

**CITY OF ANOKA
HOUSING AND REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
WORKSESSION MEETING MINUTES – JANUARY 12, 2015**

Call to Order: Chair Carl Youngquist called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Roll Call: Commissioners present were: Chair Carl Youngquist, Dave Bonthuis, Lynn Hopkins, Lori Manzoline. Absent: Merrywayne Elvig. Staff present were: Housing Manager Darin Berger.

Approval of the Agenda: MOTION BY COMMISSIONER, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER, TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS PRESENTED.

UPON A VOICE VOTE, MOTION CARRIED.

2014 HRA Accomplishments: Mr. Berger gave an overview of the HRA's accomplishments to help start the discussion amongst the Board in regards to 2014:

2014 Accomplishments

- Demolished and prepared site for redevelopment at 1833 2nd Avenue and 100 Monroe Street
- Adopted criteria for expending HRA funds over the next five years
- Successfully found a buyer to relocate the historic home at 210 Monroe Street, making way for potential redevelopment
- Made \$100,000 commercial loan commitment to It's About Sleep for renovation of 633 Main Street East
- Acquired 1800 2nd Avenue in order to further redevelopment opportunities in the South Central Business District
- Acquired 117 Benton Street to allow for potential future redevelopment at the Benton Street and Ferry Street corner
- Provided homeowners with 10 home improvement loans
- Facilitated the North Suburban Home Improvement Show, which drew it's largest number of attendees since its inception

Action Requested: Identify at least five accomplishments by reflecting on 2014.

Mr. Berger noted the home improvement loans is down seven from last year. He said he has spoken with the Center for Energy and Environment (CEE) who state how complimentary Anoka is with advertising their programs through the City newsletter so it is interesting that the number of loans are down. He said he is unsure how many actually apply versus how many approved but said he will be watching this a little closer to see if they can identify some trends.

Commissioner Bonthuis inquired about the history of CEE. Mr. Berger said the HRA has been working with CEE for about 10 years and they usually process 20-25 loans per year so this figure is surprising. He said he will ask more about the next few applications and processes and check

in a little more with CEE over the next few months. Mr. Berger said he would like to see more loans because it results in more improvements within the City.

Chair Youngquist noted equity is needed in order to obtain a loan so this should increase more as the market and economy improves.

Commissioner Manzoline said some loans require matching dollars, which could be part of the issue as well.

Mr. Berger shared an update on It's About Sleep and some delays on completing their construction.

Chair Youngquist said he would like to add one more accomplishment regarding adopting criteria for expending HRA funds for the past five years.

Commissioner Bonthuis suggested combining the two acquisition bullet points then adding the criteria adoption as an established accomplishment. The Board agreed.

2015 HRA Goals: Mr. Berger gave an overview of possible goals to help start the discussion amongst the Board in regards to 2015:

2015 Goals

- Formulate and implement strategic plan for South Central Business District (SCBD)
 - Find buyer/end user for Riverway Clinic site
 - Acquire additional properties for potential redevelopment
 - Continue to work with the SCBD Strategic Plan Committee to carry out their vision in accordance with the Housing and Redevelopment Authority's vision
- Continue to acquire properties through Scattered Site Replacement Program as they come available
- Promote the maintenance and renovation of commercial buildings and facilities for the expansion of the tax base and quality jobs
- Establish TIF district in the South Central Business District
- Work with the Planning Commission to redevelop sites in the South Central Business District planning area and rezone properties consistent with the study

Mr. Berger noted the SCBD Committee actually disbanded and suggested they change the last bullet point and add Planning Commission with the SCBD and not separate them as outlined.

Commissioner Manzoline asked if Medved/Riverplace is a HRA or Council goal. Mr. Berger confirmed this project is a Council goal.

Chair Youngquist suggested adding coordinating monitoring of the South Ferry Street Corridor with the Planning Commission and City Council.

Commissioner Manzoline asked if the scattered site program includes desolate properties the private market is not interested in acquiring. Mr. Berger said that is correct, adding they are still paying attention to this activity. He said 433 Polk is available for \$42,000 but he is working with the neighbor and others for a possible rehab but prefers tear down. Mr. Berger said he toured the property with Building Inspections staff who made some recommendations and referred to another property at Queens and Oakland as another potential. He stated with turnaround in the private market the HRA does not always need to step in and acquire property as much as in the past.

Chair Youngquist suggested monitoring these properties such as Benton Street and others, adding that while the HRA is out of the market once it starts to improve we should still monitor.

Commissioner Manzoline said the bad properties have been dealt with while the others are rebuilt and look great.

Mr. Berger suggested 426 Taylor could be another property to consider. He said this is a vacant 40-foot lot and abuts a neighbor who may be interested. He said he will be contacting him to see if he is interested in the lot that the HRA could possibly assist with demolishing the site.

Board consensus for 2015 goals:

1. Formulate and implement strategic plan for South Central Business District (SCBD)
 - a. Find buyer/end user for Riverway Clinic site
 - b. Acquire additional properties for potential redevelopment
 - c. Continue to work with the SCBD Strategic Plan Committee to carry out their vision in accordance with the Housing and Redevelopment Authority's vision
2. Continue to acquire properties through Scattered Site Replacement Program as they come available
3. Promote the maintenance and renovation of commercial buildings and facilities for the expansion of the tax base and quality jobs
4. Establish TIF district in the South Central Business District
5. Work with the Planning Commission to redevelop sites in the South Central Business District planning area and rezone properties consistent with the study

Mr. Berger suggested adding more to Goal #3 with regard to housing.

Commissioner Bonthuis inquired about the 2nd to 5th Street commercial buildings with apartments above. Mr. Berger said we say 60% vacancy above which includes those areas that do not have units. He said part of the intention was to capture TIF but while that never caught on we were able to get almost the entire downtown getting sprinkled.

Commissioner Manzoline said the other delay for above apartments was the elevator. Mr. Berger said he will be talking with Steve Jensen about his plan, including the elevator and will once again offer the HRA's help with that project.

Chair Youngquist suggested adding "including consideration of second-story residential units" to Goal #3.

Mr. Berger noted these goals will be presented to the Council for discussion and adoption at their meeting on February 9.

Mr. Berger said Goal #4, Establish TIF District in the SCBD is moving forward, adding we will have a schedule soon from Ehlers on how to establish the TIF District, which includes a public comment period. He suggested selling Riverway before establishment of the district as it will make it a much cleaner process. Mr. Berger said he will have more updates at the February meeting.

Chair Youngquist suggested adding “coordinate monitoring of South Ferry Street corridor” as Goal #5.

Mr. Berger said there will be a future worksession on rental licensing. He said staff has been working with the Council on code compliance and programs such as possibly assisting financially or assessment agreement. He referred to other recognition/incentive programs as well, similar to Arden Hills’ “Shine Program” that has been effective.

Adjournment: MOTION BY COMMISSIONER BONTHUIS, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER HOPKINS, TO ADJOURN. The motion carried, the meeting was adjourned at 6:58 p.m.

Submitted by: Cathy Sorensen, *TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.*