

**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, May 25, 2017, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Members Present: Chairperson Jim Steffen
 Member Phillip Brunt
 Member Brian Burandt
 Member Chris Riley
 Member Wayne Skaff
 Member Kristine Williams (arrived at 7:38 a.m.)

Members Absent: Member Glen Hardin

Also Present: Patrick Brama, Econ. Dev. Mgr/Assistant City Administrator
 Tim Gladhill, Development Services Manager

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Steffen called the Economic Development Authority meeting to order at 7:35 a.m.

2. APPROVE AGENDA

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

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

3. APPROVE MINUTES

3.01: Approve Meeting Minutes Dated April 13, 2017

Motion by Member Steffen, seconded by Member Skaff, to approve the April 13, 2017, minutes as presented.

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

4. EDA BUSINESS

4.01: Review Planning Commission Recommendation for The COR Interim Development Plan

Community Development Director Gladhill presented the staff report.

Member Williams arrived at 7:38 a.m.

Chairperson Steffen asked if this plan includes more or less retail than the original plan.

Community Development Director Gladhill noted that this plan has slightly less retail but identified two other areas that have available space for retail. He noted that the Planning Commission feels that it would be a better balance.

Chairperson Steffen asked if there was a negative opinion of retail in this area from The COR panel.

Community Development Director Gladhill stated that there are challenges and barriers to the retail market. He explained that The COR will not be a Riverdale or Elk River, but the focus should instead be a unique business incubator.

Member Skaff asked the plans for the open land in the downtown area.

Community Development Director Gladhill stated that there would still be a mix of uses along Sunwood Drive between retail and residential with a focus on high density residential. He noted the relationship needed between residential and the success of the transit with the commuter rail.

Chairperson Steffen asked if the document would change any zoning.

Community Development Director Gladhill stated that the zoning would not change as the mixed use allows for a multitude of uses. He stated that some simple adjustments can be made to the subdistrict boundaries which allows more flexibility.

Member Williams stated that the document makes some strong statements in regard to retail and asked if the EDA is comfortable publishing that and making it public. She stated that while the City has not been able to attract the desired retail that is indicative of the market. She noted that there are two places in the vision statement that state no “big box” retail and asked if the EDA is comfortable with that.

Community Development Director Gladhill stated that he would support tweaking that language, as the vision statement became more focused on the northwest quadrant. He believed that the Planning Commission would support “big box” retail in the right opportunity. He explained that the Planning Commission wanted to attract more unique opportunities but would still be open to “big box” retail as well.

Chairperson Steffen stated that the City has been open to “big box” retail for 15 years and did not see any reason to detract from that option now.

Community Development Director Gladhill stated that perhaps the statement be tweaked to remove the portion disallowing “big box” retail and instead encouraging smaller incubator retail destinations.

Member Riley stated that the market will dictate the choice the City will have and noted that there are several statements that push the smaller unique retail that would have a higher rate of turnover. He noted that he would prefer to have more established names in terms of retail that would most likely have a higher rate of success.

Member Burandt agreed that the statement should instead say that the City will embrace market driven opportunities as they come, rather than trying to attract businesses that would have a higher rate of turnover.

Member Riley stated that this is a first draft of a document that the EDA has not yet had input on and therefore this is a great discussion.

Community Development Director Gladhill noted that the Planning Commission has spent a lot of time attempting to develop a plan broad enough to go over the entire development but advised that this is still a draft. He noted that he does like the idea of embracing market driven opportunities as they come but stated that perhaps the vision statement is not the right place for that item. He instead suggested putting talking points from each group under each section as the discussions continue.

Member Riley recognized the change in the mixed-use definition, noting that the idea has been switched as the vertical mixed use did not seem to be a success. He stated that parking is another area that the group should discuss. He noted that although the City prefers structured parking, the market would most likely support that notion. He stated that because the market would not support additional structured parking, that would require City funds to make that a reality. He stated that the floor area ratio has been changed but the document suggested that it should be changed back. He provided an example of a development that did not include structured parking and still provided a good product. He noted that going back to the original ratio would not allow additional developments of that nature.

