

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

Date and Time: Tuesday, December 4, 2018 at 5:15 p.m., Council Chambers

**Economic Development Members Present:** Neal, Rasmussen, Gisselman, Peckham and Martens

Others Present: Schock, Mielke, Jacobson, Groat and Plaisance

Other Council Members Present:

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 pm.

### **Approval of the Minutes from 11/07/2018.**

No changes.

*Motion by Peckham, second by Gisselman to approve minutes with no changes. Motion passed 5-0*

*Committee agreed to move Agenda Item – Discussion and Possible Action on Economic Development Marketing to first agenda item.*

### **Discussion and Possible Action on Economic Development Marketing**

Schock introduced Elizabeth Knight of Aplomb PR. Knight presented an update on the goals and accomplishments so far on the 2018 Marketing campaign which positions the city and leverages the community and individuals through social media, website articles and ambassadors. There are 8 featured stories since May that have been released regarding Wausau's quality of life and amenities. The December story will deal with the growing bicycling scene in Wausau and the progress of Wausau being a great destination city. The engagement on Facebook has been very good and the campaign is proving the right mix of engagement. Schock and Knight have been working on collaborations with students at Wausau West and DC Everest high schools which includes interacting with a different audience, the students, parents and teachers. The students are creating videos which will be continuously be uploaded to our Wausome website, YouTube channel and social media outlets. The engagement has spread well here in the Wausau area, but also in the targeted regions, such as; Chicago, Milwaukee, Madison and Minneapolis. The Wausau Region Chamber of Commerce, Wausau Pilot & Review and Wausau Neighbors publication have all shared and used these articles which creates good momentum and future opportunities. The engagement has shown the viewers passion on the subject and the audience genuinely wants to get involved. Knight believes that for the future the City should continue with the video idea and possibly have professional produced videos done. She also thinks that a "submit your own" story experience would work to engage more people and continue to build audience. Lastly, she believes the City should start engaging on the social media, Instagram outlet. Schock is proud of the campaign and thinks it has developed a great story book that can be shared, promoted and continuously enhanced. He thinks the City can start diversifying our stories and work with the AARP and the aging population, along with the youth of the area, like the high school video production project. The Economic & Community Development and Planning Department has leftover funds and he thinks the department can utilize them for continued marketing into 2019. The administration has discussed budget modifications to move the funds to 2019 marketing and is asking the committee to approve the staff to release an RFP for marketing services around \$15,000 and then move those funds out to the 2019 marketing campaign. Rasmussen agrees and said the Wausome campaign has a very positive vibe. She, as the finance committee chair, would like to see this continue and is interested in using the funds that are left over for this continued marketing success. Neal suggests that we partner with other local community organizations to share videos and marketing efforts.

*Motion by Peckham, second by Rasmussen to have staff move ahead with taking the budget modification to the Finance Committee and then releasing an RFP for the 2019 marketing campaign. Motion passed 5-0.*

### **Discussion and Possible Action on the Proposal Received for the Riverlife Area South of Fulton Street.**

Schock explained that there was a revised, refined site plan in the ED packet. Dave Johnson presents that there has been a fair amount of progress since the last meeting. The developer team developed a program to look at the cost and selling of the project which arrived around 3 million dollars for 12 units at \$266 per square foot which he then explained was extremely high and they would possibly need city support. They are looking for one million dollars of TIF funds which would then get paid off in 7 years or less. Schock showed committee members that the plan was refined in the areas that were as of concern, the gating and fencing around the parking and private patio area. Staff will continue the dialogue with the developer and work on a more final number and plan. Rasmussen asked about the site prep and if the same process would be used as the WOW building where there was earth removal done. Schock thought there would be, but suggested that the developer may benefit from this process. Rasmussen then explained that her thoughts of city participation would be in the means of footings, site prep or site structure if we were using reverse TIF funds and Schock thought that further discussion on the process

should be taken into closed session. Neal agreed and suggested that staff continue to work with proposer on the process and detail.

**Discussion and Possible Action on the Proposal Received for the Riverfront Concession Building.**

Schock presented the only proposer for the operation of the newly built concession building being Briq's Soft Serve. Kevin Briquelet Miller spoke on behalf of the family owned and operated business saying that this opportunity would be valuable to many businesses and family environment in this location. He thinks it is a good fit for the business and the City. They would plan to hold special events down the road and would look to work with other local businesses. Neal thinks it's a great place to gather down on the Riverfront and what better than by a park. Rasmussen says that the Merrill Avenue Briq's is such a success story that she would welcome the great partnership and participation. Their brand recognition and following is already there. Martens asked Briquelet about the building layout and if everything will work for their business needs and Briquelet answered that there were a few minor changes, such as the coolers and freezers inside the building, but otherwise yes.

***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:***

➔ **Discussion and Possible Action on the Proposal Received for the Riverlife Area South of Fulton Street.**

➔ **Discussion and Possible Action on the Proposal Received for the Riverfront Concession Building.**

**ROLL CALL VOTE – Neal, Rasmussen, Gisselman, Peckham and Martens.**

**Others Present: Schock, Groat, Plaisance, Jacobson and Mielke.**

*Motion made by Peckham, second by Rasmussen to go into a closed session. Motion passed 5-0.*

*Motion made by Peckham, second by Martens to go back into Open Session. Motion passed 5-0.*

**RECONVENE INTO OPEN SESSION, if necessary**

**Open Session Action on Closed Session item(s):**

No discussion.

