the condition of the Downtown electrical and GFI systems, noting ongoing failures affecting streetlights, holiday lighting, and public outlets due to aging infrastructure from the original streetscape installation. He emphasized that the DDA has made significant long-term investments in Downtown and that maintenance responsibility for these systems has become a recurring issue.

He reported that multiple bids were received to assess and evaluate the electrical system, ranging widely in cost, and explained that this is only a preliminary evaluation of the broader scope of needed repairs and potential future costs.

He also referenced the existing DPW maintenance agreement, which includes responsibilities for diagnosis and repair of DDA-owned lighting and electrical systems, and stated his intent to formally notify the Village to clarify contractual obligations regarding maintenance. He emphasized that the goal is to establish clarity and ensure proper responsibility under the existing agreement.

MOTION made by Treasurer Shell, Seconded by Board Member Barnett, to authorize the Executive Director to issue a Notice to the Village of Lake Orion asking for the repair of all damaged outlets pursuant to both the executed contract for such services, and as a duty for damage caused by seasonal snow maintenance in Downtown.

VOTING YEA: Burgess, Shell, Caruso, Lorant, Campbell, Garris, Barnett

VOTING NAY: None

ABSENT: Coe, Rutt

MOTION: Carried

Vice Chairperson Caruso inquired about the DDA's reported \$20 million in cumulative infrastructure investment. Executive Director Gibb explained that the figure reflects total DDA and grant-funded investments in Downtown improvements, including parks, streetscapes, lighting, sidewalks, EV charging stations, and other public amenities, and noted that additional details would be highlighted at an upcoming Main Street Open House. Vice Chairperson Caruso acknowledged the value of these reinvestments and the use of tax capture funds for community infrastructure.

Board Member Barnett asked whether the DDA was currently in communication with the Village regarding ongoing maintenance and responsibility for infrastructure. Executive Director

Gibb responded that discussions are ongoing with DPW leadership regarding maintenance responsibilities and recent repairs, noting that while some work has been completed in coordination with the Village, cost-sharing and contractual obligations still need further clarification through continued discussions.

C. Social District License

MOTION by Board Member Barnett, Seconded by Secretary Lorant, to recommend approval of the application from fourteen (14) wineries partnering as Michigan By the Bottle for inclusion in the Lake Orion Social District, and to direct the Executive Director to facilitate presentment of a fully prepared Resolution of Approval of Permit for Village Council's consideration at its next meeting.

VOTING YEA: Burgess, Shell, Caruso, Lorant, Campbell, Garris, Barnett

VOTING NAY: None

ABSENT: Coe, Rutt

MOTION: Carried

9. Reports, Resolutions and Recommendations

A. Executive Director Report

Executive Director Gibb reported on the March 26 Main Street Open House, including outreach efforts and anticipated reaccreditation for the 19th year. He noted new Board resource materials and upcoming distribution of a National Board handbook, with possible future training sessions.

He provided brief operational updates (storm cleanup, minor repairs, marketing coordination) and stated that budget development is underway, with efforts to obtain improved revenue data. The draft budget is expected soon and will show minimal changes, prioritizing fund balance stability.

Vice Chairperson Caruso asked about receiving board materials in PDF format and Executive Director Gibb indicated they will be provided electronically via flash drive.

MOTION made by Treasurer Shell, Seconded by Secretary Lorant, to receive and file the Executive Directors Report for March 2026.

VOTING YEA: Burgess, Shell, Caruso, Lorant, Campbell, Garris, Barnett

VOTING NAY: None

ABSENT: Coe, Rutt

MOTION: Carried

B. Lumber Yard Report – Recommendations

Executive Director Gibb provided a status update on the project, noting progress on tenant commitments, traffic studies, MDOT coordination, and DTE service planning, with cost savings achieved by handling some work internally. He reported that PUD eligibility was recommended by the Planning Commission but delayed at Council due to lack of quorum and mixed feedback.

He stated the project is still moving forward, with permits planned for existing building renovations while final site plan development continues. He noted potential delays and added costs due to evolving requirements and indicated the project may shift to a phased approach if necessary to maintain progress and protect grant funding.

He also presented electrical planning proposals and recommended proceeding with the lowest quote despite a late submission, while acknowledging procedural considerations and requesting board direction.

Board Member Barnett asked for clarification on the project's status following a reportedly contentious Council meeting and expressed concern about delays, rising costs, and lack of coordination. He emphasized the need for collaboration among stakeholders and offered support to help move the project forward efficiently.

Council Member Dandalides clarified that the PUD item was tabled due to insufficient Council attendance to secure the required votes, noting the discussion itself was generally positive.

Executive Director Gibb responded by reaffirming that the project is still progressing, though facing some delays, and may require phasing if approvals are not timely. He also highlighted challenges with inconsistent planning guidance due to turnovers and reiterated the importance of maintaining momentum, including his recommendation to proceed with the lowest electrical proposal.

MOTION made by Board Member Barnett, Seconded by Secretary Lorant, to recommend and accept the proposal from Triple R under the policy, that allows the Board to acknowledge what came in, waive any requirements in favor of the recommendation.

VOTING YEA: Burgess, Shell, Caruso, Lorant, Campbell, Garris, Barnett

VOTING NAY: None

ABSENT: Coe, Rutt

MOTION: Carried

Executive Director Gibb shared architectural proposals from Davis & Davis but recommended no action at this time, noting additional planning is needed. He stated updated plans will be required for PUD approval and that additional quotes will be obtained for comparison, with the item returning next month.

