

Final
CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF COMMERCE
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Tuesday, July 15, 2025
Commerce Township Hall
2009 Township Drive
Commerce Township, MI 48390

CALL TO ORDER: The Meeting was called to order by Chairperson Matta at 12:02pm.

Downtown Development Authority:

Present: Debbie Watson, DDA Director
Steve Matta, Chairperson
Tim Hoy, Vice Chairperson
Brian Winkler, Member
Jose Mirkin, Member
David Smith, Member
Susan Spelker, Member
Derek Tuck, Member

Absent: Larry Gray, Township Supervisor (excused)
Spencer Schafer, Member (excused)
Chris Martella, Dawda, DDA Attorney
Jason Mayer, Twp Engineer, Giffels-Webster (*at 5 & Main site meeting*)

Also Present: Sandy Allard, DDA Assistant
Molly Phillips, DDA Treasurer
Melissa Creech, DDA Secretary
Eric Ladasz, Dawda, DDA Attorney
Randy Thomas, Insite Commercial
Dave Campbell, Township Planning Director
Lt. Eric Hix, Substation Commander, OCSO
Sgt. Matt Leggat, OCSO

Item 1: Approval of Minutes

MOTION by Spelker, seconded by Mirkin, to approve the DDA Meeting Minutes of June 17, 2025.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Item 2: Public Comments

No comments.

Item 3: OCSO Update

Chairperson Matta – Any word on how our retired Officer Reyes is doing in retirement?

Lt. Hix – I saw her at another retirement party on Friday. She said she's loving it but she misses everybody.

Director Watson – Lt. Hix, did you want to tell us a little bit about yourself?

Lt. Hix – I started here officially on June 28th, so with the 4th of July weekend, it was an abbreviated week. I'm just getting into the swing of things here. I have 25 years with the department. I started my career out here. I worked in Pontiac for 10 years.

I'm excited to meet everyone. Matt is my right hand man here. I do know the area. I grew up here and I live in the area.

Chairperson Matta – Anything to tell us, good or bad?

Lt. Hix – We had a recent complaint that was generated out of the Ordinance Department; it was off Elkin Court. It was a problem house. It went through our Narcotics Unit and the Ordinance Department. A search warrant was executed two weeks ago, resulting in an arrest. The recent shooting in White Lake spilled over into Commerce Township at Huron Valley Hospital.

Discussion continued regarding the White Lake shooting incident and investigation.

Chairperson Matta – Thank you for the update.

Item 4: Insite Commercial Report

Randy Thomas provided an overview of the Insite report submitted in the agenda packet.

- Nothing too exciting this month.
- Dave or Eric might know a little bit about the easements.
- 5 & Main:
 - We met with a couple groups this past month. One group is looking at doing two restaurants on two pads.
 - We're in active discussions with a hotel operator.
 - As far as the market, it seems to be moving in the right direction. We're just getting readjusted costs.

Chairperson Matta – Is one of the pads that's under negotiation Pad A?

Randy Thomas – No. These are restaurants. Right now, we're moving the boxes around to get a good fit. We have a good operator.

Vice Chairperson Hoy – Randy, does he have anything scheduled to build yet?

Randy Thomas – Yes, the credit union will be the next project. We have a couple restaurants with the group I mentioned, along with the shoppette which is back on the plan.

Open discussions continued regarding progress at 5 & Main.

Randy Thomas –

- Parcel F, located in front of the Township Hall; We have a developer who is known in the community and he is working on a plan. I don't have anything to tell you yet as I don't know exactly what the plan will be. Hopefully by next month, he will have met with Dave and Deb.
- Parcel J1, at the corner of Oakley & Haggerty; I get a lot of calls but not any real interest. And today, we had two guys regarding gas stations.

Dave Campbell – Somebody checked with us about a gas station without alcohol.

Randy Thomas – There was talk of that at one of the Township Board meetings a while ago. I tell people that want to do a gas station that they're not going to be able to sell alcohol.

