

**Final**  
**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF COMMERCE**  
**DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**  
**Tuesday, December 17, 2024**  
**Commerce Township Hall**  
**2009 Township Drive**  
**Commerce Township, MI 48390**

**CALL TO ORDER:** The Meeting was called to order by Chairperson Matta at 12:10pm.

**Downtown Development Authority:**

**Present:**

Debbie Watson, DDA Director  
Steve Matta, Chairperson  
Tim Hoy, Vice Chairperson  
Larry Gray, Township Supervisor  
Brian Winkler, Member  
David Smith, Member  
Derek Tuck, Member  
Spencer Schafer, Member (arrived at 12:15pm)  
Jose Mirkin, Member (arrived at 12:21pm)

**Absent:**

Molly Phillips, DDA Treasurer  
Susan Spelker, Member (excused)  
Randy Thomas, Insite Commercial (gave report by phone)

**Also Present:**

Sandy Allard, DDA Assistant  
Melissa Creech, DDA Secretary  
Dave Campbell, Township Planning Director  
Chris Martella, Dawda Mann, DDA Attorney  
Jason Mayer, Township Engineer, Giffels-Webster  
Lt. Wendy Reyes, OCSO Substation Commander  
Sgt. Matt Leggat, Oakland County Sheriff  
Jim Dundas, Township Fire Chief  
Mark Gall, Township Fire Marshal  
Terry Long, Ordinance Officer  
Mark Schoder, Township Maintenance Director, along with the members of the Township Maintenance Crew

**Item 1A: Approval of Agenda**

Chairperson Matta noted that the agenda had been revised.

Director Watson explained that Bruce Aikens may arrive later in the meeting, and he asked that the 5 & Main update be moved toward the end of the agenda. A copy of the revised agenda was provided, with the 5 & Main Update as Item 12.

**MOTION** by Hoy, supported by Winkler, to approve the DDA Agenda as amended for December 17, 2024, as revised.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**Item 1B: Approval of Minutes**

**MOTION** by Hoy, seconded by Winkler, to approve the DDA Meeting Minutes of November 19, 2024.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**Item 2: Public Comments**

Chairperson Matta opened to public comments.

Ray Golota, 1595 Vanstone Dr., Commerce Township – It may not be about the DDA, but two things. At the last meeting, Larry went into great detail about the indirect costs the Sheriff's Department is billing back to the Township. On a personal note, it was kind of disturbing. I received my winter tax bill, and I knew it had the new Parks millage on it. I wasn't ready for the winter tax bill, and I didn't know that this was going to be coming next year.

Chairperson Matta – You are correct, sir. It does not have anything to do with the DDA but thank you. Please, indulge.

Ray Golota – Maybe I should have saved it for a Township meeting.

Director Watson – They read our minutes, they'll get it.

Ray Golota – Okay, good. The next one, I think everybody that's in Jim Runestad's district received this letter. If this House Bill 4828 goes through, it's going to be very interesting.

**Chairperson Matta closed to public comments.**

*[Schafer arrived at 12:15pm]*

### **Item 3: OCSO Update**

Lt. Reyes and Sgt. Leggat discussed the following with the Board.

- I think we discussed convicting the homicide suspect last month.
- Speaking to your comment about the budget:
  - It was quite shocking to all of the Townships to see the increase imposed by the Oakland County Board of Commissioners onto the Townships.
  - The Township Board is really doing a good job of looking out for the Township's best interests. We did some work, and we will cut a couple positions.
  - The good news is, they were auxiliary positions and none of the actual road patrol response units were cut. So, citizens won't see any lapse in services in any way, but it will help out with the budget.
  - Unfortunately, over 3 years, it's a 37% increase. And then we read in the paper today that the County Commissioners just gave themselves a 21% raise.

### **Item 4: Insite Commercial Report**

Randy Thomas gave his report by phone to the Board. He provided an overview of the Insite report submitted in the agenda packet.

Randy Thomas –

- Bruce might make it in later today, but if not, he will reschedule.
- Obviously everybody can see the construction that is going on. The sewer is going in.
- The ICSC happened last week. It was well attended and very upbeat. It was probably the busiest one in New York since covid stopped it for a while. I believe we will hear a good tenant report from Bruce.
- On Phase II, Bruce and I did meet. He is looking at different options now for what Phase II could be and he will have a drawing out at some point. I don't think he's anywhere near executing by any means.
- We do have activity with some users looking at outlots. That will dovetail onto Parcel M as well.
- Parcel F; nothing really developed over the last month that's worth reporting on.

