

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

---

Time and Place: The Economic Development Committee met on Tuesday, January 22, 2013 at 5:00 PM in the Board Room at City Hall, 407 Grant Street, Wausau

ED Members Present: Jim Brezinski (Chair), Romey Wagner (Vice-chair), William Nagle, Lisa Rasmussen, and David Oberbeck

Others Present: Heather Wessling, Ann Werth, Mayor Tipple, Maryanne Groat, Brad Lenz, Art Romine, Bob Bradder

In accordance with Chapter 19, Wisc. Stats., notice of this meeting was posted and sent to the Daily Herald in the proper manner. Brezinski noted there was a quorum and called the meeting to order at approximately 5:00 PM.

### CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

Brezinski welcomed the members and those present for attending the meeting.

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES (DECEMBER 18, 2012)

Motion by Wagner to approve the minutes, second by Rasmussen. Motion carried unanimously 5-0.

### DEED RESTRICTION(S): FIRST RIGHT OF REFUSAL: 400 SOUTH 72<sup>ND</sup> AVENUE FROM BANK FORECLOSURE TO GRAPHIC HOUSE

Wessling said Graphic House has wished to establish a presence in the city limits in the near future. It is a great testament as the company is growing and is currently utilizing all of the space at the current location. It is a building that has been underutilized and vacant for several years.

Bradder said that there is a lot that needs to be done to the building. In the past, it was used as a warehouse, so there are a lot of facilities that need to be invested in. There will be a period of 16-24 months for preparation work. During the preparation time, the facility will be used for storage the trucks and leasing some of the cold storage space. Within 2 years, it is planned to move the whole business to the new location and then selling or leasing the current building. The facility is perfect for the operation of Graphic House. It is a large, open manufacturing space that will allow the company to continue to grow. Last month was the biggest month and was hard pressed to get all the work through the current facility.

Rasmussen motioned to waive the first right of refusal 400 South 72<sup>nd</sup> Avenue from bank foreclosure to Graphic House. Oberbeck seconded, and the motion carried unanimously 5-0.

### RIVERFRONT PLANNING PROCESS

Lenz and Werth showed a slideshow of what is currently being planned for the riverfront area. Werth said that there have been a lot of things going on in the riverfront area. Staff is working with Stantec with the EPA Grant and have identified several different things that are happening on the waterfront. Recently, Sav-O Supply was acquired. There has been a trip to the twin cities for some ideas of to drive people down to the riverfront area. The old FedEx building will remain for some inside family entertainment and will also have some outdoor seating on the waterfront. In the floodplain area, staff is working with Stantec for a meandering stream. Currently the struggle is to determine if an open creek or culvert should be used. A waterfall will be located on the side of the bridge. Another EPA grant will be applied for the southern part of the riverfront, which is a hot spot. The plan is for private and mixed small scale commercial properties. There will be a high-end residential area with a walkway. There are 3 houses, machine shop, and ABC headquarters could be potentially obtained by the city. There is a 50' railroad easement and staff is trying to get it down to a 25-30' easement to make a connection. The development team has been looking at the different pods of what should be on the waterfront and feels that it should be family orientated, have entertainment, and somewhere where people can go to have a sandwich, a drink, and sit on the waterfront.

There have been different field trips Green Bay, Milwaukee, and Stillwater to look at their waterfront. It needs to be determined what is going to be put on these areas to move forward with any grants. A forensic structural engineer has been hired to look at the Sav-O Supply site and there seems to be interest in making that a residential area.

Nagle asked if there are any plans for Barker Stewart Island or plans to finish a pedestrian access for bikers and walkers. Werth said that Barker Stewart Island is the perfect place for a children's or logging museum. It would require a 3<sup>rd</sup> connection. There has been permission to hang a bridge along the side of the railroad bridge. There is already a connection from Bull Falls Park and a connection from the eye clinic. There has been a huge increase in people using Barker Stewart Island since the thorn was removed. Nagle said that he thought there was an easement on 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue on to the River Edge on the north side of Eastbay. Rasmussen asked if it is the area where MPX has the materials. Nagle answered that is between that and Eastbay.

Rasmussen said that she had a few concerns regarding the design as it looks very different from the design charette. It looks like there are places for family fun, parking, and residential, but not commercial and mixed use. A large part of the property will not pay the property taxes. Rasmussen said it should be a northern extension of the downtown. There is high-end residential area downtown that is not full. Werth corrected by indicating they are full and said that people are always asking for high-end residential areas. Rasmussen said that it could have a better use. Werth said that the lots are too narrow to build on and has contaminated soil, which is why the green space has been chosen. Rasmussen said she has no issues if it is not buildable. Werth pointed out areas on the map that will be commercial and mixed use properties. Rasmussen said that during the charette there were walk areas, kayak rentals, and visitor centers. Rasmussen also said that staff shouldn't get caught up in green space and to forget about property taxes. Werth said staff has been thinking about the tax aspect. Rasmussen asked what role the committee will play in the riverfront project. Werth said that in the future, the committee will be brought a concept of the plan into closed session. Wesling asked about the review of the RFP. Werth said that before that goes out. Groat said that the city will retain ownership of all this property and entering into leasing agreements, similar to the mall.

Wagner asked if the green space would be a park or would it stay as it is. Werth said that the discussions haven't gone that far. Wagner said that he would like to state that it should stay like it is and not be designated as a park. Rasmussen added that once it is classified as a park, it is hard to reclassify it later on. Nagle said that it may be good to keep in mind that an office building could go between the commercial area between the Dudley Tower and the Eye Clinic. Wagner said it is not for parks, but for green space. Nagle said to not forget about where the demand may be.

## **ESTABLISH NEXT MEETING AGENDA ITEMS AND OTHER COMMUNICATION/UPDATE**

The next meeting will be scheduled for Tuesday, February 19 at 3:00 p.m. Wesling said that committee may want to discuss the items that we listed in the email, such as: TIF policy development, Wausau cityscape logo adoption and establishment (recommendation forwarded from ED), two commercial rehab projects to be approved by ED, design standards, and RFP old incubator building.

## **ADJOURN**

Wagner moved to adjourn. Oberbeck seconded. All voted to adjourn. Meeting ended at 5:25 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Chairperson  
Jim Brezinski