

CITY OF ANOKA
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
APRIL 14, 2016

Call to Order: Chairperson Kelly called the EDC meeting to order at 7:30 a.m. at Anoka City Hall, 2015 First Avenue North in the City of Anoka.

Roll Call: EDC Members present were: Jerry Cotton, Dr. Gene Dvoracek, Tracy Kelly, Gary Fahnhorst, Jason Peters, Andy Peterson (arrived at 7:31 a.m.), Kelsey Swokowski, (arrived at 7:37 a.m.), and Jessica Thunder. EDC members absent were: Tom Redmann. Staff present: City Manager Greg Lee.

Approval of Minutes: MOTION BY COMMISSIONER FAHNHORST, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER DVORACEK, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MARCH 10, 2016 EDC MEETING, AS PRESENTED. MOTION CARRIED.

Commissioner Peterson arrived.

OLD BUSINESS:

Projects Update: Mr. Lee stated that the Riverplace Counseling Center project is moving forward and will go before the City Council the following week for a rezoning, preliminary plat and PUD for the new parcel where the business will be relocating to. He stated that at the May 2nd Council meeting the Council will consider the Purchase Agreement, the final plat, and awarding contract for utilities for the site. He stated that there are three options to provide utilities to the site, one extending service from Anoka and two options to extend services from Ramsey. He noted that the Ramsey City Council will consider the item at their next meeting. He stated that if approved by the Council the following week, work could begin clearing the site next week as well.

Commissioner Fahnhorst asked for additional information on the existing Riverplace site and whether the buildings will be razed.

Mr. Lee stated that the Council will make the decision on whether to raze buildings noting that removal could begin later this fall or next spring. He advised that the EDC and Park Board would also provide input as the intent is to add the property to the park system. He stated that intent for the trailway on the west side would be that the trail would interact with the historic elements on the west side. He confirmed that a consultant has been hired to provide input, noting that the information is on the City website.

Commissioner Swokowski arrived.

Mr. Lee provided an update on the Gladstone Cooperative, which is proposing to remove the fourth floor in order to make the project work and be able to move forward. He noted

that the adjacent building is also a similar height. He stated that at the previous Council meeting the Council approved an extension on the Purchase Agreement to June 1st and the applicant is confident that they would be able to move forward before that time. He referenced the City owned liquor store and stated that the City intends to purchase the parcel west of the east liquor store. He noted that the phase two environmental assessment was completed and the site is fairly clean so the City is going to go forward with the purchase of that property. He stated that the first phase would be to raze the building on that site and pave the area to expand the parking area. He stated that the next phase would be to prepare plans to expand the liquor store and noted that construction for that expansion would begin in approximately two to 2.5 years.

Chair Kelly stated that at the Chairperson's meeting there was a discussion on the level of profits received from the liquor stores and what those funds are used for.

Mr. Lee replied that he has general figures, estimating that the liquor stores generate \$100,000 to \$300,000 annually, most of which goes to the park system. He stated that in recent years some of the funds have went to Greenhaven.

Commissioner Fahnhorst stated that there was a recent article in the *Star Tribune*, which discussed that issue of municipalities owning liquor stores and noted that Anoka was one of the more profitable locations.

Commissioner Thunder stated that she also heard a news story in the recent years that stated that Anoka is one of the more profitable municipality owned liquor stores.

Mr. Lee referenced the west liquor store that will need to be relocated at some point as it will not have access from Highway 10 at some point in the future. He noted that originally the intent was to shift the store to the west slightly to Thurston, which will have an exit from Highway 10 but the market study did not support that because of the proximity to Coborns. He stated that the market study identified the corner of Pleasant and 4th Street and the EDC had brought up instead placing that store at Ferry and Pleasant. He stated that the Council discussed that option but has decided not to reserve a spot at this time until the Highway 10 process is further along.

Commissioner Dvoracek stated that perhaps the best option would be to eliminate the west liquor store as it is not as profitable as the east location and place all the funds into expanding the east liquor store.