- Parcel J1; There was a group that provides services for autistic children. I haven't heard anything further from them. We did have two gas station inquiries again on that site.
- The last two are the remaining outlots. We are getting a fair amount of calls. The vast majority are from residents driving through and they're more curiosity than real users, but phone call activity has certainly picked up on anything that is fronting Pontiac Trail.

Spencer Schafer inquired with Randy about a concrete truck falling into an underground detention basin at the Continental construction site. Randy Thomas and Dave Campbell had not heard about the incident.

Chairperson Matta – Thank you, Randy.

The call was terminated.

*[Mirkin arrived at 12:21pm]*

### **Item 5: Attorney's Report**

#### **A. Insite Commercial Contract**

Attorney Martella – Insite's Commercial Contract is up for renewal as of the end of the year. After discussions with Randy and with Debbe, we talked about renewing it for another three years for the Fifth Amendment. There have been no changes to the compensation package or terms.

**MOTION** by Gray, supported by Hoy, to approve the 3-Year Renewal of the Insite Commercial Contract.

#### Discussion –

Matta – I personally feel that Randy is doing a phenomenal job. He keeps us updated. He's very loyal. He's very good at what he does and I see no reason we wouldn't want to renew him.

Watson – Agreed.

Hoy – I would agree. Through this time, with what he's had to deal with, he's earning his money.

Matta – He really is.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

#### **B. Administrative Contracts**

Attorney Martella – The Administrative contracts are up for renewal based on the budget. As we know, last month the new budget was passed for the DDA. These contracts reflect the allocated compensation amounts for both Sandy and Debbie. The copies were in your packets.

**MOTION** by Gray, supported by Hoy, to approve the Administrative Contracts for both Sandy Allard and Debbie Watson.

#### Discussion –

Matta – I would simply say that both have done a fantastic job and a remarkable service to us all. It has been a pleasure to work with you.

Watson – Thank you.

Matta – I would certainly lend my voice to approving that.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

C. AT&T

Attorney Martella – As we all know, our favorite subject is the falling AT&T pole. They have recorded the easement, 4 months after we sent it to them. We have repeatedly asked them for an update on when the project would take place. We received an email which read as follows:

*Good Morning,*

*I am the design engineer for the Glengary and Commerce Rd. project. We have some crews going out to the site this week, to start prepping for our work. When do you need us totally out of the way, I want to make sure we are out of the way by that day. Please let me know.*

*Jason D. Harris, Specialist OSP Design Engineer*

Discussion continued regarding the timeline. Supervisor Gray has received calls inquiring about the crooked utility pole. Director Watson noted that the ground is not frozen so they should be able to do the work, hopefully within 30 days. Attorney Martella agreed.

**Item 6: Director's Report**

Director Watson submitted her December 5<sup>th</sup> report in the Board's agenda packet, which is included below, along with edits and relevant updates.

**I. Updates on Developments – Please refer to the Insite Report and the Planning Director's Report for additional information.**

- *5 & Main –*
  - *Continental is progressing on installing infrastructure and they have gone vertical. They spent two months dewatering. They have their permits, and work continues on the deep sewer. They started at the lowest point at Martin Parkway and they're working toward the Walmart property.*
  - *Continental closed the CTP pathway from Walmart to Avalon during construction.*
  - *Bruce Aikens is scheduled to provide an update on 5 & Main projects; a follow-up after attending the recent ICSC.*
- *Merrill Park – Their holiday lights are stunning.*
- *The Avalon of Commerce Twp. – Nothing new to report.*
- *Barrington – Nothing new to report.*
- *Wyncliff – Their holiday lights are very festive.*
- *Public Storage – Nothing new to report.*
- *The Space Shop, Self-Storage – Nothing new to report.*
- *Higher Ground, Guidepost Montessori – Nothing new to report.*
- *LaFontaine Automotive Group Dealerships (LAG) – At the corner of Pontiac Trail & Haggerty, they are wrapping up utility work for the Genesis & Hyundai dealerships. The LaFontaine Acura dealership at 2199 Haggerty is open. The building had a facelift, and significant improvements were made to the site with landscaping, sidewalks, et cetera.*
- *Parcel F / Unit 7, in front of the Township Hall – Nothing new to report.*
- *Parcel J1, Haggerty & Oakley Park – Nothing new to report.*
- *Parcels M & N – Nothing new to report.*

