

Final
CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF COMMERCE
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Tuesday, September 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 12:02pm.

Downtown Development Authority:

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

Also Present: Melissa Creech, DDA Secretary
Molly Phillips, DDA Treasurer (arrived 12:04pm)
Sandy Allard, DDA Assistant
Dave Campbell, Township Planning Director
Chris Martella, Dawda Mann, DDA Attorney
Randy Thomas, Insite Commercial (exited 12:48pm)
Jason Mayer, Township Engineer, Giffels Webster
Bruce Aikens, Robert B. Aikens & Associates

Item 1: Approval of Minutes

MOTION by Spelker, seconded by Mirkin, to approve the DDA Meeting Minutes of August 20, 2024.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Item 2: Public Comments

Mark Collins, 2070 Marble Court, Commerce Township – I live just on the other side of Welch Road, a short way from here. My family and I are avid cyclists and we enjoy walking the nature trails in the existing development. We're looking forward to the Five & Main commercial development and the businesses that are planned. We currently enjoy use of the nature trail system and the sidewalks that have already been built within the development, stretching from Welch all the way to Haggerty Road, and Pontiac Trail on up. I live less than half a mile away from the development, however, there is no safe way to bike or walk to the development. I drove here today out of safety, when I would have preferred to ride my bike or walk. Many years ago, there was a map on the Planning and Building Department wall in the old building, the old Township Hall off Fisher Road, that showed a bike path down Welch Road. We're wondering what became of those plans. I'm here today asking what's being done to ensure residents along Welch Road, and particularly on the other side of Welch Road, will be able to safely visit and shop in the new outdoor lifestyle center, in the restaurants and stores, without driving and thereby adding additional traffic to our roads?

Chairperson Matta – Well that’s a good question. I don’t know if those plans are still around. Dave, can you speak to that at all?

Dave Campbell – I’m not sure where you are on Welch exactly.

Mark Collins – Marble Court is one of the dead-end roads, just west of Welch, about a quarter mile down, in Marble Acres.

Chairperson Matta – It’s across from Campbell Creek?

Mark Collins – No, it’s north of that. It’s across from the vacant parcel that would have connected to the Wycliff development. There’s a short stub road. It would have connected and lined up with Marble Court, but then the owner of the front house bought that and stopped the development.

Dave Campbell – Understood. Right now, with the Barrington apartments development, there are sidewalks through there that could get you from Welch over to Martin Parkway. Once you’re to Martin Parkway, there are pathways along the west side and there is a tunnel under the Parkway that could get you to the Five & Main development. What’s missing is a safe pathway along Welch Road. That’s something that we as a Township want to look at as we’re looking globally at our sidewalk and pathway network. We have a Pathway Committee which Mr. Gray leads. We’re actually meeting today, correct?

Supervisor Gray – Yes.

Dave Campbell – I think our end game is trying to put a millage on the 2026 ballot for a sidewalk and pathway millage to see if the voters want to support additional funding to try to fill in some of these gaps. I think Welch Road might be one of the gaps we would be looking at. Like a lot of things, it’s a question of money and how things get paid for. That’s what I think this Pathway Committee is meant to evaluate and hopefully come up with a plan that we would put to the voters during one of the election cycles in 2026.

Mark Collins – Okay, I appreciate that, because currently, the sidewalks you mentioned, we take the gravel shoulder of Welch Road to get to Barrington. It’s quite dangerous.

Dave Campbell – I know our Fire Chief lives along Welch Road and he’s an avid cyclist himself and he rides his bike on the gravel shoulder of Welch.

Mark Collins – Yes, he’s on the east side of Welch Road. He and I are old friends. We’re on the other side and we’ve got to cross it.

David Smith – Isn’t there school property there?

Dave Campbell – There is, just north of Barrington; Walled Lake Schools owns the property.

David Smith – If that ever got developed, do you think it would connect or would it be fenced off?

Supervisor Gray – Well I’m sure we’d have sidewalks along Welch Road.

David Smith – I'm talking about at the back of it.

Director Watson – It could tie into the Commerce Towne Place trails.

Mark Collins – So that would get us 200 feet more of sidewalk roughly. We would still have to go a half a mile on the gravel shoulder from where we are. The solution would be that we need a sidewalk or a safety path along almost the entirety of Welch Road, not just piecemeal as developments go in. Maybe the Township would consider an additional millage, and maybe some grants that might be available.

