

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
CITY OF RAMSEY
ANOKA COUNTY
STATE OF MINNESOTA**

The City of Ramsey Economic Development Authority (EDA) conducted a regular meeting on Thursday, September 19, 2013, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Members Present: Chairperson Jim Steffen
 Member Philip Brunt
 Member Glen Hardin
 Member Wayne Skaff
 Member Kristine Williams

Members Absent: Member John LeTourneau
 Member Chris Riley

Also Present: Patrick Brama, Assistant to the City Administrator
 Kurt Ulrich, City Administrator

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Steffen called the Economic Development Authority meeting to order at 7:30 a.m.

2. APPROVE AGENDA

Motion by Member Hardin, seconded by Member Skaff, to approve the agenda. Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Steffen, Members Hardin, Skaff, Brunt, and Williams. Voting No: None. Absent: Members LeTourneau and Riley.

3. APPROVE MINUTES

3.01: Approve EDA Meeting Minutes Dated August 8, 2013

Chairperson Steffen advised that Member Riley requested the last sentence of the final paragraph on page 1 be revised to state: “He stated the overriding themes of the strategic planning process included a desire to work together, to hold the City accountable, a desire for more transparency, to provide a high level of support and amenities to residents, and to ensure that ~~all decisions made by the City Council are fully funded~~ the City Council only implements changes that can be paid for.”

Motion by Member Skaff, seconded by Member Brunt, to approve the minutes dated August 8, 2013, as amended.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Steffen, Members Skaff, Brunt, Hardin, and Williams. Voting No: None. Absent: Members LeTourneau and Riley.

4. EDA BUSINESS

4.01: Annual Fall Networking Event

Assistant to the City Administrator Brama presented two alternatives for the annual networking event including the EDA's traditional networking event (alternative 1) or an event utilizing the Anoka Area Chamber of Commerce manufacturers' cohort program (alternative 2). He stated the EDA's traditional networking event has averaged 45 attendees with a target market of Ramsey general business owners. He explained that the Anoka Area Chamber of Commerce has a manufacturers' cohort group that holds bimonthly meetings with a nearly identical format to the EDA's networking event. He pointed out that the manufacturers' cohort group has an exclusive invite list focused on manufacturers so there would be some selectiveness in who would be allowed to attend a joint networking event. He stated that a networking event with the manufacturers' cohort group could be held at the Ramsey Municipal Center on Tuesday, December 10, 2013, from 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. and the proposed topic is effective leadership and communication styles with the EDA chair providing opening and closing remarks. He pointed out that Councilmember and Member LeTourneau is the director of the manufacturers' cohort and if the EDA moved forward with this proposal, Member LeTourneau would not be a speaker at the event but would be a facilitator and he would not receive any compensation if the City sponsored this event; in addition, Member LeTourneau is employed by the Anoka Area Chamber of Commerce as an independent contractor. He added that staff contacted the Anoka Area Chamber of Commerce about this opportunity and Member LeTourneau did not approach staff about this opportunity.

Chairperson Steffen asked how many people typically attend the manufacturers' cohort meetings.

Member Hardin advised the Bank of Elk River is a trusted partner in the manufacturers' cohort and paid a sponsorship fee so the Bank is allowed to attend the meetings as a trusted partner where there are usually 25-30 people in attendance. He indicated the manufacturers' cohort has been fairly restrictive in the past and felt that if the annual networking event was going to limit attendance, he was in favor of Alternative 1.

Assistant to the City Administrator Brama acknowledged there would be a percentage of Ramsey businesses that would not be allowed to attend the networking event under Alternative 2. He stated the intent behind being restrictive is to avoid high-pressure salespeople from attending and soliciting the businesses, adding he felt that Ace Solid Waste and/or Connexus would be allowed to attend but a business like Do All Printing would not be allowed to attend.

Member Brunt suggested that staff work with Pete Turok on the invitation list to expand the list to non-manufacturer businesses.

Chairperson Steffen asked if the EDA would be a sponsor of the event under Alternative 2.

Assistant to the City Administrator Brama stated that an event under Alternative 2 would need to be further refined but felt that the EDA could be one of the trusted sponsors of the event.

Chairperson Steffen expressed concern about the selective nature of Alternative 2.

Member Skaff asked if there was any way that Alternative 2 could be structured as a joint meeting so that it broadens the attendance.

Assistant to the City Administrator Brama stated that while he could not speak on behalf of the Chamber, he assumed they would not agree to a joint meeting.

Chairperson Steffen stated he was in favor of Alternative 1 and would like to consider ways to increase attendance. He added he was not opposed to being a trusted partner with the manufacturers' cohort but was not in favor of replacing the EDA's networking event with Alternative 2.

It was the consensus of the EDA to direct staff to continue the status quo with respect to the annual fall networking event.

Chairperson Steffen requested ideas for a speaker or topic for the networking event.