**II. MTT Judgments – As updates are available, reports are given at the DDA meeting.**

### III. *Commerce Towne Place HOA Items –*

- A. *Budget – The 2025 budget and consent actions were emailed last week, and we await electronic signatures from the CTP Directors.*
- B. *Dues – All dues are current.*
- C. *Tax Forms & Reports – Nothing new to report.*
- D. *Lighting/Electrical – Shaw Elec., Eric Peterson, Adam Dornton*
  - *Shaw completed all repairs, maintenance and inspections last month.*
  - *Light poles were decorated for the holidays at the Township roundabout only, and the Martin Parkway bridge rails were also decorated. Due to construction, the Library/Barrington roundabout was avoided. Continental actually removed one light pole there as it interfered with construction.*
  - *Our inventory of lighting supplies should be adequate for the upcoming season.*
  - *Sandy followed up last week with the 52<sup>nd</sup> District Court on an accident claim from earlier this year. As a result, we received final payment of \$8500 in yesterday's mail from an uninsured driver. That was beneficial to the CTP budget, thanks to Sandy's persistence, and our prosecuting attorney's efforts to pursue restitution in this case.*
- E. *Landscaping & Maintenance – United Lawnscape, Jose Medina; Bob Rousseaux's Excavating, Mark Rousseaux*
  - *United has concluded landscaping services for the season.*
  - *Rousseaux continues to promptly address any trail and tree issues as needed.*
- F. *Irrigation – Michigan Automatic Sprinkler, Mike Rennie, Mike Toro*
  - *The system has been winterized.*

### IV. *Other –*

- a. *Final budgets and contracts are on our agenda today.*
- b. *The RCOC is in the design phase for the new traffic signal at Walnut Lake Road and Pontiac Trail, at the entrance to Five & Main. They informed us that the cost of a potential mast arm, versus a box span, is estimated at an additional \$100,000.*

Discussion took place regarding potential design changes and costs, along with the parties involved in the traffic signal agreement with the RCOC.

- c. *A big thank you to everyone who supported the Outrun Hunger 5K! The race was held on Sat., Nov. 9<sup>th</sup> and it was a huge success! Official results have been posted:*
  - *Raised \$34,383 for Hospitality House & Open Door (goal was \$33,000)*
  - *Provided 687 families a holiday meal (the goal was 660)*
  - *Registered 400 runners/walkers*
  - *Recruited 68 volunteers from the community*
  - *Received contributions from 86 donors*
  - *Benefited from the support of 24 sponsors*

### **Item 7: Engineer's Report**

Engineer Mayer discussed the following with the Board:

- **Springs at Five & Main:** Obviously their site is a little muddy today. Dave called me this morning. They were tracking mud through the roundabouts but that has been cleaned up.
- **LaFontaine:** Their crew is not working today, but everybody is moving as quickly as they can with the weather going on out there.

Chairperson Matta – Yes, it looks pretty good, and progress is being made for sure on both sites.

### **Item 8: Planning Director's Report**

Dave Campbell, Township Planning Director – For the Planning Commission meeting on January 6<sup>th</sup>, I think the big item will be Spencer Schafer wearing his developer hat. He will be in front of the Planning Commission looking to make a significant change to the Midtown on Haggerty project. As mentioned before, instead of doing residential apartments behind the existing retail, they are looking to flip that to a Kroger with a fuel center. They would have to amend their PUD that has already been approved. Spencer sent us a lot of information last week. Anytime you do a PUD, or an amendment to a PUD, you have to volunteer recognizable public benefits. Spencer and I will talk more about what those public benefits should be.

Tim Hoy inquired about the closure of Ghost Taco with Dave Campbell. Dave noted that although the Township is not privy to the negotiations with Costco for that site, Ghost Taco's sign is down and the business appears closed. Costco's plan is to remove the restaurant building and replace it with the new Costco fuel center.

David Smith inquired about the sale of Matter of Taste. Dave Campbell confirmed that the restaurant has been sold. The new owner-operator was in front of the Township Board last week Tuesday, looking to transfer the liquor license and that was approved. The new restaurant name is Aurora on the Lake. The owner's group owns six restaurants throughout Southeast Michigan.

