

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Time and Place: The Economic Development Committee met on Thursday, October 16, 2014, at 4:00 p.m. in Room 231 of the Entrepreneurial & Education Center, 100 North 72nd Avenue, Wausau

ED Members Present: Tom Neal (Vice Chair), Romey Wagner, David Oberbeck and Lisa Rasmussen

ED Members Absent: Bill Nagle (Chair)

Others Present: Ann Werth, Brad Lenz, Megan Lawrence, Gary Gisselman, Allen Wesolowski, Jim Warsaw, Sara Guild, Mark Goffin, Chris Menard, Sara Marquardt, Jared Adkins, Pat Peckham, Mark Kordus, Stuart Krahn, Rick Binder, Debra Ryan and Keene Winters

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

CALL TO ORDER

Wagner noted there was a quorum and called the meeting to order at approximately 4:10 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON MATTERS APPEARING ON THE AGENDA

Debra Ryan, 702 Elm Street, expressed her personal opinion on agreements and staff members.

Neal arrived at 4:16 p.m. and Wagner turned the meeting over to Vice Chair Neal.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM 9/18/14

Rasmussen motioned to approve the minutes. Oberbeck seconded and the motion carried unanimously 4-0.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT WITH LINETEC (725 SOUTH 75TH AVENUE)

This item was taken out of order.

Lawrence reviewed the development agreement with the Committee highlighting the requirements for jobs, square footage and the sewer agreement. Rasmussen asked if City standards and inspections would still apply on the sewer portion and Wesolowski answered yes. A Committee discussion was held regarding the maintaining of the jobs requirement beyond the 5 years in the agreement. Oberbeck and Wagner stated that just having a jobs requirement without asking to maintain the jobs is not good enough. Lawrence stated that 5 years is the standard set forth by the State and is found in the WEDC grant requirements. Oberbeck asked about the length of the return on investment. Staff stated 18 years. Rasmussen felt 18 years was too long. Neal stated that the project has impact on other businesses also. He felt jobs are important but not the only thing.

Rasmussen mentioned that the 1 calendar year statement in the claw back puts a burden on the City to follow through. Non-committee member Winters stated that 18 years is too long but 10 years is more likely and further asked about how much risk the City is willing to maintain. Wagner requested semi-annual or quarterly reporting. Chris Menard from Linetec mentioned that the WEDC grant does include a ramp up requirement for jobs as well as annual reporting. Neal asked Menard to comment on stability of Linetec. Menard stated that during the economic downturn, Linetec was in a better economic position due to the fact that they can accommodate whatever projects that are presented to them.

Wagner made a motion to approve the development agreement with the added ramp up verbiage from the WEDC grant. Rasmussen seconded.

Oberbeck asked if the WEDC verbiage requires Linetec to maintain the jobs after 5 years. Menard said no. Oberbeck stated that the Committee needs to set standards for all agreements and be fiscally minded. Winters

suggested splitting the difference. Wagner felt the Committee should stand with the WEDC but also set standards for future developments. It was clarified that the motion included adding the verbiage from the WEDC grant.

Oberbeck offered an amendment to add an additional 5 year requirement to maintain the 93 jobs. The amendment failed for lack of a second. Motion then passed 4-0.

Lawrence questioned if the Committee would like to see the agreement again before it goes to Council and the answer was no.

UPDATE ON CITY DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENTS WITH A SUMMARY OF AGREEMENT TERMS AND TRACKING SYSTEM

This item was taken out of order.

Werth provided an update highlighting that many companies developed more jobs than required and that 2 agreements have issues. Those 2 companies will be invited to the next ED meeting to discuss further. Oberbeck stated that there needs to be a system of checks and balances. Wagner requested that all active agreements be reported to the Committee on a regular basis highlighting who is out of compliance and the plan of action. Werth stated that it will be on every month. Winters requested that Staff add the agreement information from 1999-2005.

