

# MINUTES

## Economic Development Committee Meeting

*Date / Time:* Tuesday, October 7, 2025, at 5:30 P.M. | *Meeting called to order by* Lukens at 5:30 P.M.

### In Attendance

**Members Present:** Carol Lukens, Chad Henke, Tom Neal, Terry Kilian, Victoria Tierney

**Staff Present:** Randy Fifrlick, Patrick Gatterman, Atty. Anne Jacobson, Eric Lindman, Lou Larson, Mayor Doug Diny, Brad Lenz, Shannon Graff

*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 – Public Comment

Several residents provided public comment on **Agenda Item 6**, expressing concern about any proposal to rezone 1300 Cleveland back to Industrial. Residents emphasized their preference for the city to focus on environmental cleanup and pursue residential development for the property. Resident Speakers (approximate comment times):

- |                                  |                           |                          |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Resident Alford 5:39 and 6:09 | 5. Resident Kainz 5:52    | 9. Resident Harness 6:02 |
| 2. Resident 5:42                 | 6. Resident Radtke 5:54   | 10. Resident Miller 6:04 |
| 3. Resident Thao 5:45            | 7. Resident Gajewski 5:55 | 11. Resident Gau 6:06    |
| 4. Resident Stevens 5:48         | 8. Resident Lewis 6:00    | 12. Resident Scheff 6:07 |

### Agenda Item 2 – Approval of Minutes from September 2, 2025, Meeting

**Motion by Neal, second by Kilian to approve September 2, 2025 meeting minutes. Motion carried 5-0.**

### Agenda Item 3 – Discussion and possible action on N 2nd St Request for Information

Fifrlick reported that Gizo is not interested in moving forward and requested committee direction. Options presented included:

1. Issue another RFI with a longer but definitive deadline or
2. Leave the RFI open-ended on the website and review proposals as they come.

Kilian stated her preference for a defined deadline, noting that a nearby business owner felt having a timeline would provide clarity for making decisions about remaining or relocating. Based on those concerns, Kilian expressed support for Option 1 (releasing another RFI with a set deadline).

Neal disagreed, noting that while the property is not currently in high demand, it has potential due to its location on a high-traffic corridor. He suggested placing a large sign on the property to advertise availability and expressed support for an open-ended approach.

**Motion by Henke to proceed with Option 1—releasing another RFI with a definitive deadline.** However, he indicated he could support either option. Henke also voiced support for placing a sign on the property.

**Tierney seconded the motion.**

Neal raised a concern about what would occur if no proposals were submitted, stating that the committee might end up revisiting the same issue. He indicated he would vote against Option 1.

Kilian reiterated that business owners in the area did not wish to wait indefinitely.

**Motion carried 4-1, with Neal dissenting.**

### Agenda Item 4 – Discussion and possible action on the Property Redevelopment Policy aka Property Disposition Policy

Fifrlick presented revisions to the Property Redevelopment Program, noting that changes were made to provide additional clarity and to set clear expectations for the purchase and sale of City-owned property for redevelopment. The revised version, included in the packet, highlighted changes in red that reflected staff updates following prior committee discussion.

Fifrick also reported that they are exploring additional methods to market City-owned properties beyond the City's website and on-site signage. While no new marketing measures have been added to the policy at this time, options are still being evaluated.

Kilian inquired who determines appropriateness under the program and questioned whether a city ordinance requires property owned or purchased by the City to be directed to a specific committee.

Tierney noted that the revised program reads as if *all properties* come through the Economic Development (ED) Committee.

Henke clarified that if the plan is for a property to return to the tax rolls, it should come through ED, but if the intended use is public/non-taxable, then the matter should go to the Infrastructure Committee.

**Motion by Tierny, second by Henke to approve Property Redevelopment Policy. Motion carried 5-0**

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### **Agenda Item 5 – Discussion and possible action on approving the city's next Poet Laureate**

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Lenz presented the Wausau Arts Commission's recommendation of Mai Kao Hang for the next Poet Laureate, with Barry Liss named as the alternate.

