

**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 11, 2014, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Members Present: Chairperson Jim Steffen
 Member Philip Brunt
 Member John LeTourneau (arrived at 7:36 a.m.)
 Member Chris Riley
 Member Wayne Skaff
 Member Kristine Williams

Members Absent: Member Glen Hardin

Also Present: Ted LaFrance, Economic Development Coordinator
 Patrick Brama, Assistant City Administrator/Ec Development Manager
 Tim Gladhill, Community Development Director
 Nicole Wenberg, Public Information & Events Specialist

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

2. APPROVE AGENDA

Member Skaff asked to have a moment of silence at 7:46 a.m. in memory of 9/11.

Motion by Member Brunt, seconded by Member Skaff, to approve the agenda.

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

3. APPROVE MINUTES

3.01: Approve Meeting Minutes Dated August 14, 2014

Member Riley stated under Item 5.2, EDA updates, the sentence states “Member Chris Riley asks about the Beauty Center.” He stated did not ask about a beauty center and suggested the sentence be changed to “Member Riley asked what type of user would be appropriate for leasable space for the second floor of the Ramsey Municipal Center.” Followed by: “Assistant to the City Administrator Brama indicated a non-profit Government or private office may be acceptable.”

Motion by Member Riley, seconded by Member Skaff, to approve the August 14, 2014, minutes as amended.

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

4. EDA BUSINESS

There were no items.

Member LeTourneau arrived at 7:36 a.m.

5. MEMBER / STAFF UPDATE

5.01: EDA Updates

Economic Development Coordinator LaFrance reviewed the updates to the current projects.

Member Riley asked if Prospect Red is still progressing and in negotiations.

Economic Development Manager LaFrance stated they are not in negotiations on the parcel he mentioned but are working on their building.

Member Steffen asked if Prospect Red knew that Prospect Season was interested and in contact.

Economic Development Manager LaFrance indicated they did.

Economic Development Coordinator LaFrance continued to update the Board on ongoing projects.

Community Development Director Gladhill stated things are moving forward with PSD's proposal. He reviewed the progress to date.

Assistant City Administrator/Economic Development Manager Brama stated the scheduled closing is set for Monday.

Member LeTourneau stated in regard to the density piece, this has to do with market demand. He noted they are reviewing the projects on a case-by-case basis.

Community Development Director Gladhill stated they are not necessarily stating the density will not be achieved, they are making it easier to get to those densities by not setting the bar too high on the first projects. They are not giving up on the vision, they are making it easier to build towards that density.

Chairperson Steffen asked when the Master Plan was developed for the density.

Community Development Director Gladhill stated originally it was a part of the Ramsey Town Center in 2003. He stated most recently in 2011, after they went through a revision process they changed how they approached the development pattern and concentrated on the first quarter mile.

Chairperson Steffen asked if there has been any research done that indicated the economy supported it.

Community Development Director Gladhill stated there have been market studies done. The Northstar Community Development Authority finished up a study in 2012-2013 that supported some of this. The Planning Commission mentioned this is a good time to look at that plan.

Chairperson Steffen asked if the purchase agreement was passed by the Council unanimously. He stated it was troubling to him that after it went to the Council, it went to zoning and items were red flagged and now it appears that the deal potentially may not close.

Community Development Director Gladhill stated the development and zoning plans were well known and it was stated that they would be able to meet those standards. As PSD started to go through their planning, they started to have trouble reaching the standards and as part of their natural process of design, they found some better market data.

Chairperson Steffen asked if the proposal was far from what the City wanted.

Community Development Director Gladhill did not think the City wanted to risk losing the project and have planned several alternatives in order to make the project happen.

The Board paused for a moment of silence at 7:47 a.m. to remember the victims of 9/11.

Member Riley stated at the Council meeting, there was no discussion about forcing the deal or losing it. PSD was being flexible in working with staff and they were looking for direction. PSD is willing to build the parking ramp if the numbers work.

Member LeTourneau agreed.

Member Williams stated in her experience, this type of due diligence process is part of a development like this. There is usually a rapid turnaround from the time a purchase agreement is signed to the closing date and for a commercial project of this size that is short. PSD is asking what modifications are required and it does not sound concerning to ask for a change in the density. Member Williams asked what options there are to modify at this point.

Member Riley stated market forces were also discussed at the Council meeting. There was no talk about government forcing what it is going to look like.

Chairperson Steffen asked if it would be appropriate to ask for the PSD market study.

Community Development Director Gladhill stated it was not intended to see every detail of the study. What he took out of the meeting was that the Planning Commission was asking for data. When there is talk about changes to the development plan, the process is intended to be flexible and work with the market.

Member LeTourneau stated in regard to market analysis, it is meant to determine feasibility and if they were to share that publicly, someone else might be able to move in with a better deal so he asked that the Board think about that as they move forward. He thought PSD would share pieces of that or the whole study after the project is finished.

Chairperson Steffen stated if the closing is not done on Monday, he would suggest an aggressive move to try to get the project done.

Economic Development Coordinator LaFrance explained an aggressive closing date was set. He reviewed the process that needs to be taken in order to close the project. He noted they still need to see full site plans of the project.