Dave Campbell – Sure, and we often do pursue grants. We just got one recently along the north side of 14 Mile to get from Long Park over to M-5, and particularly to the M-5 Metro Trail. So, in theory, someone could unload their bike at the park and take advantage of the trails in the park, but also safely get along the north side of 14 Mile to the Metro Trail, which then takes you up to the Michigan Airline Trail. We are trying to make these connections; there's a patchwork to it, for better or worse, until we find a money tree.

Mark Collins – We've been waiting since 1990 so we hope it speeds up soon.

Chairperson Matta – Thank you for those comments, and thank you, Dave, for that very thorough response. Any more public comments? Hearing none, we'll close that.

Item 3: OCSO Update

No report in Lt. Reyes' absence.

Item 4: Five & Main Update

Chairperson Matta – Bruce, welcome.

Bruce Aikens – Hi everybody. We're very pleased that dirt is moving and construction has begun on Five & Main. Continental is planning to get the infrastructure and roads completed by Spring, and they'll go vertical with their buildings I think in March.

As part of that, we are working on that deal with Dort Credit Union to do a bank at the entrance off of Pontiac Trail. We're also working on building next Spring; going vertical with the 12,000 square foot shopette, as we call it, which is a small strip center, next to the bank. The main point there is that we're putting about \$4.5 million of infrastructure improvements in; water, sewer, roads, electrical, the traffic light, the new entrance, and re-routing Walmart Drive.

I've always told you that it all has to be done at once, and a lot of that was because of those costs to do that infrastructure. You can't do that with a small shopette or a bank. Now, we can put different eyes on this and we can think about doing it in more of a phased manner, which is exactly what we're doing. The bank can happen now and the shopette can happen now and be financed. I don't need the other tenants to accomplish that. The hotel, the (gourmet) market and the retail facing Martin Parkway can be done now, and that's what we're working on.

We believe that if we do the shopette, we'd put in an additional road, a main street, that would run over to Martin Parkway. We would do all of the rough grading on the site, take down the trees and keep prepping the site and the dirt. It allows me to have much more leverage with the tenants because we can really show where we're going, and say, *if you don't get on the boat, you're going to get left at the dock*. Whereas before, they were like, *you can't do this without us* and they didn't want to pay rent. It gives us more leverage and we're in a better position to work our deals.

We're still succeeding and we're going back to committee with a number of the deals that we had before covid that are important names in a center like this. The New York ICSC is December 6th. By then we hope to have about 40,000 to 50,000 square feet secured with those lifestyle tenant names back on the plan so that we can go to New York and market it with them being part of the project, and we will keep pushing other tenants to join them.

I think it was just a brilliant move to get Continental to happen. Thank you guys for your support in that. I think they're a good company and I think a lot of companies would not have been able to get that done because it was tough times and multi-family is not in the easiest place that it was a few years ago. They're very good and we're happy to have them on that site.

It really has opened up a lot of doors for us in a lot of different ways about how to accomplish this project versus having to have signed leases from 40 tenants to make it go forward, which is really hard. So, we're really upbeat. I think we can really show that this thing is happening and do the things necessary so people can see that it's happening, and that will really accelerate our leasing efforts.

David Smith – To recap basically, from the Marketing meeting; because the infrastructure is going in right now, there will be a couple other stores including the grocery store we've always talked about. Because of the looping, certain construction can begin and roads can start to be built that are now more viable. What we're hoping, and what's implied, is that maybe in the Spring of next year we can start seeing some real construction.

Chairperson Matta – Right, even without 40 signed leases, you'll have others and you can get them going which will lead to 40.

Bruce Aikens – Yes, I don't need to be in a situation where we had to have 180,000 square feet of the project pre-leased. Back in 2000, with one tenant, you could get 30,000 square feet of deals. Those tenants talked with each other and they were oriented to coordinating on a project like this. Today, it's brokers and a lot of these real estate groups don't even have real estate in-house. They do it with third-party brokers, and those people have their own agendas. They don't communicate. It has become much more difficult to put together these types of centers than it was 10 or 20 years ago, but when they see that it's happening, they want to be there. They want to be on this site. As Randy will tell you, we've really proven the site. Nationally, people know that this is one of the top sites in the country so we don't have to fight that fight. It's more about when it's happening, so this allows us to put some definition and some meat on the bones to demonstrate that it is happening, and if you don't do a deal now, you'll get nothing. That's exactly where we want to be.