Member Brunt suggested having someone speak about the MNsure program.

City Administrator Ulrich suggested having Development Services Manager Gladhill discuss the Community Development Department's impact on local business, e.g., sign ordinances, approval of expansion plans, and sharing information about the City's new strategic plan.

Chairperson Steffen suggested allocating ten minutes to the City's Business of the Year.

It was also the consensus of the EDA that the annual networking event should include remarks by Mayor Strommen, remarks by Development Services Manager Gladhill, comments by Vision-Ease, and consider a presentation about the MNsure program if time permits.

4.02: EDA Updates

Assistant to the City Administrator Brama presented the EDA updates and advised that the old LeTourneau SuperValu building has been sold to Java Investments with the intention of renovating then selling the property. He stated the City received interest from Premier about listing the entire 167/47 parcel and the City is seeing more leases in that node as well, especially in the convenience store building. He reported that the Police Department has started an initiative to visit all Ramsey businesses to obtain feedback about the City's public safety services with a goal of visiting over 300 businesses by December. He stated that recruitment continues for the Economic Development Manager and five applicants will be interviewed by phone in the near future.

4.03: Community Development Update

Assistant to the City Administrator Brama reported that Molin Concrete is in the process of completing a 10,000 square foot expansion of their facility. He also reported that Cullinan

Rigging is completing a 10,000 square foot expansion of their facility. He advised that Noble Roman's Pizza and Dollar Store will be opening in the Coborn's retail plaza and Metro Hydro Graphics will be opening in the former Allina building; in addition, Northgate Performing Arts and Worship Center will be opening this fall. He stated that Seasons of Ramsey, a 50-unit townhome development, has made substantial progress and is expected to be complete this winter. He added that a groundbreaking has been scheduled for September 25th for Stoney River, a 72-unit assisted living facility near Lord of Life Church. He provided an update regarding the Rum River Hills project and explained the project has gone to the Planning Commission with the next step being the public input session. He stated that Rum River Hills has been in contact with Premier Commercial Realty about finding someone to list the properties together and they are also working with developers, but they need to wait for the statement of goals to get through the Planning Commission and City Council before proceeding further. He suggested that the statement of goals be reviewed by the EDA before going to the City Council for final adoption. He stated that Rum River Hills is aware that the EDA wants to see something happen on the north side of this project and Rum River Hills's initial plan is to concentrate on the residential aspect of this project.

Chairperson Steffen requested an update regarding Super America and McDonalds.

City Administrator Ulrich advised the City received word that Super America is no longer interested in locating in The COR, adding that the corporation completed a market study for their proposed location and concluded it did not want to move forward. He stated that McDonalds is planning to close in October and break ground next spring. He then provided a City Council update and advised the City Council approved an RFP process for a real estate broker to represent shovel ready sites throughout the City excluding the Nordvick site based on the decision to prepare a master plan for this area before placing it on the market. He requested that EDA members forward any real estate contacts to staff so the RFP can be forwarded to those contacts. He reported that the City Council received a report from Ehlers regarding TIF District 14 and the report indicates this TIF District's property values continue to decline below the base level with no tax income coming to the City. He stated this TIF District is intended to pay for the City's infrastructure improvements and staff will be pursuing some modifications to the TIF District. He also reported that the Mayor and City Council are focusing on meaningful community engagement and will be working with residents on new river rules being proposed for the Mississippi River. He stated that Mn/DOT recently held an open house regarding Highway 10 and the access study being planned to address the pedestrian issues in this corridor. He indicated the Armstrong project was turned down for the Federal grant and the City hopes to close the \$5-10 million gap through legislative action. He stated the County awarded a contract for design work on the interchange to SRF Consulting and the bids were lower than anticipated. He reported the City Council made a decision to move ahead with a public hearing on October 8th regarding establishment of a franchise fee on utilities, adding that this franchise fee is intended to provide a dedicated fund for road construction.

Chairperson Steffen stated he spoke with the Vision-Ease team at the golf tournament and they have offered to conduct a tour for EDA members. He requested that Assistant to the City Administrator Brama follow up on this to schedule a tour.

Assistant to the City Administrator Brama stated that an open house regarding the 167/47 node is scheduled for September 26, 2013, from 6:00-9:00 p.m. in the Alexander Ramsey room and EDA members are welcome to attend.

Member Hardin requested an update regarding the old municipal center site.

Assistant to the City Administrator Brama advised that the deadline for submitting interest in the public input group is tomorrow, September 20th, and so far fifteen people have expressed an interest. He stated that staff will present the proposed makeup of the public input group to the City Council on October 8th and updates will be provided to the EDA throughout the process.

5. Member/Staff Input

None.

6. Adjournment

The regular meeting of the Economic Development Authority adjourned at 8:40 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kurtis G. Ulrich, City Administrator

ATTEST:

Patrick Brama, Assistant to the City Administrator

Draft by Barbara Hughes
(*TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.*)