Non-committee member Jim Warsaw mentioned that if MCDEVCO loses the CWED contract they may not be able to continue to administer the City loan fund. Rasmussen stated that the Committee should develop the standards and best practices that should be in these agreements. Staff was directed to add the Council approval date to the Krasowski item.

UPDATE ON THE RIVERFRONT PROJECT

Mark Kordus of Stantec highlighted the timeline information and summary notes of where the project is at. Specific areas included Planning, Site Clean Up, Stream, First Street Extension and the Shoreline, Wharf and Bike Trail. It was also mentioned that the stream is in and the waterfall should be in on Friday. Wagner asked about the project pace and Kordus responded that it is going well. Further, he mentioned that the project started as a small piece and has now grown to include much more, especially regarding site clean-up.

Neal reiterated his desire to see marketing and branding ideas for the area further stating that he does not want to see anything "dry" going out. Rasmussen stated that public feedback has been positive and asked at what point we should re-engage the public. Lenz said that there are and will be more opportunities for public input. Rasmussen said we should make it a big community discussion. Committee agreed that the story needs to be clear, concise, exciting and strong. Wagner and Rasmussen felt that the story needs to come not just from the City but also from young professionals and others. Werth stated that Adrenalign has been tasked with coming up with preliminary marketing and branding ideas.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR PROPERTY LOCATED AT 1500 GRAND AVENUE (KWIK TRIP)

Lawrence stated that there are 2 businesses interested in the site and a Citizen Selection Committee will be utilized. Lawrence will develop a scoring system. Rasmussen asked about the reach of advertising the RFPs and requested that a sign be placed on the site. Oberbeck and Neal will come back with suggestions on possible RFP advertising avenues. Staff will ask area developers for suggestions.

Oberbeck stated that future developments on Grand Avenue need to take parking and traffic into account. Rasmussen felt that Grand Avenue needs some attention as it will be a corridor for future tourism. Wagner would like to see the top 2-3 options. Oberbeck felt that we should focus on the highest and best use and increased value.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON THE APPLICATION FOR AMERICA'S BEST COMMUNITIES COMPETITION

Sara Guild from the Chamber introduced the competition sponsored by Dish Network and Frontier to stimulate growth and revitalization. It is a multi-million dollar competition with a 3 year time commitment and open to communities with populations of 9500-80,000. Step one is due in January and there are multiple levels of competition. The Chamber is taking the lead to tell the story with a focus on the downtown and riverfront, Lawrence has secured the grant writer from NTC to assist and Becker Communications has agreed to help with a video. Jim Warsaw, also from the Chamber, added that it will be important to emphasize the “but for” side of the downtown development. There is a \$15,000 match requirement.

Rasmussen stated that Wausau used to be a city divided by a river, but not anymore as it is the river that brings us together. She further emphasized that Wausau used to be a City of East versus West and that does not seem to be the case anymore. The Committee and audience felt that those statements would be ideal to add to the application.

Non-committee member Debra Ryan felt education should be emphasized.

A motion was made by Rasmussen to approve participation in the America’s Best Communities Competition with investigation into alternative sources of funding the match requirement. Motion was seconded by Oberbeck and passed 4-0.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON THE APPLICATION FOR THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT INVESTMENT GRANT

Lawrence presented the application for the WEDC grant which is a program that supports redevelopment efforts with an emphasis on downtown community-driven efforts. The grant would be \$500,000 and is due in January. Mark Goffin, owner of Elk Creek Architectural, added that the grant gives preference to historic preservation projects. Goffin will present his proposal for the Wausau Club at the November Economic Development Committee Meeting. He stated that this grant would help alleviate the City risk.

Rasmussen made the motion to approve moving forward with the application. Wagner seconded and the motion passed 4-0.

ADJOURN

Wagner motioned to adjourn. Rasmussen seconded and the motion passed 4-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:59 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Vice Chairperson
Tom Neal