

**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, December 14, 2017, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Members Present: Chairperson Jim Steffen
 Member Brian Burandt
 Member Glen Hardin
 Member Jill Johns
 Member Dominic Kanaventi
 Member Wayne Skaff

Members Absent: Member John LeTourneau

Also Present: Patrick Brama, Econ. Dev. Mgr/Assistant City Administrator
 Tim Gladhill, Development Services Manager
 Kurt Ulrich, City Administrator
 Member Chris Riley (via telephone)
 Brian Pankratz, CBRE
 Dick Tollette, Rum River Hills Golf Course
 Mike Allen, Rum River Hills Golf Course
 Tom Gamec, Rum River Hills Golf Course

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Steffen called the Economic Development Authority meeting to order at 7:34 a.m.

2. APPROVE AGENDA

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

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Steffen, Members Skaff, Hardin, Burandt, Johns, and Kanaventi. Voting No: None. Absent: None.

3. APPROVE MINUTES

3.01: Approve Meeting Minutes Dated October 12, 2017

Motion by Member Hardin, seconded by Member Skaff, to approve the October 12, 2017, minutes as presented.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Steffen, Members Hardin, Skaff, Burandt, Johns, and Kanaventi. Voting No: None. Absent: None.

3.02: Approve Meeting Minutes Dated November 9, 2017

Motion by Member Skaff, seconded by Member Hardin, to approve the November 9, 2017, minutes as presented.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Steffen, Members Skaff, Hardin, Burandt, Johns, and Kanaventi. Voting No: None. Absent: None.

Chairperson Steffen welcomed the newest member of the EDA and provided him an opportunity to introduce himself.

Member Kanaventi introduced himself and provided background information noting that he has been a Ramsey resident since 2002.

4. EDA BUSINESS

4.01: Rum River Hills Development Proposal

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

Chairperson Steffen referenced the trunk sewer line and asked when that is planned, whether that is in the near future or far into the future.

Economic Dev. Mgr./Assistant City Administrator Brama provided additional input on the process that is followed to consider a request to build a line shown on the plan. He noted that there would be a cost benefit development analysis involved, before making a final decision to extend any new particular trunk line. Just because a line is shown in the trunk plan, it doesn't require the city to build it. The trunk sewer plan allows that discussion to occur, as the line is planned and funded. He explained the reasoning that this trunk line was recently added to the plan, noting that it was not just because of this proposed project, however that was a factor.

Community Development Director Gladhill provided additional details on trunk line construction, noting that construction is development driven decision making process.

Chairperson Steffen asked for details on the zoning change and Comprehensive Plan amendment that would be needed.

Community Development Director Gladhill stated that the property is not guided for urban services, but noted that because the sewer plans have changed, the property can then be changed to match. He provided additional details on the zoning, noting that part of the property is zoned for golf course and therefore would need to be changed along with a change to support the requested density. He provided additional details on the discussion that occurred on a broad scale at the Planning Commission. He stated that while there are items that need to be worked

through, the Planning Commission believes that this request is worth moving forward for further discussion.

Chairperson Steffen asked and received confirmation that there are a few developers that are interested in the project.

Mike Allen replied that now that the trunk line has been identified on the plan, this project could be the catalyst to bring that service to the area. He confirmed that there are developers that are interested in the project. He stated that members in the Men's Club are also very interested in the housing project.

Chairperson Steffen asked for details on the mix of the housing products, and how that was developed.

Mr. Allen replied that they have a desire to provide a mix in housing between single family homes, bay home villas/detached townhomes, and apartment/condominium style units.

Chairperson Steffen referenced the Anderson property and asked if that was included in the original plan.

Mr. Allen replied that has always been an option and is part of the concept with the bay home/townhome product.

Chairperson Steffen asked for information on the viability of the golf course and whether the course would survive without this project.

Mr. Allen replied that the golf course could survive without the project but noted that there are improvements needed. He stated that the bar/restaurant is currently leased for the next four years but then will return to the golf course. He stated that to add this number of rooftops and add the underpass would assist in providing that golf course community feeling. He stated that households to the east would have access through the underpass to access the parks and retail node. He stated that there would be a direct benefit to the golf course, which would allow them to improve their facility.

Chairperson Steffen asked if the improvements planned could be identified, and be made a guaranteed performance requirement, to ensure the viability of the golf course, if the city were to provide assistance.

Dick Tollette replied that the debt the golf course has is miniscule and the improvements are what will help the golf course and help to revitalize that area. He stated that this will create a community feel that is unique to courses in the metro area. He stated that they are asked everyday about available properties, explaining that these homes would provide a lifestyle.

Member Skaff stated that he does agree that this would revitalize the 167th Avenue node.