Chairperson Matta – If you start the shopette in the Spring, how long will it take you to get to doors opening?

Bruce Aikens – Six months. I think we could open it up next year. The bank is supposed to open up next year too. We're willing to talk to Hour Magazine because we have started. I think that's really important to get out there. It may take a number of years to get the whole thing complete, but it has started. Again, enough people are aware of this site that I don't have to do a lot of selling. It has really created a reality of the timing and that it's happening.

Chairperson Matta – Perfect, thank you. Any questions for Bruce? Hearing none, we appreciate you being here.

Bruce Aikens – It's awesome to see some dirt moving.

Chairperson Matta – Do we have a schedule with him for the next time, Deb?

Director Watson – I don't, but we'll coordinate with Randy and Bruce.

Bruce Aikens – We go to New York in December, so that would be a good time to sit down.

Director Watson – So the December DDA meeting?

Bruce Aikens – Yes. So again, covid did hurt us badly and we did lose some deals to Twelve Oaks. We are having to go back to committee on deals that we already had pre-approved. We are in the process with 4 or 5 national tenants, bringing those deals back to committee. We hope to have those back on the plans for New York so that we can be marketing the project with those key names on the plan.

Spencer Schafer – Do you have any idea for the 12,000 square foot shopette, are you expecting retail, or do you have interest from tenants?

Bruce Aikens – We're trying to get Starbucks in there, and The Hudson Café, which is breakfast and they're over off Orchard Lake. They're awesome. And then we are talking to some health and beauty salon service-oriented tenants. But we aren't going to put AT&T. We're going to put tenants that will mesh with what we're trying to do in the overall project.

Spencer Schafer – So general retail, service-oriented retail.

Bruce Aikens – Yes, like a Lens Crafter, a Health Quest, a day spa, those types of things. Things that can live out there now, alone, but will mesh with the overall shopping center. That mix hasn't changed at all. Our vision is still the same mix we have discussed with you; the same apparel, fashion, beauty, wellness, entertainment, and a bunch of restaurants.

Robin Mifsud, 5298 Baronette Lane, Commerce Township – Where are these stores going in on the map?

Bruce Aikens approached and identified the site of Five & Main on the map handout for the residents, including the location of the proposed bank, the shopette and the gourmet market.

Bruce Aikens – Thank you.

Chairperson Matta – Thank you.

Item 5: Insite Commercial Report

Randy Thomas provided an overview of the Insite report submitted in the DDA Board's packet.

Randy Thomas – I don't have a whole lot new to report from last month. I can share with you that we have had a group that has made offers on DDA property before. They approached us regarding Parcel M. As we discussed in the Marketing Committee, I think it's way too soon to even consider anything until we start seeing what Bruce has going on. Once he goes vertical, we can look at things that will fit on that site. I'm not necessarily sure that the proposed use would be a fit, but I think it is to the DDA's benefit to wait, from two perspectives; what could be there, and then economically.

Chairperson Matta – It’s going to grow in value.

Randy Thomas – And it has already. Nothing else really new on the balance of the property. There was a prospective self-storage user. Dave never heard from them and they have gone silent on us.

Item 6: Attorney’s Report

Attorney Martella – I have very little to report. As you know, last month we signed the AT&T easement, pending the updated exhibit. I still don’t have the exhibit. We have followed up numerous times, including this morning when we had a call from upper management at AT&T. They said they’re very sorry and they will get it to us as soon as possible. I explained that I have their easement ready to go, so as soon as we get the exhibit, they can build away and fix the leaning pole.

Treasurer Phillips – This all has to do with South Commerce?

Attorney Martella – Yes.

Discussions took place regarding the two projects going on at South Commerce, including the RCOC project for which an easement was already previously granted, and the AT&T project.

Item 7: Director’s Report

Director Watson noted that everything was included in the report submitted in the Board’s packet, which is included below along with updates.