Vice Chairperson Caruso asked for clarification on "as-built" drawings. Executive Director Gibb explained these are detailed records of existing structures, documenting how they were constructed to support inspections and ensure compliance with historic preservation requirements.

MOTION made by Treasurer Shell, Seconded by Secretary Lorant, to receive and file the Lumber Yard Progress Report.

VOTING YEA: Burgess, Shell, Caruso, Lorant, Campbell, Garris, Barnett

VOTING NAY: None

ABSENT: Coe, Rutt

MOTION: Carried

C. Committee's Minutes

Assistant Director Bloom reported on committee activity, noting Economic Vitality Committee and Design Committee are being restructured, while Organization Committee efforts increased volunteer engagement through the Illuminators Program. Promotions Committee work included evaluating and categorizing events, identifying approximately 15 DDA-led events, and recognizing a need to better balance the annual event schedule. A new event intake form is being piloted to formalize DDA support for partner events.

Chairperson Burgess expressed concern with labeling 15 events as "Signature Events," noting the term traditionally refers to only a few major events and recommending clearer terminology. Vice Chairperson Caruso asked for clarification on event categories and noted fewer events appear to meet "Signature" criteria. Assistant Director Bloom agreed to refine definitions and labeling moving forward.

MOTION made by Treasurer Shell, Seconded by Secretary Lorant, receive and file the Committee's Minutes.

VOTING YEA: Burgess, Shell, Caruso, Lorant, Campbell, Garris, Barnett

VOTING NAY: None

ABSENT: Coe, Rutt

MOTION: Carried

D. Assistant Director's Report

Assistant Director Bloom provided updates on upcoming events and programs, including the Main Street Oakland County Breakfast Summit, Main Street Open House (March 26), Spring Cleanup (May 9), and Art & Flower Fair (May 16–17). She encouraged participation in the Shop OC Main Streets campaign and noted ongoing marketing efforts, volunteer engagement, and business outreach. She highlighted new and ongoing initiatives, including the Downtown LODown meetings, restaurant roundtables, and upcoming small business trainings and workshops. She also reported recent and upcoming ribbon cuttings and continued efforts to expand partnerships, sponsorships, and business support programs.

Executive Director Gibb highlighted the successful and efficient opening of a new downtown business (COSMedics) as an example of effective collaboration between the DDA, businesses, and the Building Department.

Secretary Lorant and Board Members briefly discussed participation in the upcoming Dragon Boat event.

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

VOTING YEA: Burgess, Shell, Caruso, Lorant, Campbell, Garris, Barnett

VOTING NAY: None

ABSENT: Coe, Rutt

MOTION: Carried

Chairperson Burgess asked whether downtown electrical issues would impact readiness for the Art & Flower Fair, noting vendors' reliance on functional outlets. Executive Director Gibb stated that portions of the system are expected to be operational, but not all circuits will function. He noted some outages may be related to recent damage and explained that temporary power solutions through DTE and DDA-controlled metering points are being explored to support the event while minimizing cost. He indicated the event should still be successful despite limitations.

10. Board Comments and Training Feedback

Board Member Campbell extended a warm welcome to Board Member Garris, highlighting his experience as a downtown business owner and expressing confidence in his contributions to the community. She also encouraged public attendance at the Main Street Open House on March 26, noting the celebration of 19 years of Main Street accreditation and promoting community involvement through the Illuminator program.

Vice Chairperson Caruso echoed the welcome, expressing appreciation for Board Member Garris's commitment and confidence in his positive impact on the Board. He also emphasized the significance of the Main Street Open House as an opportunity to showcase the DDA's contributions, noted strong economic vitality during St. Patrick's Day, and shared enthusiasm for the upcoming spring and summer season.

Treasurer Shell offered his welcome and thanked staff for their continued efforts. He encouraged collaboration to advance the Lumberyard project and called for accountability among those, including certain Council Members, who may be impeding progress.

Secretary Lorant joined in welcoming Board Member Garris and noted that a recent meeting and review of the board member handbook served as a valuable refresher. He encouraged continued focus and collaboration, emphasizing that efforts should remain centered on progress rather than personal matters.

Board Member Garris expressed appreciation for the warm reception and the opportunity to serve, and shared enthusiasm for contributing to the Board's work and advancing its goals collaboratively.

Board Member Barnett welcomed Board Member Garris and spoke passionately about the Board's potential impact. He reflected on the success of a past corridor improvement initiative as an example of effective collaboration, emphasized the opportunity to similarly transform downtown, and called for greater unity, accountability, and urgency among stakeholders.

Chairperson Burgess expressed pride in the Board's accomplishments, particularly improvements to the Lumberyard site, and optimism for future development. She reinforced the importance of partnership, collaboration, and maintaining a positive, unified approach to achieving continued community success.

11. Next Regular Meeting - April 21, 2026

12. Adjournment

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

VOTING YEA: Burgess, Caruso, Shell, Lorant, Campbell, Garris, Barnett

VOTING NAY: None

ABSENT: Coe, Rutt

MOTION: Carried

The March 17, 2026 Downtown Development Authority Board Regular Meeting adjourned at 8:08 PM.

Debbie Burgess
Chairperson

Lynsey Blough, CMC
Deputy Clerk/Treasurer

Sonja Stout
Village Clerk/Treasurer

Date Approved: as presented on April 21, 2026