Dave Campbell – And that's usually a deal killer, right?

Randy Thomas – 100%.

Dave Campbell – These guys talked to Paula and said they might be interested in a gas station without alcohol.

Randy Thomas – The last parcels are the outlots that the DDA is retaining. We are taking calls on Parcel M which is Pad A. Nothing serious yet. There was a credit union that was interested and we doubt we want to see another credit union.

Item 5: Attorney's Report

Chairperson Matta – We have a visitor.

Director Watson – Welcome, Eric.

Attorney Ladasz – Thank you. My name is Eric Ladasz. I'm with Dawda and I'm one of Chris' partners. I've been working with him since November 2021 when he joined the firm. Even though I am more of a litigator, versus a real estate guy like Chris, I do have a deep municipal background. I have represented cities like Southgate, and most recently Inkster, and my litigation focuses heavily around commercial real estate. I'm also very familiar with your community because my dad has lived right off of Lake Sherwood for almost 25 years. Chris said, *you're perfect, you're going.*

Chris did provide a quick report. Randy mentioned the easements for Pad A. Chris has communicated with Dawn Singer at Dickinson Wright, the attorney for the developer, and with DTE. That was 3 weeks ago and he has not heard back yet. He has been awaiting their response.

Dave Campbell – There is a site meeting going on now at Springs at 5 & Main.

Director Watson – Yes, and Jason is attending that on our behalf.

Dave Campbell – Part of what they're trying to figure out is how deep those DTE conduits need to be relative to what the DDA wants for the final grade of Pad A.

Director Watson – Which we determined is to the curb line, similar to Dort.

Dave Campbell – Exactly. Whatever depth DTE needs, we want it measured from the top of the curb of this new road called Pinewood Avenue. But then Jim Fielder from the Aikens team was saying that DTE will be questioning who is going to pay for it. That will be another conversation.

Chairperson Matta – Options are them, or Bruce.

Dave Campbell – Or Continental and their subcontractor. I've heard that, whether they had the authority to do it or not, the subcontractor had them put it there. And now it needs to be moved.

Derek Tuck – They did it without a grading plan?

Dave Campbell – Apparently.

Discussion continued regarding issues at Pad A.

Item 6: Director's Report

Director Watson stated that her written report was included in the packet. The July 9th report is included below in its entirety, along with any relevant updates.

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

- *5 & Main –*
 - *Giffels has monitored progress on utility work at the Springs at 5 & Main. Progress continues and they anticipate occupancy of the first units late summer to early fall.*
 - *Continental is exploring TIF capture opportunities through the amended Brownfield program, and await additional information from the State.*
- *LaFontaine Automotive Group (LAG) – At Pontiac Trail & Haggerty; Utilities are complete and progress continues. Occupancy for Genesis is anticipated in August, and Hyundai a few months later.*
- *Parcel F / Unit 7, in front of the Township Hall – There is potential interest which Randy and/or Dave will discuss when more information is available.*
- *Parcel J1, Haggerty & Oakley Park – Nothing new to report.*
- *Parcels M & N (or Pad A & Pad B) – Pad A is taking shape and is being graded to the curb line at Main Street, Pinewood and Pontiac Trail. Easements are being finalized.*

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

III. *Commerce Towne Place HOA Items* –

- A. *Budget – Nothing new to report.*
- B. *Dues – All dues are current, and Q3 invoices were sent to the subdivisions this week.*
- C. *Tax Forms & Reports – Nothing new to report.*
- D. *Lighting/Electrical – Shaw, Eric Peterson, Adam Dornton, BrightSource, Rich Walton*
 - *Several repairs and reinstallations are being scheduled this month.*
 - *We had another hit and run accident sometime over the holiday weekend at the Pontiac Trail roundabout.*
 - *We will be placing another order soon for lighting supplies.*
- E. *Landscaping & Maintenance – United Lawnscape, Tara Marquart; Rousseaux's Excavating, Mark Rousseaux*
 - *I will meet with Tara tomorrow, our new Client Manager for United, to review our contract and address a few issues.*
 - *Mark Rousseaux is scheduling 7 tree removals and 6 replacements along the Parkway. He is also scheduling trail maintenance.*
- F. *Irrigation – Michigan Automatic Sprinkler*
 - *The system is functional.*
 - *We are scheduled for a mid-season inspection July 11th.*
 - *We await scheduling for new irrigation to be installed at the Library roundabout, which Continental requested and is paying for.*