Mr. Lee stated that the west liquor store is still profitable, although not as profitable as the east liquor store. He noted that another option would be to place the liquor store at the corner of 7th and Bunker Lake Boulevard on City owned property.

Commissioner Thunder stated that people want the ease of being able to stop on their way home and therefore did not believe that 4th and Pleasant would be as preferable as it would not be on the way home for a lot of people.

Mr. Lee stated that the layout for the corner of Ferry and Pleasant is good for that use as people could enter from Ferry Street, circle around the site and then exit onto Pleasant, which is a signalized intersection. He noted that the Council wants to wait to see how that area redevelops to determine if that use fits. He confirmed that there would not be any conflicts with the school owned property nearby. He advised that the City started demolition on the parking lot near City Hall this past week, using City staff to demo and clear the lot and advised that the contractor will start the following Monday. He noted that there is a substantial completion date of July 1st but the contractor feels that they may be able to complete the project by mid-June.

City of Anoka Marketing – Development Opportunities Booklet Update: Mr. Lee noted that the comments from the EDC were incorporated into the booklet, which was presented to the City Council. He noted that the additional comments from the Council were incorporated and he is working to create the final draft. He noted that once complete the City will keep moving the process along to find a real estate agent that can assist with marketing the sites.

Commissioner Dvoracek asked if all the parcels included in the booklet are City owned.

Mr. Lee replied that the majority of the sites are City owned but a couple of private sites were included in the booklet for marketing.

Commissioner Dvoracek stated that he was surprised to see that the City owns this amount of scattered site property.

Mr. Lee agreed noting that the direction of the Council has been to market these properties in order to get them back onto the tax roll.

NEW BUSINESS:

Hiring a Deputy Community Development Director – Douglas Borglund: Mr. Lee reported that the City has hired a new Deputy Community Development Director, Douglas Borglund. He provided background information on Mr. Borglund's previous experience in Forest Lake and a Planning Board for the area around the State Capital in Saint Paul. He stated that the overall City structure was provided in the packet as well, noting that he intends to combine the planning and economic development departments into one community development department. He stated that Carolyn Braun, whom is partially retired, will continue her current position for the remainder of the year and Mr. Borglund will take over as the Community Development Director after that time.

Commissioner Fahnhorst asked if the City has ever had those two departments combined.

Mr. Lee replied that the departments were combined approximately 10 years ago and it is time to bring them back together. He noted the benefits of having those departments combined in a city of this size and advised that the EDC will begin to gather additional information from the planning department under this new model as well.

COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORTS:

Marketing and Communications Updates:

- Discover Anoka: Commissioner Peterson provided an update on the recent activity of Discover Anoka that includes the upcoming Diva Days. He asked if the City has a complete list of businesses in the downtown area in order for the group to determine if there are additional businesses that they have not yet reached out to. He stated that the group will begin work with QCTV in order to publicize upcoming events. He noted that the group would like to become more proactive in terms of web searching and additional ideas to promote Anoka as a shopping destination.

- ABLA: Mr. Lee stated that he was not able to attend the last ABLA meeting but did include an executive summary of the minutes from that meeting. He noted that the group has been discussing the sign ordinance, specifically the use of sandwich board signs. He advised that the Council will continue that discussion.

Commissioner Peterson asked if the EDC could provide comments on that issue as well.

Mr. Lee confirmed that the EDC could provide input.

Chairperson Kelly asked that the item be placed on the agenda for the next meeting.

Commissioner Dvoracek noted that there are a number of businesses, which use that type of sign and believed that perhaps there should be some general regulations while not becoming too stringent.

Chairperson Kelly asked who would be in charge of enforcement of that issue.

Mr. Lee replied that the Community Development department would be in charge of enforcement.

Chairperson Kelly noted that enforcement was addressed at the last Chairperson's meeting and it was stated that the City has become more proactive and sent more letters to homeowners regarding violations in one week than they had in a long period of time.