- I. **Updates on Developments** – *Please refer to the Insite Report and the Planning Director’s Report for additional information.*
 - *Five & Main – Continental’s construction is well underway for the Springs at Five & Main, along with infrastructure for the entire development. Bruce Aikens provided his update to the DDA, and he will attend the Oct. 8th Township Board meeting.*
 - *Merrill Park – Nothing new to report.*
 - *The Avalon of Commerce Twp. – Nothing new to report.*
 - *Barrington – Nothing new to report.*
 - *Wyncliff – Nothing new to report.*
 - *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) – Pre-con minutes were circulated, and they are progressing on both sites.*
 - *Parcel F / Unit 7, in front of the Township Hall – Nothing new to report.*
 - *Parcel JI, 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 – Nothing new to report.*
 - B. *Dues – Dues are current.*
 - C. *Tax Forms & Reports – The HOA Annual Report will be filed by the Oct. 1st deadline.*

- D. *Lighting/Electrical – Shaw Elec., Eric Peterson, Adam Dornton*
- *Pole #64 is being scheduled for reinstallation. We have a pending insurance claim for that incident.*
 - *We are scheduling fall maintenance and inspection of the lighting system, along with other necessary repairs.*
- E. *Landscaping & Maintenance – United Lawnscape, Jose Medina; Bob Rousseaux's Excavating, Mark Rousseaux*
- *United has been working hard to maintain the site and they're doing a great job.*
 - *Rousseaux's crew continues to perform maintenance tasks on the CTP trails, adding millings, along with addressing tree issues.*
- F. *Irrigation – Michigan Automatic Sprinkler, Mike Rennie*
- *The system is fully functional.*

IV. **Other –**

- *The Outrun Hunger team is gearing up for the 5K race on Sat., Nov. 9th. Their alternate route has been approved, which will avoid the construction zone at Five & Main. For more information on this event, visit <https://www.outrunhunger.org/>.*
- *Some flags of concrete were cracked when trucks drove into the trails to do tree and trail maintenance. Those are being scheduled for repairs.*

Township Board Report

Supervisor Gray –

- The South Commerce culvert should be taking place; the RCOC will be closing that down this Friday. Hopefully they will have it done over the weekend.
- Another RCOC project is that they will be paving at Sleeth and Bass Lake Road starting the week of the 23rd.
- At our Township Board meeting, we had Priority Waste come in to give a presentation on where they were and where they're at now.
 - They're starting to pick up mostly on time. Hopefully everybody who lives here in Commerce is now getting trash picked up on the right day. If not, feel free to give me a call.
 - They were a little bit worse off than what they thought. They ended up with about 60% of the GFL trucks running which put them so far behind.
 - Residents located south of Oakley Park, east of S. Commerce Road, whose collections are on Tuesdays will now be moving to Monday pickups. Mailers will be sent out to notify those residents. We will go from a 4-day to a 5-day pickup.
- We approved a couple of projects. One was at Victory Park, off Wise Road; we will be putting a dog park in there. We approved the paving at that park.
- We also approved repaving at the Commerce Township Kayak & Canoe Launch, which is better known as the old Union Lake boat launch by the Dairy Queen. We will have an ADA compliant kayak launch, and we currently have canoe racks there. No motor boats can be launched there and we have everything blocked off with boulders.
- We also passed a couple of SAD's.
- We are starting our budget season so we had our first special Board meeting. We will be having those on Tuesdays moving through October 22nd.

Mark Collins – Where is the dog park going in?

Supervisor Gray – It's going to be in Victory Park, on Wise Road.

Treasurer Phillips – The south side of Wise.

Mark Collins – Will there be a fenced-in area? Do we know what the extent of the improvements will be?

Supervisor Gray – There will be a parking lot. We're looking to do three different dog runs. Also looking to put a pavilion and restrooms in there. I'm not quite sure when restrooms will be done, but they will be done in the future. You'll see that project starting this year.

One other thing; you brought up the old Township Hall. If you have not been by Bicentennial Park lately, you'll notice that park has been completely revamped. The old Township Hall is gone. There is a brand new full-size basketball court, new tennis court, two new pickleball courts, and all the pathways through there are now paved. That was a big park project that we needed to get up and running.

David Smith – I know this is not in your regime, but what is going on with the Glengary Inn?

