

Economic Development Committee
Tuesday, October 29, 2013 - 4:30 p.m. - City Council Chambers

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

Also present: Mayor Henke, Administrator Hager, Karen Gething, Terry Bomier, Beth Hutchinson, and Diane Montz from the *County Post East*.

1. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Morack at 4:30 p.m. O'Connell/Schirpke to adopt the agenda. Carried 8-0.
2. Chairman Morack welcomed Terry Bomier, Principal Broker of Bomier Properties, Inc. Terry reviewed his activities over the course of the past six months when his company had the listing for the City downtown river front property. Terry made numerous contacts with developers in the region. He reported that several of them were familiar with the property. Terry suggested that the City may need to be more pro-active in encouraging property owners on the other side of the river to improve their property. Given the surrounding structures near the property, Terry suggested that the City may want to be more open to development proposals of various types and characters. The Committee commented that we are open to alternative development proposals, just not industrial or manufacturing development on the property. The Committee noted that we are not in a race to develop the property. The City is willing to consider all proposals that are offered for the development of the property. A motion was made by Steinhorst and seconded by O'Connell to approve the extension of the current six-month listing contract with Bomier Properties for another six months. Carried 8-0.
3. Beth Hutchison from Familiar Grounds visited with the Committee about her business and observations regarding our downtown. Beth has been in business for 17 years. She recently cooperated with a small local business to help them get started by renting out her businesses' kitchen. She also is working in partnership with the New London Charter School to establish a Bulldog sports store. She has been working in partnership with numerous local stores by "cross-marketing" with the use of joint flyers and sharing coupon promotional efforts together. She reports that digital marketing is very important and that a presence on Face Book is critical. It also helps to cross-market with other businesses using Face Book. She suggests that City residents don't need to be afraid of the opening of any new business in our community. It is important to never stand in the way of someone wishing to try a new business idea. We all need to be open and welcoming. Beth was thanked for sharing her observations with the Committee.
4. The Committee visited with Karen Gething about the status of the "Fishing Village" development proposal for the City downtown river front property. Karen thanked the Committee for the opportunity to visit with them and also stated that Mr. George Seater of GRS Development said to say hello. Karen reported that after further research, their initial proposal for high-end condominiums for the property was not feasible, but rather higher quality apartments were more appropriate for the property.

She suggested that when the sea wall is repaired on the other side of the river, it would be an appropriate time to consider construction of a trail out over the river along with some attractive landscaping. She and Mr. Seater are also looking at development options on other vacant river-front property that may complement the Fishing Village concept. The Committee thanked Karen for the update and wished her and Mr. Seater good luck.

5. Chairman Morack, Mayor Henke and Alderman Steinhorst informed the Committee of their attendance at various educational sessions while attending the annual League of Wisconsin Municipalities meeting which was held recently in Green Bay.
6. Chairman Morack, Mayor Henke and Administrator Hager informed the Committee about their attendance at the “debriefing” session with the eight sight selectors that toured our area. This effort was undertaken by the Fox Cities Regional Partnership. The eight individuals who visited our area represent over 100 years of work in the site selector business. They toured our area for three days. They commented very positively about the quality of our work force and our schools, particularly Fox Valley Technical College. Very few negatives were identified by the consultants. The visiting site selectors left with a new understanding of our area.
7. Administrator Hager informed the Committee that the proposal the City delivered to the owners of Shiocton Cut Stock was well received, however at this time, they are going to be concentrating on growing their business at their current location. They reported that they are keeping our offer on the table for future consideration.
8. Administrator Hager reviewed his monthly report with the Committee.
9. Chairman Morack informed the Committee that the next regular meeting will be Tuesday, November 26th. Administrator Hager and Laurie Shaw will arrange for a speaker for the next meeting.
10. O’Connell/Schirpke to adjourn. Carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 5:40 pm.

Kent Hager
City Administrator