### **Township Board Report**

Supervisor Gray –

- At the Township Board meeting, we gave a proclamation to the Walled Lake Marching Band, which is a combination between Walled Lake Central and Walled Lake Western.
- I don't know if anybody here lives in Island Club, but they have a sewer system that they're looking to attach to the Township sewer system. We opened a public hearing to discuss the SAD. We tabled it because there were residents that wanted to review further options for lower costs.
- For those who use the Library, we approved purchases for shelving for year-round used book sales, versus twice per year sales. We are purchasing more pods which are individual studying areas, along with booths for the teen room. We also approved new signage for the east side of the building with the Library logo. In addition, in the youth room, they're going to put up a nice outdoorsy type of mural on the wall.
- We talked about the Oakland County Sheriff's contract. We did eliminate two positions, which were not patrol, but one was the SONIC task force. We also eliminated the HIDTA officer. That will save the Township \$450,000 a year for those two positions, so it's a total savings of about \$1.5 million. But our contract is due to go up, as Lt. Reyes said, by about 37%, so that is a \$3 million increase. And the Oakland County Board of Commissioners gave themselves a 21% raise. We still need to work on the school resource officers.
- As Dave mentioned, we transferred a liquor license from Matter of Taste to Aurora on the Lake.
- We approved some budget amendments to wrap up the rest of the year.
- For our dog park at Wise Road, we approved the dog park rules. If you see any suspicious people on that site, please let us know. We have had people removing construction stakes as we were trying to put the parking lot in, and last week we had a fire started over there, along with damage to construction equipment.
- At Byers Farm, we are going to put a historical marker back up there, which will be the Commerce Homestead.

- We approved the Michigan Airline Trail budget.
- There were 288 photos submitted for the Commerce Township Photo Contest 2024. We've had 1200 votes so far. Voting closes on December 22, 2024.
- I think I mentioned Outrun Hunger at our last meeting.

### Item 9: Committee Reports

#### A. Finance Committee –

##### 1) 2024 DDA Amended Budget

Director Watson – We don't have Susan or Molly here today, but these are really formalities. I'll review it and you can let me know if there are any questions. The amendments shown on the 2024 Budget were approved at the December 10<sup>th</sup> Township Board Meeting. The amendments are highlighted, along with the footnotes on the following page. Revenues were adjusted and increased from \$2.5 to \$2.7 million, and expenditures were reduced by \$1 million, which was primarily due to the reduction in the interest expense related to the revised debt interest agreement we discussed last month. Unless there are any questions, I just need a motion to approve the amended budget for 2024.

**MOTION** by Smith, supported by Mirkin, to approve the 2024 DDA Amended Budget as presented. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

##### 2) 2025 DDA Budget Final

Director Watson – The 2025 DDA Budget was also approved by the Township Board this month at a special meeting. The budget is always brought back to the DDA for final approval, and there were no changes since the last review. We will need a motion for final approval of the 2025 DDA Budget. The only item I would bring to your attention is the insurance which was adjusted to \$8500 for 2025. We discussed that previously. Those were prepaids, so it's not a cash item. That was also an amendment in 2024, and a change to 2025.

**MOTION** by Mirkin, supported by Schafer, to approve the 2025 DDA Budget as presented. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

- B. Public Relations Committee – Jose Mirkin – I apologize for being a little late; 696 was a mess with construction. I was coming back from the east side. Traffic is a big problem and it's not only Commerce, but all around Michigan. We have scheduled a meeting with the Superintendent of Walled Lake Schools and the Director of Public Relations to discuss the possibility of bringing music to the K-12 Art Exhibition in May of 2025. Based on their response to my request, we will go ahead and see if we can have a trio or quartet playing classical music during the Art Exhibition in the Library. I will meet with the art teachers in January. We will keep improving every year.

Vice Chairperson Hoy – Jose, if you need any help with that, let me know.

Dave Campbell – Jose brought up traffic, and it reminded me of something I wanted to mention. Larry, help me out if necessary. We all get yelled at about the traffic along the Martin Parkway corridor and through Richardson to Union Lake Road, along with Haggerty as well. Larry had SEMCOG do an analysis of the traffic flow on a regional level through Commerce Township. I think what they

determined was that 71% of the traffic through this corridor is both originating from, and destined to, locations outside of Commerce Township. People are just passing through Commerce Township on their way to and from destinations elsewhere. I think that's relevant to these conversations we have about traffic. We can only hold ourselves responsible for 29% of it.

Chairperson Matta – Yes, it's actually really good, and we want them all to stop at Five & Main.

Dave Campbell – I've always said, we have a dead-end expressway here, and that was the result of the State and the Feds building a dead-end expressway and dumping it onto County roads that were probably never designed to take that volume of traffic. It was as if they said, here you go Commerce Township, and good luck with that.

Jose Mirkin – Maybe 15 years ago, there was an idea to enlarge Haggerty between Pontiac Trail and 14 Mile. It was one portion Commerce and one West Bloomfield. However, West Bloomfield Township said no. They did not want to do it. Commerce was accepting of the idea of widening Haggerty.

David Smith – The complaints have involved multiple communities; White Lake, Waterford, Commerce and West Bloomfield.

Derek Tuck – Wasn't the original idea to connect M-5 to 75?

Chairperson Matta – Yes, to M-59 or whatever.