IV. *Other*

- *Attorney Martella will not be in attendance at our July meeting. His colleague, Eric Ladasz, will attend to present the Attorney's Report.*
- *The Acuity Eye Care 5K for VOSH is coming up a month from now on August 16th.*

Township Board Update:

Treasurer Phillips reported the following:

- We had our Board meeting last Tuesday.
- We had a Fire Department recognition of a citizen who woke up a sleeping resident whose house was on fire and got her out while they were waiting for the Fire Department to arrive.
- We went through our water and wastewater rate studies with Dawn Lund.
- We had the audit results presented to the Board from Plante Moran. We have a clean audit. They said it was the best audit that they had ever been through. We had no adjustments and a clean report.

Director Watson – Fantastic!

Chairperson Matta – Wow!

[Applause]

Treasurer Phillips –

- We set the SAD roll for the Island Club Sanitary Sewer Repair & Improvement SAD. It will be 15 years and \$22,000 per house.
- We appointed Caitlin Bearer to the Zoning Board of Appeals.
- We agreed to let Fire Chief Dundas buy two powerlift stretchers for two of our ambulances.
- We approved adding \$100,000 to the budget for the restroom and storage facility outside of the Richardson Center, near the pickleball courts.

Chairperson Matta – Which are packed daily.

Treasurer Phillips – Which are packed daily unless it gets above 85 degrees.

- Missy said we are putting fencing around the north side cemetery on Commerce Road.
- They tracked 3,300 cell phones at the Bicentennial event. Tracking cannot be done on kids' phones, so we are estimating we had over 5,000 people in attendance.

David Smith – Who was tracking the phones?

Treasurer Phillips – SEMCOG.

Item 7: Engineer's Report

Engineer Mayer had submitted his report in the Board's packet, and as mentioned previously, he was attending the site meeting with DTE and Springs at 5 & Main.

Item 8: Planning Director's Report

Dave Campbell, Township Planning Director –

- My written report was in the packet.
- Two projects that are pending might be of interest to the DDA.
- One is the prospective new Kroger store at 14 Mile & Haggerty. They would be moving their existing store a little bit further north to the overall project called Midtown on Haggerty. The PUD has been approved by the Township Board. Now they will return to the Planning Commission with a detailed site plan for the new store, and that is on the Planning Commission agenda for a meeting that was rescheduled to August 11th.

- The other thing is that Continental Properties is investigating whether their project, Springs at 5 & Main, would be eligible for a Brownfield financing option that the State of Michigan made available in 2023. They're having to work with the Township and the DDA on how all of the financing would work. They have a Brownfield consultant looking at that, and Deb is helping by providing some of the numbers of what the DDA has invested in the overall Commerce Towne Place area. More to come on that.

Chairperson Matta – Do you have any update on that?

Dave Campbell – They like their chances, but they really have to sell this to the State of Michigan, and specifically to the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA). They are the ones who administer this new residential Brownfield option.

Director Watson – I think I'm under the impression that in other communities where the State has granted this funding, the DDA has typically helped them out with TIF capture and may give up some of their capture. However, we've already invested \$84 million.

Dave Campbell – Right, you've already helped out.

Director Watson – Right, so we're trying to show that we've made our investment, so the State should help Continental along.

Dave Campbell – So we're all going to find out whether the State of Michigan accepts that argument.

Chairperson Matta – Any questions for our Planning Director?

Director Watson – When will Taco Bell be built?