Community Development Director Gladhill noted that there are discussions currently to determine whether there would be a return on investment for the City to invest in that type of infrastructure. He noted that while that policy discussion is occurring, the parking ramps have been left off this plan for the time being. He noted that the Planning Commission mentioned that during peak times it can be difficult to find parking near areas like Acapulco. He confirmed that the City is flexible in terms of parking, whether that be surface or ramp.

Member Riley stated that the EDA should weigh in further on parking. He stated that shared parking is a great concept if it works, he provided a successful example between Allina and the neighboring church. He stated that while that is a great concept that works in that situation he does not believe the City should attempt to coordinate those efforts between developing sites.

Community Development Director Gladhill asked if there is any openness to partner with developing properties to create structured parking, whether that be grant funds or TIF dollars. He asked if there is a desire to continue that discussion.

Economic Dev. Mgr./Assistant City Administrator Brama stated that this is a high-level policy land use plan, which is an interim plan. He noted that the next step will be a more detailed planning exercise, and will include a parking discussion that will have more details on costs. He confirmed that in this market there would need to be a cost-share between private and public to develop structured parking.

Chairperson Steffen stated that he would not say no to the concept. He noted that he would be willing to continue discussions, but does not want structured parking to be a requirement for developers.

Member Skaff stated that he would also be open to the concept but would not want to see structured parking become a requirement in a planning document, for developers.

Member Riley asked for more details on the floor area ratio.

Community Development Director Gladhill provided the definition of floor area ratio, noting the higher the floor area ratio, the denser the parking would need to be. He noted that the ratio had been decreased in order to respond to the market. He stated that a few years ago the Council then made the decision to encourage shared and structured parking but not require that element and decreased the floor area ratio to .65. He confirmed that the Planning Commission did support reverting back to the ratio of .75. He noted that the EDA comments would be added to that item, noting that while the EDA would be open to encouraging shared/structured parking, they would not want to require the element and do not support the change in floor area ratio from .65 to .75. He asked for broad thoughts on architecture and whether the City is on track, providing examples of recent development, and whether the architecture is meeting the expectations of the EDA.

Chairperson Steffen stated that there were one or two developments that did not meet his architectural expectations. He asked which examples the Planning Commission had.

Community Development Director Gladhill provided examples of architectural elements that the Planning Commission felt perhaps did not meet their expectations, noting that often it was color related.

Chairperson Steffen asked if the guidelines have changed in the past two years.

Community Development Director Gladhill stated that there have not been changes in the last two years but there was a significant amendment prior to that. He stated that staff's approach is to add more details to make things more specific. He stated that the design document is currently very lengthy and staff is attempting to simplify that while still providing the necessary definition. He stated that The COR is very unique and because the density was going to be higher, the desire

was to have higher design standards. He did not believe that would be appropriate to have the standards community wide.

Member Williams stated that she appreciates that the desire to stay strong to the architectural desires. She stated that with retail that could become a concern. She stated that it is important in the western and southern portion of The COR, and she would not want a development to look out at the back of a building. She stated that it is important to have four-sided design for buildings, so that you prevent a development from looking out at the back of a strip mall with no design and just back doors. She stated if you are going to require four-sided development, the City should also ensure that the sign ordinance would allow for signage on all sides. She provided examples of four-sided development that has been well done in The COR.

Community Development Director stated that there is flexibility to allow signage on all sides but the conflict often comes with the type of signage allowed. He noted that the discussion would play out with the Stonebrook Academy application as that moves forward. He noted that business will have their front entrance on the side opposite of Sunwood Drive and therefore the four-sided design will be important as the back of their building will be facing Sunwood.

Member Williams stated that she would want to ensure that the back of the building facing Sunwood still looks like the front as well, since that is the main roadway for The COR.