Supervisor Gray – It took them about two months to get everything going through the State, and then they had issues with the State. They also had a lot more smoke damage than they thought. They're currently in the process of removing everything and they hope to reopen by the beginning of next year.

David Smith – Thank you.

Item 8: Engineer's Report

Engineer Mayer –

- LaFontaine started underground utilities a couple weeks ago. They have about a month and a half to do the underground and then I assume they will start paving and working on the building.
- The Springs at Five & Main split their plans into two phases. They're going to try to get the water main in service around the buildings so they can do the building portion, then they will do the sewer and water out to Martin Parkway. They got 700 feet of water main in yesterday. They're doing testing on the water main onsite. They are moving along well.

Supervisor Gray – Bruce talked about Five & Main and how he is going to wrap around and do the frontages of Pontiac Trail and Martin Parkway. The sewer line that runs up Pontiac Trail; how much can that handle?

Engineer Mayer – There is capacity to do everything he is looking at, and they also revised some plans on The Springs site to provide a stub to the bank. They're looking at it as the whole site, and along the frontages of Pontiac Trail and Martin Parkway, there's water and sewer available. I don't have his whole plan of where everything is going, but I think we can make what he's looking at work.

Supervisor Gray – So when we abandon the pump station on Haggerty Road, everything is going to be gravity.

Engineer Mayer – Yes.

Chairperson Matta – But he is planning to stub off some things right on the frontages.

Engineer Mayer – I haven't seen his site plans come in, but yes, there are stubs coming in off Pontiac Trail and Martin Parkway. Wherever he is looking at going, we will figure out how to service it.

Chairperson Matta – That's what he told us today.

David Smith – He said he relocated the water main down one of the stub streets.

Engineer Mayer – Yes, that's one of the plan revisions, and I believe the sewer stub got relocated to service the bank.

Discussion continued regarding water and sewer connections at Five & Main, and the timeline for EGLE permits, which is about 3-4 months.

Item 9: Planning Director's Report

Dave Campbell, Township Planning Director, shared the following with the Board members:

- I think we've covered Five & Main and LaFontaine.
- Speaking of LaFontaine, in addition to the new dealerships they've started on at Pontiac Trail and Haggerty, they've also repurposed the former dealership at 2599 Haggerty. When that got approved, it got approved to be the service center for the Hyundai & Genesis dealerships up the road. It will continue to be a service center, but it's also now going to be an Acura dealership.

Chairperson Matta – They're still working on that right now, right? They're renovating as we speak.

Dave Campbell – I think they're putting on the finishing touches. And, once the Acura deal is finalized, then they will want to put their own branding on it. They overhauled that site and the building. The building got a new face, new landscaping, new parking lot and sidewalks. It's looking pretty good and I guess that's what drew Acura's attention.

- Further south in the DDA, we continue to get calls on parties interested in what is now Regal Theater, formerly United Artists Theater. If you've gone by, you've seen it's barely limping along. There are prospective developers looking at that for re-purposing that site. Nothing formal has been submitted, or even any concepts. Just folks calling and asking what's in the realm of possible.
- Across the pond from there, this guy Schafer is trying to figure out what he wants to do with Midtown on Haggerty and whether they want to move away from the apartments that were approved on the site and instead do a new Kroger which they hope would include a Kroger gas station.

Spencer Schafer – I can talk about that a little bit now. We met with the Planning Commission about 6 weeks ago now. We are working with Kroger who is looking to relocate from their existing facility at 14 and Haggerty to build a new store that would be 103,000 square feet. It's going to be a little smaller than their White Lake marketplace store. They're looking to have a pharmacy, a lot more prepared foods, a larger assortment of produce, meats, poultry and deli meat. I think it will be a very welcome addition.

Dave Campbell – How big is the existing store?

Spencer Schafer – The existing store is about 55,000, so it's almost twice the size.

Chairperson Matta – The old Hiller’s?

Spencer Schafer – Yes. So it’s very welcome for me. I actually live on 14 and Haggerty on the Farmington Hills side. When my grandmother was at the house, she always used to go to Hiller’s.