Member Burandt agreed that this area needs to be revitalized, but noted that this is a large ask and noted that he would like to see a cost/benefit analysis before providing firm direction.

Chairperson Steffen stated that this is a lot of homes that would be added to the area, and asked if there would be a traffic study.

Community Development Director Gladhill replied that MnDOT would be given the opportunity to comment and the right time would need to be determined to conduct a traffic study. He noted that typically that would occur with preliminary plat but that may occur earlier in this process because of the magnitude of the project. He confirmed that MnDOT could halt the project or add minimum requirements that would be needed to the road system to support the project.

Chairperson Steffen asked how access would be provided to the homes on the east side.

Mr. Allen replied that access would be provided from Quicksilver. He replied that another access would be provided from the existing stub off of 164th.

Community Development Director Gladhill noted that additional detail would be needed for the access provided through the golf course property to ensure that would be a safe access for public safety and whether that would be a public or private road.

Chairperson Steffen asked how the golf course would feel about a stoplight at 167th.

Mr. Allen replied that they would love it, noting that it would be great to have the stoplight even without this project.

Member Riley stated that there is already an underpass to a neighborhood from Elmcrest Park. He noted that while the underpass would have a benefit to some other residents, it would mostly benefit the golf course development and therefore he would have a difficult time justifying that cost.

Mr. Allen replied that it is obvious that the underpass would be for the project to access the new holes. He stated that there is a definite benefit for residents on the east side to access the west and the retail node. He stated that the 2013 study stated that additional rooftops would revitalize that retail node. He stated that the tunnel is vital for the golf course, but it will also allow the density to improve the retail node and provide connection to the City's park system. He stated that the other tunnel is south to the Centex development.

Chairperson Steffen asked if the tunnel would support two golf carts coming and going at once.

Mr. Tollette replied that his daughter lives in the Centex development and the tunnel connection is highly used to access the park property. He stated that this tunnel would also be highly used by the public.

Mr. Allen noted that the water tower site does not have a lot of buildable use and they would be willing to purchase that property for this development, and use it for golf holes, which would be a great use of the property.

Tom Gamec stated that the underpass could be used not only for golf use but also for all other residents of Ramsey, and would be connected to the trail system.

Member Riley stated that he would like to see a larger trail plan to provide additional connections, and justify the tunnel for the public. He stated that he would like to see further negotiation and cost share on the underpass element.

Chairperson Steffen asked if the Park and Recreation Commission would provide input.

Economic Dev. Mgr./Assistant City Administrator Brama confirmed that there would be further investigation on elements such as trails and connections to parks and it would be routed through other Boards/Commissions, including the Park and Recreation Commission, assuming the Council was comfortable with further investigating this project.

Community Development Director Gladhill noted that there are discussions with the new elementary school and with this development as well, it would make sense to look at a broader trail plan for this overall area of the city.

Chairperson Steffen asked and received confirmation that golf carts can travel in the city with the correct permitting and noted that the underpass would allow people to travel across the highway to access each side. He asked if the business subsidy 'but-for' test would apply to this request.

Economic Dev. Mgr./Assistant City Administrator Brama stated that this project is gray as it is not a traditional economic development project, like a business park. He stated that the assistance request includes a road cost-share and the construction of an underpass. He stated that both of these requests are made and processed by the city for non business subsidy situations. Determining if this project is a formal business subsidy is a challenge and can be subjective. He stated staff intends to be cautious with this request, and intends to treat this as a formal business subsidy request, and will recommend requiring general underwriting of the benefiting business.

Chairperson Steffen asked if the business would have a problem with the City reviewing their financing as part of this process.

Mr. Allen replied that their source of income would be the sale of the land. He noted that the funding of the project would be coming from an outside source. He stated that they would not have a problem with the financials being investigated.

Mr. Tollette stated that most of the golf course owners live on the course and their intention is to see the course improved.

Member Skaff asked for the action requested from the EDA.

Economic Dev. Mgr./Assistant City Administrator Brama stated that he would like to see whether there is general support to continue to investigate this project, and recapped a list of items the EDA would like further investigated.

Chairperson Steffen stated that the project is great on paper, as it would do a lot for the course and the area in general. He confirmed the consensus of the EDA to continue to investigate the project, including the list outlined by staff.

4.02: Review Draft Economic Development Chapter of Comprehensive Plan

Community Development Director Gladhill presented the staff report.

Member Skaff stated that he feels that the group has done a great job and commended Community Development Director Gladhill for his leadership. He stated that he is happy with the document, as being developed, and feels that it supports economic development.

Community Development Director Gladhill thanked Economic Development Mgr./Asst. City Administrator Brama for his assistance in the process as well.

Member Hardin stated that some of the items under the goals and strategies have already been accomplished and asked if that section would be further updated.