Dave Campbell – They actually cleared a pretty big hurdle through the State Attorney General's office. It had to do with an old subdivision plat that existed on the property. It had to be abandoned and it had to go all the way to the State Attorney General's office to get them to force LARA to do it the easier way. Now that that hurdle has seemingly cleared, the properties can be combined and Taco Bell can hopefully get going. I don't know if their intent is to still get going on construction this year.

Randy Thomas – As far as I know, yes. They are scheduled to close September 8th.

Item 9: Committee Reports

- A. Finance Committee – Susan Spelker – I think you heard the big news from Molly.

Chairperson Matta – We did; a perfect score.

- B. Public Relations Committee – Jose Mirkin – Last month, we voted and approved \$300 for art supplies for the Walled Lake Schools. I purchased the supplies on Amazon and delivered them to the Director of the Art Department. Ghost Taco was demolished and Costco is building their new gas station. I can't remember how many pumps they will have.

Dave Campbell – They are going from 18 to 40 pumps, so more than doubling.

Jose Mirkin – The roof is done and it was done in a week. They are really speeding up the process.

Lastly, I've started the forms for the DIA's Inside/Out Program to get it back in Commerce for 2026. We will see their response in September.

- C. Marketing Committee – David Smith had nothing to add. It was covered under the Insite Report.

Item 10: Approval of Warrants and/or Carryovers, Add-ons, Revenue & Expenditure

MOTION by Mirkin, seconded by Hoy, to approve the Warrants and/or Carryovers, Add-ons and the Revenue & Expenditure Report.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Item 11: Other Matters

Brian Winkler – I will miss the August DDA meeting.

Treasurer Phillips – I am retiring next year at the end of June 2026.

Chairperson Matta – Okay, well that's rejected. When you say next year, do you mean at this time, or January?

Treasurer Phillips – June 30th, which gets us through the full tax season settlement and the audit.

Chairperson Matta – Okay.

The Board members and staff congratulated Molly. She has been with the Township for 10.5 years.

Treasurer Phillips – My husband has been bugging me for 4 years to retire. This will be my 40th wedding anniversary gift to him. Be careful what you wish for.

Chairperson Matta – We're going to miss you. How are we going to replace you?

Treasurer Phillips – We will discuss a succession plan at the quarterly Township Board meeting.

Item 12: Adjournment

- Next regular meeting is Tuesday, August 19, 2025.

MOTION by Spelker, seconded by Mirkin, to adjourn the meeting at 12:35pm.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY



Melissa Creech
DDA Secretary

INVOICE APPROVAL (BY INVOICE) FOR COMMERCE CHARTER TOWNSHIP

EXP CHECK RUN DATES 07/15/2025 - 07/15/2025

POSTED AND UNPOSTED OPEN AND PAID

BANK ACCOUNTS: DDA

Invoice Number	Bank Account	Description	Amount
ADKISON ADKISON, NEED & ALLEN JUNE 2025	DDA	DDA MATTERS	586.50
Total For: ADKISON, NEED & ALLEN			586.50
DAWDA DAWDA MANN COUNSELORS AT LAW 617933	DDA	PROFESSIONAL SERVICES THROUGH JUNE 30, 2025	10,080.00
Total For: DAWDA MANN COUNSELORS AT LAW			10,080.00
WATSON DEBORAH WATSON JUNE/JULY 2025	DDA	DDA DIRECTOR 6/11/25 - 7/14/25	4,732.00
Total For: DEBORAH WATSON			4,732.00
GIFFELS GIFFELS-WEBSTER ENGINEERS 135196	DDA	DDA GENERAL ENGINEERING	149.16
Total For: GIFFELS-WEBSTER ENGINEERS			149.16
SANDYB SANDY ALLARD JUNE/JULY 2025	DDA	DDA ASSISTANT 6/12/25 - 7/14/25	783.75
Total For: SANDY ALLARD			783.75
Report Total:			16,331.41

