

**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, August 8, 2024, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Members Present: Acting Chairperson Shanna Stewart
 Member Chelsea Howell
 Member Rachal Johnson
 Member Brittany Lindahl
 Member William MacLennan
 Member Chris Riley

Members Absent: Chairperson Scott Wiyninger

Also Present: Sean Sullivan, Economic Development Manager

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

4.02: Consider Recommendation to Implement Lodging Tax and Membership with Twin Cities Gateway Visitors Bureau

Economic Development Manager Sullivan presented the staff report.

Al Stauffacher, President of Twin Cities Gateway, stated that the owner of Hilton Home2Suites approached the TCG Board Chair with interest in this program and that is how these discussions began. He provided information on the Twin Cities Gateway, its purpose and intent, strategic goals and objectives, two staff members, organization history, and member cities and lodging properties within each city. He provided details on the TCG Board, which is composed of representatives from each community and meets quarterly. He provided additional details on the lodging tax, how that is used as well as details on the TCG budget. He stated that 75 percent of their budget is put back into marketing for the member cities. He provided additional details on the TCG city grants and regional grants as well as the 2024 marketing work plan.

Member Howell asked if any of the member cities have negotiated a higher percentage.

Mr. Stauffacher replied that they have not.

Member Howell asked the initiatives, practices and leadership opportunities that fall in line with diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Mr. Stauffacher replied that when they developed their strategic plan they worked with a consultant and provide opportunities for everyone to advertise, as well as with employees. He noted that the other TCG employee works more in that area and could provide more details as a follow-up.

Member MacLennan asked if both of the Ramsey hotels support this.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan replied that both hotels support this and see this as a benefit.

Member MacLennan asked if there is a way to track the results.

Mr. Stauffacher confirmed that they do have tracked data of that manner to show that success. He stated that data is also used to assist with targeted marketing.

Member Riley commented that the fact that this is being driven by the hotels is important, as the EDA did consider this in 2010 but chose not to move forward. He stated that it seems to make sense at this point and noted that Game Fair could also be a beneficiary as well as the sports dome if that continues to move forward.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan reviewed some pros and cons.

Mr. Stauffacher estimated that 85 to 90 percent of cities have a lodging tax. He provided additional details on how the city grant could be used for a city event.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan stated that if they move forward, he would work with Mr. Stauffacher to develop a draft resolution to go before the Council.

Mr. Stauffacher stated that the Board member from the City of Ramsey would need to be identified prior to January 1, 2025 when the membership would begin. He explained that their financial representative would provide a brief training to Ramsey staff and staff from the hotels. He noted that once Ramsey adopts the resolution, the membership would still need to be approved by the TCG Board but noted that they have already discussed this and are considering adding Vadnais Heights as well.

Member Howell commented that she would be more supportive if the City portion of the lodging tax was more than five percent. She stated that she would also be interested in more of the qualifications for the city grants. She noted that she will abstain from this vote until she has more information.

Mr. Stauffacher confirmed that he could get that information to staff to provide to Member Howell.

Motion by Member Johnson, seconded by Member Lindahl, to recommend to City Council to implement a 3% Lodging Tax and to join the Twin Cities Gateway Visitors Bureau.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Members Johnson, Lindahl, MacLennan, and Riley. Voting No: Acting Chairperson Stewart. Absent: Chairperson Wiyninger. Abstain: Member Howell.

6. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Member Johnson, seconded by Member Lindahl, to adjourn the meeting.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Acting Chairperson Stewart, Members Johnson, Lindahl, Howell, MacLennan, and Riley. Voting No: None. Absent: Chairperson Wiyninger.

The regular meeting of the Economic Development Authority adjourned at 9:02 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Sean Sullivan
Economic Development Manager

ATTEST:



Wendy Schlueter
Economic Development Administrative Assistant

Draft by Amanda Staple
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.