Discussion continued regarding road connections that were anticipated years ago.

Brian Winkler – Years ago, Dave Campbell shared a study with me that MDOT did back in the 70's showing how they were going to connect. If you looked at where they were routing it, it would have changed the geography and character of not only Commerce Township but other communities. It's an interesting map. MDOT was trying to be preemptive.

Dave Campbell – We have the map that you can all look at on your way out.

Discussion continued regarding 71% of traffic being transient users along Martin Parkway and plans for road connections that never came to fruition.

- C. Marketing Committee – David Smith – I have nothing to add. I do look forward to Bruce's proposed agenda. I wish everybody Happy Holidays.

**Item 10: Approval of Warrants and/or Carryovers, Add-ons, Revenue & Expenditure MOTION** by Mirkin, seconded by Schafer, to approve the Warrants and/or Carryovers, Add-ons and the Revenue & Expenditure Report. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**Item 11: Other Matters – 2025 Meeting Calendar**

Director Watson – We included the 2025 Meeting Calendar again in the packet for your reference to update your calendars.



**Item 12: 5 & Main Update**

Director Watson – Bruce did text me during the meeting to inform me that he could not make it here today. However, he did provide some comments via email that I can share with you.

- *I hope the board is pleased with the \$5 million of infrastructure being poured into the retail component of the project, including the gravity sewer.*
- *We plan on coming in and discussing the sidewalk, lighting and phasing of such in January, prior to Dort submitting plans. The bank, however, will follow the approved design for the sidewalk and its architecture. Landscaping and fixtures will be coordinated with the future development. I assume Pad A will follow our lead as far as landscaping and the sidewalks.*
- *We have worked for two months with Dort to get to an agreeable plan. Our immediate goal is to close (with) Dort, cut the trees and do rough grading on the retail site.*
- *We continue to push for additional phasing to follow Dort as we played out in September.*
- *This is a fantastic piece of dirt and such an important project. Our main goal is to not rush into moves that would hurt the result, which we all will live with for many years.*
- *Slow and steady; we are pleased with the progress over the last year.*
- *Happy Holidays to all and hoping for another positive year for 5 & Main and for Commerce in 2025.*

Chairperson Matta and Dave Campbell discussed the site that Dort Credit Union is looking at occupying.

**Item 13: Adjournment**

Director Watson – Before we adjourn, I'd like to thank our Maintenance Department who I see in the back. Thank you for all of your help with everything around Commerce Towne Place, and especially with decorating the light poles. I also see Fire Chief Dundas here, and Terry Long Ordinance Officer, along with Mark Gall, our Fire Marshal. Thank you for joining us today and for all you do. It's good to see you.

I would also like to note that this Holiday lunch buffet is sponsored by the DDA contractors to honor our volunteer Board members and our dedicated Township staff. I want to thank all of you for your support, and thank you to Jason Mayer and Chris Martella for the support of Giffels Webster and Dawda Mann. Your generosity is appreciated. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

**MOTION** by Smith, seconded by Mirkin, to adjourn the meeting at 12:52pm.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**



Melissa Creech  
DDA Secretary

**INVOICE APPROVAL (BY INVOICE) FOR COMMERCE CHARTER TOWNSHIP**

EXP CHECK RUN DATES 12/17/2024 - 12/17/2024

POSTED AND UNPOSTED OPEN AND PAID

BANK ACCOUNTS: DDA

Invoice Number	Bank Account	Description	Amount
L A DAWDA MANN COUNSELORS AT LAW 608612	DDA	PROFESSIONAL SERVICES THROUGH 11/30/24	922.43
Total For: DAWDA MANN COUNSELORS AT LAW			<u>922.43</u>
WATSON DEBORAH WATSON NOV/DEC 2024	DDA	DDA DIRECTOR 11/14/24 - 12/16/24	4,536.00
Total For: DEBORAH WATSON			<u>4,536.00</u>
DTE DETROIT EDISON 01/03 2579 LIBRARY	DDA	ACCT# 9100 077 1100 5	22.47
01/03 2581 LIBRARY	DDA	ACCT # 9100 077 1086 6	1,073.45
01/03 2660 OAKLEY	DDA	ACCT# 9100 077 1065 0	196.36
01/03 3106 MARTIN	DDA	ACCT# 9100 077 1076 7	214.12
Total For: DETROIT EDISON			<u>1,506.40</u>
SANDYB SANDY ALLARD NOV/DEC 2024	DDA	DDA ASSISTANT 11/14/24 - 12/16/24	864.00
Total For: SANDY ALLARD			<u>864.00</u>
Report Total:			<u>7,828.83</u>