Mr. Lee stated that ABLA is hosting a Halloween stamp event on September 29th at 11:00 a.m. at City Hall. He stated that there will be a lot of people attending, some even coming from Washington D.C. He noted that there is a series of four stamps that were designed by an artist and will be unveiled in Anoka as the first ever Halloween stamps. He noted that typically most unveilings happen in Washington D.C. or New York and Anoka made a large pitch to host the event because Anoka is the Halloween Capital of the World. He stated that Anoka Halloween has been heavily involved.

- Anoka Enterprise Park Annual Meeting – March 16, 2016: Chairperson

Kelly stated that the event took place last month and overall went very well. He stated that there were some great speakers and the biggest concern mentioned was traffic at Thurston and Highway 10.

Mr. Lee stated that he is going to ask the City Council whether they would like staff to spearhead the interchange for Thurston. He stated that although the main focus has been Fair oak, his thought has been that perhaps Anoka should take the lead on Thurston and then it will become glaringly obvious that MnDOT will have to handle the Fair oak interchange.

- Celebrate Anoka Day – Annual Celebrate Anoka Day; September 12, 2016: Mr. Lee noted that Celebrate Anoka Day will be held on September 12th this year.

MISCELLANEOUS:

Discuss Next Agenda - May 12, 2016: Chairperson Kelly noted that the discussion of signs should be placed on the agenda.

Mr. Lee stated that the May meeting will be the first meeting of the new Deputy Community Development Director. He noted that his intent would be to take a group picture for the website at that time as well.

It was noted that perhaps the Commission would like additional information on how a cooperative would operate, such as the Gladstone Cooperative project.

Chairperson Kelly stated that his comments are not specific for the next meeting but perhaps a future meeting. He noted that he recently read an article that mentioned Anoka County Commute Solutions, which is a transport management organization. He stated that he would like more information on the organization, specifically who they are, how they are funded and what they do.

Commissioner Peterson stated that there was a discussion a few years prior on that topic. He noted that staff developed a list of all the available transportation options in the community.

Mr. Lee replied that that staff researched and listed all the available transportation options in the community and compiled that information into a brochure. He stated that during that process staff discovered that Anoka County has a similar process, which is mainly a one-person staff that can provide similar information by telephone. He noted that he would provide the brochure and additional information in the next packet.

Chairperson Kelly stated that at the Chairperson's meeting there was a discussion regarding the crossover between the EDC and some of the other Boards and Commissions, such as Park and Recreation Board. He thought that it would be beneficial

to have a joint meeting with the Park and Recreation Board in order to open the lines of communication and make it clear that everyone is working together.

Commissioner Peterson agreed that it would be a good idea to have those two groups gather together. He suggested that perhaps the HRA could also be brought into the discussion.

Mr. Lee noted that there could be a joint meeting with those groups and perhaps the Historical Preservation Commission to discuss the riverwalk plans.

Commissioner Swokowski stated that perhaps the Anoka parks need updating, noting that her family travels to Champlin to use the splash pad.

Commissioner Peterson stated that if the City wants to attract millennials the City will need to market to that group and upgrade some of those items.

Commissioner Thunder noted that millennials are also drawn to nostalgic things, so there is a balance.

Chairperson Kelly agreed that the discussion topic of the joint meeting could begin with the riverwalk.

Mr. Lee noted that he would wait until the process is further along and the City actually has ownership of the property.

Board and Commissions Appreciation Dinner – April 14, 2016: Mr. Lee reminded the Commission that the Board and Commissions appreciation dinner will be held tonight with the entertainment to start at 5:15 and dinner at 5:45 p.m.

September 2016 EDC Meeting – Cablecast Meeting: Chairperson Kelly noted that the plan would be to schedule the cablecast meeting for September. He stated that will give the group a sufficient amount of time to plan the agenda.

Mr. Lee stated that Open to Business is a topic that would be good to discuss at that meeting along with a presentation from the HRA, which will highlight their available programs. He noted that the Finance Director will also provide a presentation on TIF, specifically how those funds are used and the benefit that the City gains from that.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned upon a motion by Commissioner Dvoracek, a second by Commissioner Peters, and a unanimous vote of those present at 8:50 a.m.

Amanda Staple, *TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.*