So, we’ve helped out Kroger a little bit. They’ve had very early stage discussions with a number of retailers that would occupy that old Hiller’s store location. It would probably be two operators at roughly 20,000 to 30,000 square feet each. Likely users would be fitness or other small retailers. We have 4 or 5 different users looking at that. Kroger owns the site and is running it, but we have just been helping. Whether they sell the site, or renovate it, or we purchase it and incorporate as part of our deal, all of that is in very early stage discussions.

Back to the Midtown site, we have layouts that we shared with the Planning Commission. It does include a gas station use as part of their facility which is very critical for Kroger in order to justify the investment of building a new store, they have to have that gas station. It’s very different than a typical gas station. People who shop there get points and so it’s really built for the shoppers and providing that holistic experience where you can get your groceries, you can get your gas and your prescriptions. Trying to create more of that lifestyle design. I think it will be a welcome addition.

I’ve talked a lot with Dave and Paula about what happened with the Union Lake Kroger, where it sat vacant because of the restrictions about uses that can go in. So, as part of the PUD agreement, we’re talking about it with Atwell who is the civil engineer, trying to figure out public benefits and what could be allowed in there to ameliorate any concerns about that staying vacant for a long time. That’s one item and I’m happy to answer any questions you have. We will probably be submitting on that here in the next 15-30 days. I just finalized the PUD documentation and Atwell is putting the finishing touches on the plan. We have one more joint meeting so we can wrap up and submit to Dave.

Dave Campbell – You’re doing the traffic study, right? You can’t do anything in Commerce without talking about traffic.

Spencer Schafer – Yes. I did have a conversation with Julie. I believe Kroger has been in touch. We will be submitting the application and along with that is going to be the check for the traffic study. It may be 60 days before we get on a formal meeting, pending Julie’s review. Julie will be doing a full-blown analysis because, as part of our Midtown development, we did get a signal approved. We’re calling it Midtown Drive. It’s a private road, the access way we built on Haggerty Road. When we had multi-family, the intention was to have the traffic signal go there because we did traffic studies and felt that most traffic would be coming in off Haggerty. But with Kroger, they have an additional curb cut to Springvale which is that east/west road that separates us from United Artist and Home Depot. As part of Julie’s traffic study, we’re going to investigate that further and see if it warrants moving that traffic signal. The gas station Kroger is proposing is actually behind that northerly retail building.

Speaking of the retail center at Midtown, it’s fully leased up. Most of the plans have been submitted to the Building Department. The hope is that the retail center will be fully occupied and everybody will be open for business by the end of Q1 or beginning of Q2 next year. I think that’s exciting to see the last piece in the Commerce Crossing and Haggerty commercial center finally being fully developed.

To piggy-back on something else, because it is in the DDA area, we just signed a contract with Meijer, who owns a 5.5 to 6-acre parcel on Crumb Road, just south of the existing store, west of the Goodwill. We are finalizing plans now and we’re looking to do a for-sale townhouse

development. We have met with Planning Commission for an informal, conceptual meeting and we received favorable feedback. I like that site a lot because Meijer already put the detention in and we have a storm stub on the property. It should be pretty easy from a development perspective. Water and sewer are right there. We think, from an engineering standpoint, that's going to be pretty easy. We will probably be submitting plans for that within the next 60 days.

Director Watson – Have you sought feedback from the neighbors there where Jose resides?

Spencer Schafer – I did talk with Jose as Paula told me he lives in Treyborne Cove. Once we fine tune the plans, I'll have some elevations and renderings, and I told Jose we can do an informal meeting. The first thing I like to do is educate the neighbors because if they know what's going on, they come to the meeting, they understand what's happening and they can ask informed questions. In our experience, it's less combative. We can listen and try to implement their feedback. I'm keen on that. My father taught me well.

Director Watson – Wonderful.

Jose Mirkin – As Dave said, traffic studies will be a critical issue, because traffic on Haggerty, between Pontiac Trail and 14 Mile, is chaos.

Spencer Schafer – Yes, trying to make a left of out there, from Crumb Road onto Haggerty, with the way it slopes, it's difficult. As part of our studies, we will see what we can do.

Robin Mifsud – I don't know if this is part of it, but when I was leaving here after the last meeting, I noticed there are three businesses behind here that are all closed up.

Supervisor Gray – The Nuspire building is for sale. They just left about a month ago. I believe the other buildings are all full of lumber storage.