Community Development Director Gladhill summarized the input from the EDA regarding the vision statement, noting that the EDA would like to be market driven rather than dictating the market, with an emphasis of that discussion related to different types of retail users; for parking the EDA would be open to all parking options, but does not want to force shared/structured parking on developers; and in regard to architecture the EDA would like to emphasize four-sided design and would want to ensure signage is allowed for all sides if desired.

Member Riley stated that he feels the vision statement needs more amendments than what was mentioned.

Community Development Director Gladhill noted that this is intended to be an interim document and if the master developer route is chosen, that group would work with the EDA and Planning Commission to further develop the plan and implementation of the plan. He noted that the Planning Commission would focus on developing the plan while the EDA would focus on implementation of the plan. He noted that the document has been setup to allow for additional input from a master developer.

Motion by Member Skaff, seconded by Member Brunt, to recommend to City Council that approve The COR Interim Development Plan for public comment, incorporating the consensus statements from the EDA.

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

4.02: State of Minnesota Economic Development Marketing Initiative

Economic Dev. Mgr./Assistant City Administrator Brama presented the staff report.

Chairperson Steffen asked, and received confirmation, that the City does receive copies of the ad that they would be able to utilize. He asked what would be promoted.

Economic Dev. Mgr./Assistant City Administrator Brama stated that it is a high-level advertisement for the City that is very visual. He noted that Coon Rapids and Elk River utilize the publication. He stated that Anoka County used the publication in the past but pulled out of the publication this year which brings forward another reason it would be important for the City to include their own advertisement. He stated that the City would work with the designer to develop an ad.

Member Williams stated that while she likes the advertisement, it does not seem as detailed as some of the advertisements for the other cities. She suggested reviewing some of the other advertisements to make Ramsey's stand out a little more.

Member Burandt suggested using a map to show the location of Ramsey as well.

Motion by Member Brunt, seconded by Member Burandt, to authorize staff to utilize \$5,000 of the EDA budget to select, design, and publish an ad in the 2018 MN DEED/Business Climate annual publication.

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

Member Burandt suggested possibly cost-sharing the ad by highlighting shovel ready sites.

4.03: Business of the Year

Economic Dev. Mgr./Assistant City Administrator Brama presented the staff report. He explained how the short list is developed.

Chairperson Steffen stated that he likes the line of questioning which began in the last few years.

Economic Dev. Mgr./Assistant City Administrator Brama stated that an additional question was added regarding community support the previous year.

Chairperson Steffen stated that next year perhaps a scoring mechanism be developed next year to help quantify the chosen selection, noting that the questions would be weighted to provide higher numbers for the more important elements.

Member Riley stated that might be overthinking this. He stated that the EDA has been given the information and have an idea of which elements are more important to them.

Chairperson Steffen agreed but noted the scoring system would develop a system for the group to evaluate as a whole, rather than which element is most important to each member.

The EDA discussed possible recipients for the business of the year.

The EDA selected Capstone Homes as the 2017 Business of the Year with a strong recommendation that Zero Zone should be considered for 2018.

5. MEMBER / STAFF UPDATE

The EDA reviewed the Staff Update. Economic Dev. Mgr./Assistant City Administrator Brama highlighted recent activity regarding PSD and their interest in the north portion of the new business park noting that the request will come before the EDA in the next few weeks. He stated that Adrenaline Sports is also looking at the PSD owned space next to the potential PSD development. He stated that there is also interest in the site Adrenaline Sports was previously interested in, noting that hopefully a purchase agreement will come before the EDA at the next meeting. He also provided updates on the potential closing for Capstone and the recent activity of Stonebrook.

6. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Member Skaff, seconded by Chairperson Steffen, to adjourn the meeting.

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

The regular meeting of the Economic Development Authority adjourned at 8:53 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kurtis G. Ulrich
City Administrator

ATTEST:

Patrick Brama
Econ. Dev. Mgr/Assistant City Administrator

Draft by Amanda Staple
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.