**Update on Current Projects.**

- Westside Battery – Schock continues to work with Urban Street Bistro through financing steps and the process with the SBA (Small Business Association). There is importance to close on real estate and the business loan at the same time. Urban Street Bistro is aware that taxes will be paid by them for 2018 in the purchase price. Schock remains confident in the project.
- HOM Furniture/Wausau Center Mall – This subject has been well discussed and the purchase of the old Younkers building to HOM Furniture has taken place and renovations will begin. HOM Representatives talked about a timeline of opening in the spring. Schock explained that they will have new signage and lighting and they are currently working with inspections on the regulations. Martens asked if we are sharing any of the design and market studies that we have done lately. Schock conveyed that HOM is aware of the studies and the redevelopment plan ideas and thinks that their vision fits well within our long term plans, including mixed use buildings with some retail. Regarding the mall itself, administration is working on addressing the rent payment issue with the owners and are waiting for the finalized recommendations from Toole Design in the new year. Gisselman asked if there is any update on the Sears building and Schock explained that the dialogue is ongoing but it's too early for actionable proposals and staff wanted to see if the ED committee was interested in sending out another RFP for the site. There have been interested parties and staff is waiting on any proposals from them, but there has been positive interest in the building. Rasmussen thinks that a key part of this process are the study recommendations and if we wait we can create a plan with this momentum. Schock agrees and thinks it is strategic for us to think about the next steps.
- Parkway 52 Design Services – In earlier discussions this committee and staff have talked about improving the median and landscaping in areas along East Stewart Avenue. The ED department would like to develop an RFP to frame the dialogue on expectations and then would be on the CISM agenda for December and then released. Gisselman asked Schock if there would have to be dual approvals and Schock explained that this item originally went through the ED committee. Rasmussen has sensitivity and caution on this topic, but thinks if we have cooperation between CISM and ED and if Engineering and the Parks Departments communicate well and drive the project she is supportive of ED releasing the RFP. She thinks that with the right team on this ED can work with their feedback.

- Old Incubator Site – 1301 Cleveland Avenue – Schock would like ED to discuss the idea of issuing an RFP for this site. He spoke on the issue of the original acquisition and environmental issues in which he recommended the City to have a Phase 1 testing done after the RFP goes out and we see what proposals come back and what industries are involved.

Public Comment: Tom Killian, 133 East Thomas Street, explained that this was the former Conner Forest Industries site and that he asked for records through the City of Wausau and the DNR. His research found that this site historically had environmental issues and he urged the City to do a thorough Phase 1 testing especially for a residential development.

Peckham assumed that any proposer would ask about environmental and Schock explained that if the site was used for another industrial use they may not need extra testing. Schock's question to the committee was do we do the testing now or release the RFP and depending on what proposals come back, do the testing after? According to Schock, the City's Environmental Engineer suggested doing the RFP first to. Neal would like staff to add documentation to the packet. Rasmussen believed that it's better to know ahead of time. She also stated that the RFP should give known history on the environmental issues or restrict the use of residential. Schock understood but explained that the City doesn't regulate the use of permits, the DNR does. Rasmussen thought the staff should wait and find out more about the historical environmental findings and then do a pre-inspection, similar to what is done with a home sale. Neal thought that the more intelligence the City has up front the more valuable the information is. Gisselman thought that the City needs to be conscious of the money spent by the proposers and the City needs to know what our land, or inventory, holds. He thought that staff should get more information and agendaize this item for next month's meeting. Martens and Peckham agreed that we need to know more and that information will help define the uses for the property. No committee action needed. Schock agreed that the consensus of the meeting was that staff should move forward with the Phase 1 environmental study.

#### **Discussion and Possible Action on the Economic Development Strategic Statement**

Schock is looking to incorporate past and current comments in the statement and then release. The administration reviewed the document, along with all department heads. The statement includes goals and specific areas we are working on, such as amenities, partnerships and the process of incorporating youth and the aging populations into our projects. Peckham suggested one change in the third to last statement. Currently the sentence reads, Embrace economic and social diversity which especially engages both local youth and aging populations..... He would like that sentence to read, Embrace economic, social and ethnic diversity which especially engages both local youth and aging populations... Rasmussen likes the action words used in this exceptional document.

#### **Discussion and Possible Action on the January 2019 Meeting Date**

The normal meeting date would be New Year's Day. Rasmussen asked if we should use the third Thursday as our typical back up date and suggested that staff poll the committee members on other possible dates. Schock explained that there are a number of moving parts to projects currently and he would like to square things up as early as possible if something arises. The committee agreed on January 3<sup>rd</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> depending on scheduled finance and council meetings.

#### **Special Instructions or Directives to Staff:**

*None*

*Motion by Rasmussen, second by Martens to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed 5-0.*

Adjournment Time: 6:52 p.m.