Dave Campbell – I've been asked what could go into the Nuspire building, but nothing formal yet.

Robin Mifsud – I just noticed all of the for sale or for lease signs out there. I thought we were trying to bring people in.

Chairperson Matta – Well, you call on that and report here next time.

Robin Mifsud – Okay, I'll do that.

Tim Hoy initiated discussion on rush hour traffic on Haggerty versus M-5. Supervisor Gray noted that a traffic study will be conducted with SEMCOG for the area between the Township Hall and Cooley Lake Road to determine how many people that come through are Commerce residents. They use software that tracks cell phones which shows when people enter and exit. Dave Campbell noted that it used to be done with license plates, but now they can ping your Bluetooth.

Item 10: Committee Reports

- A. Finance Committee – Susan Spelker – In your packet, you have the Revenue & Expenditure Report. I don't know if Molly has anything to say about that.

Treasurer Phillips – As of September 30th, the end of this month, one of our debt issues will be gone. (Applause) And the cash advance was approved by the Township Board. The payments are due Monday, September 30th, and I will do the advance the Wednesday before.

Director Watson – Thank you for handling that.

- B. Public Relations Committee – Jose Mirkin – To summarize what we discussed last month, I presented the idea of asking the DIA to pay for art through their program, Partners in Public Art, or PIPA. After last month's meeting, I met with Larry and Deb. Larry took the request to the Board of Trustees that evening. Unfortunately, the Board of Trustees decided not to do anything. Larry emailed me and explained that the Board felt this project seems like more of an urban area program versus something suitable for our setting in Commerce. As well, we could not think of a building that would be appropriate.

Robin Mifsud – I grew up in Ann Arbor and they have a nice downtown. They have some art on buildings, but they have signs that you see as you're walking. As we get this community center that we're working on, maybe there would be some art where you're walking between buildings.

Jose Mirkin – We looked at projects done in other communities and they were all outdoor murals, but we couldn't figure out where to put that type of art. Once Five & Main is built, I assume we will find a place where we can put art on display, but right now, we don't have a place. Larry, do you agree that we could revisit the idea in one or two years?

Supervisor Gray – Well, once again, it's all about walkability. We don't have a downtown area yet where something like this would fit. I'll speak on behalf of the Board; our buildings that we have, this Township Hall building, and the Richardson Senior Center, those are not buildings where you put murals on the outside walls. You don't have the walkability for it. So, when the downtown area is done, we'll have to talk with Bruce because those will be his buildings, not ours, to see if he would be interested. Isn't it one project for the tri-county area per year?

Jose Mirkin – Yes.

Supervisor Gray – So you're competing against other city areas for this project.

Jose Mirkin – Yes there are 200 communities competing to be selected.

Director Watson – I would add that in the Five & Main renderings that we've seen drafted by JPRA Architects, there certainly is a lot of art incorporated into what they anticipate in the spaces around that development for pedestrians; in the patios and park settings, it was incorporated in many different ways. I think we will see a lot of art there inevitably.

We certainly can't put statues and other artwork in our roundabouts as has been suggested in the past because we have a hard enough time keeping up with damages to the light poles and the trees.

Chairperson Matta – Right.

C. Marketing Committee – David Smith – Everything is positive and it has been covered.

Item 11: Approval of Warrants and/or Carryovers, Add-ons, Revenue & Expenditure

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

Item 12: Other Matters

Jose Mirkin – I talked with Randy as he was leaving because I have a friend who has a drone and can take pictures of what's going on in Five & Main. I asked him to talk to Bruce to see if he can do a write-up for promotional purposes. I can then circulate the information on what the DDA is doing to the local newspapers. Randy told me that Deb has information available, and Bruce already did this.

Chairperson Matta – Through Hour Magazine, right.

Jose Mirkin – If there is something we can publish to show the community what the DDA is doing, I would be pleased to take it to the Free Press, the Detroit News and the Oakland Press, and whoever wants to publicize information on the development.

The next regularly scheduled DDA meeting is Tuesday, October 15, 2024, at 12:00pm.

Item 13: Adjournment

MOTION by Hoy, seconded by Mirkin, to adjourn the meeting at 12:59pm.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY



Melissa Creech
DDA Secretary