Community Development Director Gladhill confirmed that would be updated as well. He noted that similar to the Strategic Plan, there would be updating to show that items have been completed, but believed that there is value in showing what has been accomplished for tracking.

Member Hardin asked if there would be value in setting new goals rather than tracking goals that have already been completed.

Community Development Director Gladhill confirmed that new goals could be set as well. He asked the EDA for input, not only on goals for the next three to five years but for the next ten to 20 years.

Member Hardin asked how transportation would be addressed in the plan.

Community Development Director Gladhill noted that there is a transportation plan and noted that because there are economic development tie ins, perhaps that section would be brought forward to the EDA as well. He provided details on the transportation plan, which identifies items for study and possible capital improvement. He noted that while the transportation plan is not included in the economic development chapter, this will all make more sense when all the chapters are put together and the full picture is seen. He stated that the Steering Committee has developed a transportation plan, land use plan, future development plan and perhaps there would be a desire of a map which overlays multiple items from those plans. He reviewed the timeline for the process moving forward, noting that the drafts will come back to the EDA, most likely, in February.

Economic Dev. Mgr./Assistant City Administrator Brama stated that if there is a desire to refresh the goals for this chapter, he would need to know that so that he could bring that forward as a future case.

Community Development Director Gladhill noted that there could be a case in January which would identify longer term goals for the EDA. He stated that if there are individual ideas from the EDA Members, they can provide those ideas to staff in the case that they are not able to attend the January meeting.

Chairperson Steffen agreed that the case should be added to the January agenda.

4.03: CBRE: Updates and Pricing Strategy (portions of this case may be closed to the public)

Economic Dev. Mgr./Assistant City Administrator Brama stated that this case was intended to have two sections, the first to have an update from CBRE and the second, in closed session, to discuss pricing strategies. He stated that in the interest of time, he would suggest receiving the update from CBRE today and delaying the closed session discussion to the January meeting.

Brian Pankratz provided an update on the twin cities market. He noted that while industrial continues to be strong, office remains flat. He explained what when one office space fills, another goes vacant. He noted that the face of office is also changing as people have more flexibility in their work space and can fit a high number of employees into one site. He highlighted the retail vacancy, providing an explanation that the higher numbers are because of the big tenants that have closed (such as Sears) and explained that those sites will be broken up and backfilled in the future. He provided market feedback specific to Ramsey noting that there is increased traffic on the Armstrong interchange. He highlighted the activity related to residential, retail and office/industrial. He noted that once the sports complex opens, that will bring in additional traffic on a nightly basis to the Coborn's retail area. He highlighted market suggestions and noted that retailers will want large signs that will be visible from Highway 10. He stated that because the City owns land along Highway 10, it may make sense for the City to start to develop a large monument sign plan to coordinate a main sign that could be used for multiple tenants and would be visible from Highway 10.

Member Skaff stated that he travels Highway 10 and notices the LED billboards in Blaine. He asked if there would be an option for the City to use that type of sign to advertise for retailers.

Mr. Pankratz stated that typically a retailer would pay their portion for a sign and maintenance, but the benefit would be to have a plan for the signage.

Member Burandt left the meeting at 8:57 a.m.

Member Skaff stated that he is more speaking of an LED billboard that could be utilized for other Ramsey businesses.

Mr. Pankratz stated that perhaps staff would have more information but believed that the signs would be regulated by MnDOT.

City Administrator Ulrich stated that the City does have a dynamic sign ordinance. He stated that the City could look into that option noting that there are options for a private contractor to build the sign with funds gained from advertising.

Mr. Pankratz stated that if that is going to be done, you would also want to ensure that there is space for retailer signage that would be visible from the highway.

Community Development Director Gladhill noted that is a topic being researched as part of the Resilient Communities Partnership.

Economic Dev. Mgr./Assistant City Administrator Brama noted that the sign plan is included on the work plan.

4.04: Buxton Group Opportunity

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

Member Hardin stated that the proposal was interesting, but the cost was out of line and therefore he would not be interested.

Member Skaff agreed that although Buxton did a good job on the presentation, he is not interested in pursuing this option, especially because of the non-results that were seen from the past investment with Buxton.

5. MEMBER / STAFF UPDATE

Economic Dev. Mgr./Assistant City Administrator Brama stated that in January he plans to reach out to the EDA for the opportunity to have an additional meeting or workshop to receive an update on the Resilient Communities Partnership. There is a lot of information that would be in addition to the items that would already be on the regular agenda for January.

The EDA reviewed the Staff Update.

6. ADJOURNMENT

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

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Steffen, Members Hardin, Skaff, Johns, Kanaventi.
Voting No: None. Absent: None.

The regular meeting of the Economic Development Authority adjourned at 9:10 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.*