ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Date and Time:	Tuesday, August 4, 2020 at 5:15 p.m., Council Chambers
Committee Members Present:	Tom Neal (c), Lisa Rasmussen, Sarah Watson, Becky McElhaney and Tom Kilian
Others Present:	MaryAnne Groat, Eric Lindman, Katie Rosenberg, Sean Fitzgerald, Lou Larson, Ann Werth and Michelle Van Krey.

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

The Economic Development Committee meeting was called to order by Neal at 5:15 p.m.

Agenda Item #1 Approval of the Minutes from 7/07/2020

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

Agenda Item #2 Discussion and Possible Action on the issuance of a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the former Westside Battery at 415 S. First Avenue.

Fitzgerald and the Community Development Department is looking for input from the committee on the re-issuance of an RFP for 415 S. First Avenue.

Rasmussen thinks that with the current economic state it would make sense to wait until this rough period passes so that when an RFP is issued there are multiple, quality proposals received. Kilian agrees that waiting would be a good idea. McElhaney also agrees but asked for Fitzgerald's opinion on if he saw any upside to issuing an RFP with an extended due date at this time. Fitzgerald stated that the department receives calls and inquiries from developers all of the time and this property is one that is included when responding to those inquiries.

Lou Larson suggested putting a For Sale sign on the property for better visibility.

Watson inquired about the cons of having an RFP open in which Neal responded that he didn't see any and that he thought an open-ended RFP would be beneficial. Watson suggested using both an RFP and a sign to indicate the property was available. Kilian supported this approach.

Motion by Watson, second by Rasmussen to issue a rolling RFP expiring on March 31st, 2021 and to place signage on the property indicating it is available for development. Motion passed 5-0.

Agenda Item #3 Discussion and Possible Action on options for Phase 2 environmental testing at 1300 Cleveland St. (former City Incubator) property.

Eric Lindman, Director of Public Works, reviewed his environmental findings from DNR documents relevant to 1300 Cleveland Ave. Tom Kilian also provided his findings to the committee via e-mail earlier in the day.

Rasmussen believes that at minimum, based on Lindman's and Kilian's findings, option 2 should be completed. Watson would like to see option 3 because it seems for thorough and complete but asked how long the process would take. Lindman estimated that the RFP process would take 2-3 weeks and opened at the Board of Public Works. The testing could be completed by late fall with an additional 3-4 weeks to receive results and then a few more weeks for analysis and summary for the committee.

Kilian encouraged the committee to decouple the development of this site from the environmental concerns of the site and to see the goal as taking care of environmental concerns instead of the goal of developing the site. He would like to see an RFP issued and proposals received for review instead of setting a budget prior to releasing an RFP.

McElhaney agrees with option 3 and inquired what the next steps would be after testing is complete. Lindman stated that results would be shared with the DNR and action would be taken based on guidance from them.

Rasmussen will support option 3 and agrees that an RFP should go out without setting a prior budget so that the proposals aren't limited to a certain cost.

Motion by Rasmussen, second by Kilian to pursue testing option 3 presented by Lindman including findings from Kilian and send the recommendation to the Finance Committee to request funding through the Holz-Krause fund. Motion passed 5-0.

Agenda Item #4 Discussion and Possible Action on proposals received for development in the Riverlife area.

Fitzgerald referenced the proposal received from Cherry Street Dental in collaboration with Jason Blenker from The Blenker Companies.

Jack Young, Cherry Street Dental, addressed the committee to explain that with this new proposal addresses the committee's previous concerns about the project. Those changes include partnering with Blenker for a housing component, willingness to change the look and feel of the exterior to fit with the area, moved the parking lot back, eliminated some parking spaces and reduced the financial ask to the City.

Rasmussen wanted clarification that the building would still be single use which Young confirmed was true. Rasmussen explained that incentives are used when there is risk associated with a certain development and she believes that development on the Riverfront is at less of a risk than it was at the beginning since there have been successful development of the area. She also questioned if this is the best use of riverfront property.

Neal would like to see something with a little more density that has aspects that fit with the vision created for that space. An example would be a few floors of housing on top of the dental clinic to fully utilize the space.

Rasmussen asked that the City Planner be involved and give his feedback in the future prior to any decisions being made.

Jason Blenker explained that his housing contribution to the project was following the vision of the council from past RFP's but if it didn't fit with the current vision it could be addressed.

Young voiced frustration about this RFP process and the lack of discussion about the economic impact of this project given that this was the meeting of the Economic Development Committee and not the Plan Commission.

Kilian asked of Young and Blenker if they felt like modifications could be made to satisfy the concerns of the committee. Kilian also asked that in the future if Young could share with the committee the public purpose of the project with a narrative on how it will impact the downtown area.

Rasmussen has concerns about the city involvement with incentive since she doesn't believe that this project would pass the "but for" test used for TID incentives.

Kilian asked that at a future meeting if there could be an educational piece on the "but for" test and how it's applied.

No action taken. Staff will follow up with Young for next steps.

Agenda Item #5 Update, Discussion and Possible Action on the issuance of a Request for Proposal (RFP) for 120 Scott St.

Fitzgerald shared that Merge's option with the city expired June 30th with no action so staff is looking for guidance regarding an RFP for the property.

Rasmussen questioned if an RFP is needed right now since this lot is a useful, function parking lot in the downtown area. Neal sees no rush but would like to see an RFP open so that possible development is not missed out on.

Mayor Rosenberg suggested that the committee think about what they want to see for this property and then work with staff to create a specific RFP that asks for what they want. Rasmussen agreed that a more targeted approach would be nice. Neal agreed and asked how staff would move forward with a request like this. Rasmussen recommended involving the Planning Department and referencing the studies and plans that already exist for that area.

Kilian also likes the idea of a targeted RFP approach and would like to see the needs of the market combined with the needs of the community when considering what would work there.

Watson suggested taking time to create a targeted RFP and leaving the useful lot as is for now.

Agenda Item #6 CLOSED SESSION pursuant to 19.85(1)(e) of the Wisconsin Statutes for deliberating or negotiating the purchase of public properties, the investing of public funds, or conducting other specified public business, whenever competitive or bargaining reasons require a closed session:

Closed session was not required and no action was taken.

Agenda Item #7 RECONVENE into Open Session to Take Action on Closed Session Items, If Necessary
Motion__________Second______________to reconvene

Closed session was not required and no action was taken.

Updates-given by Fitzgerald

• Wausau Center Mall Planning

In final stages of putting together estimates for street and coordinating infrastructure needed. The plan is to apply for a federal grant that could be used towards these costs.

• N Riverfront Unified Site Plan

The department heads recently toured the area to help outline what would remain park land, boundaries for parcels and engineering for extension of N River Dr. The goal would to be have that area in a developable state in 2021.

• Wausau Cares Loan and Grant Program for Small Businesses

There are still grants and loans available. To date they have given out $67,000 in grants and $62,000 in loans with other applications in the process. McDevco is still accepting applications and there is no end date set at this time.

• Community Information Meeting on Thomas Street Phase 2 Remnant Property Developments (Aedifix Holdings) Set for August 17, 2020 at 6:30 p.m. at Riverside Park

Staff coordinated with the neighborhood group to set up the meeting at Riverside Park on August 17th at 6:30pm.

Adjournment

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

Adjournment Time: 6:51 p.m.