Member Riley wondered when they will be to a point where they can look at how the numbers work on the Business Park.

Economic Development Coordinator LaFrance stated they had conceptual plans drawn up that will be brought forward to a professional firm to determine the true capacity of the park. Staff has had preliminary conversations with Ehlers in regard to TIF and what tools are available to them.

Member Riley asked when they will be seeing those numbers.

Economic Development Coordinator LaFrance stated they do not have a time frame on that.

Assistant City Administrator Brama stated staff will prepare a case for consideration at next month's meeting.

Chairperson Steffen updated the members on Item 4 (167/47 Commercial Node).

Assistant City Administrator Brama handed out the 2013 Business Networking Event flyer and indicated the proposed date for the 2014 event is November 13. He reviewed the proposed Business Networking Event for 2014.

Member Skaff stated last year's Networking Event went well.

The Board agreed.

Member Williams agreed, liked the agreement of the Highway 10 corridor, and would like MnDOT to review the project.

The Board discussed with staff possible topics and businesses that could be presented at the event.

Chairperson Steffen asked if CBRE would be an interesting candidate to speak at the event.

Member LeTourneau wondered if they could shorten or eliminate the panel piece and hear more about the Highway 10 Corridor project.

Member Riley thought they were going to do away with the panel piece and that the study would take its place.

Assistant City Administrator Brama thought there could be a quick City update by staff along with an update on the Highway 10 access study.

Community Development Director Gladhill stated he could provide an update without speaking.

Member Skaff stated he would still like to see a bullet point presentation, maybe five to ten minutes, because he thought it was important to see what was happening in the City.

Member Williams thought a City update was something Chairperson Steffen could do at the beginning of the event as the Chair of the EDA.

Chairperson Steffen asked for an update on the result of the Highway 10 study.

Community Development Director Gladhill updated the Board on the progress of that study.

Assistant City Administrator Brama thought 50 minutes for the Highway 10 update might be excessive. He suggested there be a 10-minute staff update.

Chairperson Steffen stated he did not want this to be a Highway 10 meeting.

Member Riley stated Highway 10 is the biggest thing going on but he thought CBRE should also be part of the update.

Assistant City Administrator Brama introduced Nicole Wenberg to the Board who has been hired full time as the Public Information & Events Specialist. He noted she will be the lead on coordinating the Business Networking Event and other projects going forward in the City.

5.02: Discuss Staff Transition

Economic Development Coordinator LaFrance indicated the purpose of this case is to provide an update to the EDA on staff transition. Current EDA support is provided by Ted LaFrance, whose last day working for the City of Ramsey and its respective bodies is the 12th of September. Council recently expressed support for another staff member, Patrick Brama, who serves as the Assistant City Administrator, to serve as the economic development contact. This rearrangement

is proposed to include off-loading some of Mr. Brama's duties to a new position to cover events, communications, etc.

Chairperson Steffen thanked Mr. LaFrance for his service and felt they got a lot done.

Member Skaff thought a great job was done this past year and indicated Mr. Brama had his full support.

Member Riley asked if there were any concerns the EDA could address.

Assistant City Administrator Brama stated at this point, he was comfortable with the projects that are 'in the hopper' and are making the transition from HRA to EDA. He thought the City was in a strong position but noted there will be a transition period. Assistant City Administrator Brama noted he would like to revisit the work plan with the EDA and make sure they have the priorities in order.

Member Riley stated going forward they had discussed the need for Mike Mulrone and he wondered if this was identified as one of their transition help items.

Economic Development Coordinator LaFrance stated he has used Mr. Mulrone in the past to get information about projects and found that Mr. Mulrone was very helpful.

Assistant City Administrator Brama stated moving forward, when they need assistance or expertise, Mr. Mulrone will be available. He thanked Mr. LaFrance for his service and wished him the best.

Member LeTourneau stated Mr. Mulrone had a tradition with the EDA, has acted as an on-board assistant, and attended meetings with frequency. The Board used his knowledge as a great resource and he also acted as an outside sales person for them and has many connections. He was a real great advocate so the Board may want to revisit some of those advantages.

Member Riley stated Mr. Mulrone even filled in when they did not have an Economic Development Manager.

Member Riley asked for a financial summary of the EDA for an upcoming meeting. He thought it would be helpful.

Economic Development Coordinator LaFrance stated they do report to the Department of Economic Development on the balance of their loan funds fairly often and that information can be provided to the EDA. He suggested staff provide that at the beginning of the year.

Member Riley thought that was a good idea. He also thought they could keep a running tally of the progress the EDA has made throughout the year.

Chairperson Steffen asked if December would be a good time to put together the 2015 work plan.

Assistant City Administrator Brama thought there might be some value in doing it earlier this year.

6. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Member Skaff, seconded by Member Williams, to adjourn the meeting.

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

The regular meeting of the Economic Development Authority adjourned at 8:28 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kurtis G. Ulrich
City Administrator

ATTEST:

Patrick Brama
Assistant City Administrator/Economic Development Manager

Draft by Sue Osbeck
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.