

Meeting Minutes
Economic Development Committee
Tuesday, May 29, 2012 - 4:30 p.m. - City Council Chambers

Members present: Morack, O'Connell, Steinhorst, Schirpke, Romberg, Tate and Shaw.

Also present: Mayor Gary Henke, Kent Hager, Paul Hanlon, Naletta Burr, Ann Hunt, Ken Roberts, and Tiffany Schulz along with one of our younger residents.

1. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Morack at 4:30 p.m. The agenda was adopted.
2. The Committee continued their discussion about options for the future development of the City's downtown river front property. Each person present was asked for their opinion. The following are some of the individual comments given:
 - There is no need to rush out and have a development on the property just to say that progress is being made.
 - There are a lot of mixed feelings on the Committee and in the community about what the future of the property should be. There should not be only low and moderate income housing on the site. A combination of senior housing and other public facilities is a more appropriate use of the land.
 - It would be nice to work with Todd Hutchison to develop a workable long-range plan. If it takes ten years or more to fully implement the plan then that is alright.
 - It may be best to start with a "phased" development with the assistance of a private developer. We need to be flexible with the options for the land.
 - There are opportunities for retail development if it is done correctly. We need development that is taxable. There may be an opportunity to have a unique "nitch market" developed on the land such as what some other communities have done by promoting their history or a particular locally produced product.
 - It may be best to focus on other location opportunities in the community to support and develop income assisted housing. One of those options could be The Villa apartments property.
 - The use of students to develop a concept plan for the property may be appropriate.
 - We need to wait for the economy to turn around. It would be best if the land was developed with higher end duplexes or condominiums.
 - We have never been in a hurry to develop this property particularly given that it costs nearly nothing to wait. There has never been a definitive answer given about the real need for additional senior or income assisted housing in our community.
 - There is no need for additional park space in our City.
 - It would be good to get some more advice from a private developer.

- If the development of this property were to utilize federal tax credits for multi-family housing, then you are looking at a project that is at least two years out.
 - Low and moderate income housing must be understood for what it really is. Given that you can make nearly \$50,000 with a family of four and still qualify for assisted housing, then this type of housing is better defined as “worker housing.” That is largely what our community is, workers. Given that, income assisted housing would serve our community’s residents very well. It is not “low income housing” that people typically think of.
 - The need is to bring people into our economy to benefit our community. Housing may not do that. Perhaps an art market would be appropriate. We could draw off of our history. A community center that focuses on the performing arts. A larger local food market, are all possibilities.
 - Senior housing attracts older people to our community. They bring a lot of outside income into the local economy. When we talk about new public resources being established, the City has virtually no funds available to accomplish construction of a public facility, let alone having funds to operate a new resource. Given state law, the only way to financially accomplish the construction and operation of a new public facility is thru a referendum.
 - Remember that one of the developers said that having an “open canvas” to work on the property without a definitive prior plan in place gives the developer a lot of lead-way to accomplish what the developer determines is economically feasible.
 - Time is on our side. The economy will improve and when it does, we will have a better grasp on where we will go with development of the property.
3. It was the consensus of those present that this matter needs further consideration. Kent was asked to work with Todd Hutchison to develop a framework we can work with and consider further. Going thru a deliberation process will benefit us all.
 4. The guest speaker for the meeting was introduced. Naletta Burr is the Community Account Manager for Economic and Community Development for the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC). The WEDC is largely composed of the functions of the former Wisconsin Department of Commerce. The WEDC functions solely for the economic development of the state. The intent of Naletta’s position is to develop a better connection to the communities in the state and to assist those communities with their access to state resources and technical assistance. We still have our Regional Account Managers like we did when there was a Department of Commerce, but now our Regional Account Manager is with the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation. Our Regional Account Manager is Melissa Hunt. Naletta is one of four Community Account Managers in the State. Naletta updated the Committee on the programs and services that are available from the state. The Committee thanked Naletta for her time and assistance.
 5. Administrator Hager updated the Committee regarding his activities over the course of the last month and answered questions.

6. At the next Committee meeting in June, the program will be Shannon Full, President and CEO of the Fox Cities Chamber of Commerce. Shannon will be providing the Committee with an update on implementation of the recently completed Strategic Plan.
7. The Committee considered having a round table discussion with our local business people. It was agreed that it would probably be more productive to have a one-on-one discussion. In these talks, we could visit about challenges the industry faces, successes they have had and to get any ideas about how our community can help the business be successful. Are we doing what needs to be done? The Committee will be following up on this matter.
8. O'Connell/Steinhorst to adjourn. Carried 7-0. The meeting adjourned at 6:55 pm.

Kent Hager
City Administrator