

MINUTES

Economic Development Committee

Date | time Tuesday, March 30, 2021 at 5:15 P.M. | *Meeting called to order by* Neal at 5:15 P.M.

In Attendance

Committee Members Present: Tom Neal (chair), Lisa Rasmussen, Sarah Watson, Becky McElhaney (webex) and Tom Kilian (webex)

Others Present: Mayor Katie Rosenberg, Sean Fitzgerald, Patrick Peckham (webex), MaryAnne Groat (webex), Shannon Graff, Lou Larson (webex), .

In accordance with Chapter 19, Wisc. Statutes, notice of this meeting was posted and sent to the Daily Herald in the proper manner.

Agenda Item #1 – Approval of Minutes from 01/05/21

Motion by Rasmussen, second by Watson to approve the minutes. Motion passed 5-0.

Agenda Item #2 – Overview of 2020 Wausome campaign metrics from Elizabeth Knight of Aplomb PR.

Knight discussed the progress of the Wausome campaign to position the city as an ideal place to live. She stated the campaign did actively market in the 4th quarter 2020 with favorable results. Wausome released three stories in October, November and December 2020. Knight highlighted how many people the campaign reached which spiked when stories were released. Knight stated 4th quarter traffic quadrupled from 3rd quarter and this was without paid advertising.

Kilian asked if the committee could receive a geographical breakdown of where the hits from the site are coming. Knight responded in 2019 they did do paid advertising in larger metro areas primarily through Facebook. Because the campaign didn't include paid advertising this year, she did not include geographical metrics in her reports for this year.

Kilian also asked if there could be a success metric to give us a measureable idea of an action being initiated by the campaign. Knight responded that they could build something in to track why people reach out.

Agenda Item #3 – Discussion and possible action on an amendment to the 2017 Blenker River East Brownstones Development Agreement for Short Street properties.

Fitzgerald reviewed the amendment to the development agreement as presented in the packet. No discussion pertaining to the amendment from the committee.

Motion by Rasmussen, second by Kilian to approve the amendment. Motion passes 5-0.

Agenda Item #4 – Discussion and possible action on the sale of 1214 N. 3rd St. to Aedifix Builds, Inc.

Fitzgerald reviewed the land sale proposal as presented in the packet. Rasmussen asked if there will be landscaping for aesthetics. Lenz stated permits would be required and landscaping would be required through zoning code.

Kilian requested assurance there would be no subterranean excavation due to the property's environmental history. Neal responded this would be addressed during the permitting process.

Motion by Rasmussen, second from McElhaney to approve the land sale. Motion passes 5-0.

Agenda Item #5 – Discussion and direction on affordable housing in Wausau.

The Mayor discussed the possibility of an affordable housing assessment in Wausau and the possibility of establishing a task force and requested direction from the committee.

Sippel completed a 39-page report detailing the landscape of housing in Wausau. The report defined “affordable” as housing costing 30% or less of income, while any amount over that is considered cost burdened. Sippel highlighted the following data for Wausau:

- 31%, or approximately one-third of Wausau households are cost burdened
- 13% are paying more than 15%
- Of those percentages, 22% are owner occupied and 42% are renter occupied.
- 37% are both cost burdened and under the income threshold for HUD and would likely qualify for rental assistance but this is more than HUD can help.

Ryan stated she wants to see more data regarding affordable housing with regard to populations who are struggling most with affordable housing.

Rasmussen stated there is value in doing a study to see where the gaps are in affordable housing.

Peckham agreed with the mayor’s suggestion about doing a study on affordable housing and asked if we could tap into the expertise of the Community Development Authority who may provide additional resources.

Agenda Item #6 – Updates

- 1300 Cleveland Phase 2 environmental testing report
 - o Council received a copy of the full report and there is a committee of the whole scheduled for February 23. Representatives from GEI consultants and a representative from the DNR will attend to discuss the report and answer any questions.
 - o Kilian asked that committee members receive both industrial and non-industrial remediation recommendations. Fitzgerald replied it is believed the DNR recommendations would include both.
- Date change for April meeting
 - o April 6 is general election and council chambers will be used for counting ballots.
 - o Another email will go out to solicit an alternative date.
- Joint meeting with Finance committee on March 15, 2021 to discuss special event fees.

Agenda Item #7 – Adjournment

Motion by Kilian, second by Watson to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed 5-0.

Adjournment Time: 6:26 P.M.