

City of Isanti
Economic Development Authority
Regular Meeting Minutes of
April 28, 2009
Isanti City Hall

1. Call To Order

a. Pledge of Allegiance

Pledge taken.

b. Roll Call

Members Present: Chair Larry Kuechle, Keith Dragisich, Jim Kennedy and George Wimmer

Members Absent: David Jadinak

Staff Present: Community Development Director Vita

c. Agenda Modifications

Item #4 was removed.

Motion by Kennedy, second by Wimmer to approve the agenda as presented.

2. Organization Items

a) Oath of Office for Jadinak

Jadinak did not attend meeting, thus oath did not occur.

3. Approve Minutes of February 2009 Regular Economic Development Authority Meeting

Motion by Kennedy, second by Dragisich without modifications. Motion carried unanimously.

4. Bob Strub, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development

Withdrawn.

5. Business Consultant Request for Proposals

Vita presented a Staff memo.

Kuechle questioned the length of the business consultant term. Vita stated approximately 5 years.

Motion by Kennedy, second by Wimmer to recommend approval of the Request for Proposal to the City Council and further requesting the City Council to direct Staff to obtain proposals. Motion carried unanimously.

6. Rail Industrial Park

a) Funding

Vita presented a Staff memo.

Wimmer stated that the City might also be able to apply for funds for a mechanical wastewater treatment plant. Wimmer informed the group that the new plant then would eliminate the ponding system for more industrial park land. Wimmer stated that the updated plant would ensure that the water discharged meets a higher threshold that the Federal Government will be enforcing in the future. Wimmer commented that he was informed that the rail crossing at 299th will likely be eliminated with the future passenger / commuter rail project.

Kuechle questioned the number of acres. Vita stated that the total amount is approximately 300 acres. Kuechle expressed a concern that the acreage might be too small.

Wimmer stated that the Ever Cat Fuels project will need rail if it is going to expand in the future.

Kuechle questioned the roles of the County EDA on a rail project. Wimmer stated that the County EDA is waiting on the Passenger Rail study. Wimmer continued that the County does not have funds to pay for a project. Wimmer stated that the County contracted to have a rail study completed and the study showed two sites that would support the rail. Wimmer indicated that he believes that they prefer the Cambridge site.

Kuechle questioned if Staff is able to complete the Federal EDA application. Vita stated that Staff met with the East central Regional Development Commission that has assisted other cities in writing the applications. Vita stated that Staff has the capabilities to complete the application with the assistance and advice of the ECRDC Staff, noting that the project is long and will take considerable Staff time. Vita concluded that the City's Engineering firm, Bolton & Menk will need to assist on the application and project also.

Kuechle questioned if the City has approached Congressman Oberstar in order to receive Federal funds. Vita stated that Staff did contact his office and the Federal EDA application is the process that was recommended to the City. Wimmer stated that he had a conversation with Congressman Oberstar on an Isanti rail industrial park and he was very enthusiastic on the project. Wimmer stated that Congressman Oberstar sits on the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Board. Wimmer said that an Isanti rail industrial park is a multi-year project.

Kuechle stated that there is no guarantee that the City will receive funds, but we need to pursue.

b) Joint meeting

Vita stated that a joint meeting between the EDA and the City Council is being recommended to discuss the parameters of the rail industrial park meeting including the wastewater treatment plant.

Motion by Kennedy, second by Wimmer to recommend to the City Council to authorize Staff to work on the EDA grant application, noting that this will take significant Staff time. Also, directing the City Engineer to prepare a proposal for engineering services on their portion of the EDA grant application – including working with Burlington Northern Santa Fe on a firm commitment. Furthermore, is recommending to the City Council to hold a joint meeting at 7pm on May 26, 2009 in the City Council Chambers – during the EDA's

normal meeting time, to discuss the rail industrial park project and components. Motion carried unanimously.

Vita questioned if the EDA wanted to discuss the concerns from Chair Kuechle as detailed in the Staff memo. Kuechle stated that he sees a need for transportation of trucks within the rail industrial park. Kuechle stated that the park might need a truck terminal to load and unload product. Kuechle indicated that the terminals take a lot of space, don't have much tax base, but are important and need to be discussed. Wimmer stated that the City's ordinances should reflect how the City wants to see the rail industrial park. Wimmer stated that he believes that businesses will desire a truck terminal

7. Initiative Foundation Request

Vita presented a Staff memo. There was considerable discussion on the action the City Council took in January 2009 removing charitable donations and this request. The discussion covered not wanting to recommend a matter to the City Council that is against their direction. Members of the Board also recognized the importance of the Initiative Foundation in economic development and business development in the region noting their assistance with the Ever Cat Fuels project.

Wimmer stated that the Initiative Foundation has had the Ever Cat Fuels project within their quarterly newsletter and has financially supported the project. Kuechle stated that the Initiative Foundation is a good cause, but the EDA needs to mirror the policy of the City Council. Kennedy stated that the Initiative Foundation has helped the City.

Vita stated that the EDA has funds within the EDA Marketing budget that could be used for this request. Lon Hollister, a local business owner, stated that the City could look at another amount than the \$700 being requested by the Initiative Foundation.

Motion by Kennedy, second by Dragisich to recommend to the City Council to fund the Initiative Foundations' request in the amount of \$700 noting that the Foundation has marketed a business in Isanti and is a good partner in economic development

8. County EDA

a) Update & Staff Attendance

Vita presented the Staff memo. Wimmer stated that he requested that this item be brought forth to the EDA as he does not want Vita to sign the confidentiality agreement. Wimmer stated that closed sessions are the locations for confidential discussion, not signing confidentiality agreements to prevent discussion from open meetings. Wimmer stated that State Statute regulates discussion. Wimmer stated that he wants the City to back Vita in her not signing the agreement.

Vita discussed the County's discussion on the Neighborhood Stabilization Program and foreclosure information gathering. Wimmer stated that the County might be pursuing HRA powers. Wimmer stated that the City might want to pursue obtaining HRA powers if the County does exercise its HRA powers in order for the City to have control over housing within our City.

b) Confidentiality Agreement

Motion by Wimmer, second by Kennedy to direct Staff to not sign the County confidentiality agreement. Motion carried unanimously.

9. Downtown Parking Signage

Vita presented the Staff memo.

Motion by Kennedy, second by Dragisich to recommend approval of the downtown parking signs as presented to the City Council.

10. Other Business / Updates

a. Marketing / Promotional piece

Vita and Wimmer presented the update to the project.

b. Isanti Police Department Business Informational sheet

Vita presented the one-sheeter on the business assistance that the police department provides. Wimmer stated that the City of Isanti police department provides many more businesses services than other police departments.

c. Downtown Chamber Committee

Vita presented the Staff update.

d. Business Retention visits

Wimmer presented the business retention visit history and updates.

e. Other

Wimmer informed the EDA on the press conference he presented at earlier in the day. The conference was on the funding that the McKnight foundation has allocated to greater Minnesota through the Greater Minnesota Housing Fund to assist in helping with the foreclosure crisis.

11. Adjournment

Kennedy motioned, seconded by Wimmer to adjourn at 7:53 pm. Motion passed unanimously.

Dated at Isanti Minnesota, this ____ day of May, 2009.

Respectively Submitted,

Carla MK Vita, Community Development Director