It was noted that the Arts Commission's subcommittee/panel reviewed the applicants' work, which was included in the meeting packet. The panel for this term consisted of a professor of creative writing at UWSP, the City's current Poet Laureate, and a volunteer member of the Arts Commission.

Background information was also provided, including the 2020 Resolution establishing the Poet Laureate program and outlining the selection process. The Request for Proposals (RFP) used to recruit applicants was included in the packet and detailed the program's purpose and selection criteria.

As specified in the RFP, the Poet Laureate serves a two-year term and receives a modest stipend of \$400 total to assist with expenses.

**Motion by Neal, second by Tierney to accept the committee's recommendation for poet laureate and alternate. Motion carried 5-0**

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### **Agenda Item 6 – Update on history and environmental cleanup of city-owned at 1300 Cleveland Ave**

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Public Works Director Lindman reported that the site investigation is complete, and the city is preparing a Remedial Action Options Report (RAOR), with a presentation scheduled for November. He noted funding opportunities exist for remediation and confirmed plans to form a Green Team, similar to the mall redevelopment process.

Kilian asked about cleanup standards, noting the DNR expects site closure, but cleanup levels vary. She emphasized the importance of securing funding, raised personal concerns about health impacts in the neighborhood, and stressed the need for redevelopment that reflects community pride.

The mayor reaffirmed support for non-industrial uses along the river and opposition to industrial redevelopment at Cleveland Avenue. Henke asked about the process for reviewing larger parcels.

Fifrick reviewed past development history and noted that rezoning and planning efforts have consistently prioritized non-industrial uses for the site. Future land use will also be considered as part of the 2027 Comprehensive Plan update.

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### **Agenda Item 7 – Discussion and possible action on past development proposals and UniverCity project concepts at city-owned 1300 Cleveland Ave property**

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Fifrick provided background on the 2020 Request for Proposals (RFP), which generated four submissions: one from 3M that included industrial uses, a proposal from CPC, an affordable housing project, and a mixed housing/manufacturing proposal from Kolbe and Kolbe. The city did not advance any proposals at that time, choosing instead to focus on site remediation.

Fifrick also summarized the UniverCity Alliance student project concepts, noting they do not align with current zoning (MR-12) and were conceptual in nature rather than professional development proposals.

Lukens reported speaking with Matt Thompson from DNR and asked whether the agency is waiting for the City to establish a purpose for the site before proceeding further.

Tierney expressed that Cleveland Avenue should not be considered for industrial use.

Kilian stated she has heard repeated references to the fleet facility being located at this site. While acknowledging this committee is not engaged in rezoning, she emphasized the importance of moving toward residential cleanup and redevelopment.

Neal strongly opposed any potential rezoning to industrial and stated there would not be sufficient support from the Council for the fleet facility to be located there.

Henke echoed this position, confirming there would not be enough votes to return the property to industrial zoning. Henke requested that the Committee and public provide input to the Development Department on public engagement options.

Lukens supported these comments, highlighting her personal connection to the neighborhood and her advocacy for environmental issues. She stressed the need for affordable housing given stagnant wages and expressed interest in hearing directly from neighborhood residents.

**Direction:**

Fifrick confirmed the Committee’s consensus to develop and return with a public participation plan for the parcel.

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**Agenda Item 8 – Update on Thomas Street Infill**

Fifrick reported that test wells have been drilled, and the results are currently being processed at the lab. A report is expected by the end of the month and hopes to provide further update at November’s meeting.

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**Agenda Item 9 – Adjournment**

**Motion by Henke, second by Kilian to Adjourn. Motion Carried 5-0.**

**Meeting Adjourned at 19:08 PM**

**CITY OF WAUSAU, YouTube MEETING LINKS**

*ALL City of Wausau Meetings can be viewed at:*

- <https://www.youtube.com/@CityofWausauMeetings>

*The ED meeting from 10/07/25 can be viewed at:*

- <https://www.youtube.com/live/4n1KRDmOcaY?si=k0wkplro4epKUr-X>