

**City of Isanti
Economic Development Authority
Regular Meeting Minutes of
August 23, 2011
Isanti City Hall**

1. Call To Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Kuechle at 7:00 p.m.

a. Pledge of Allegiance

b. Roll Call

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

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Economic Development Director Sean Sullivan

c. Agenda Modifications

Motion by Hallberg, second by Kennedy to approve the agenda. Motion carried unanimously.

2. Approve Minutes of July 26, 2011 Regular Economic Development Meeting

Motion by Kennedy, second by Wimmer to approve the minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

3. Greater MSP

Economic Development Director Sullivan presented the Staff Memo. Greater MSP was created as part of the Itasca Project which was an initiative by the private sector to market the 13 County MSA regionally, nationally and globally and to attract investment to the region. City staff attended a meeting on August 9, 2011 to provide input to Greater MSP as to the needs of Isanti County. The need for additional marketing and lead generation were highlighted as priorities for the area. Greater MSP will be meeting with all 13 Counties, compile the data and roll out an action plan on October 2011.

Chair Kuechle indicated that organizations such as this have not provided much benefit to the area and questioned the viability of the new organization.

Economic Development Director Sullivan stated he had worked with a similar group in Anoka County and that it was not very successful. Funding and ineffective leadership often leads to the demise of these types of organizations. Sullivan indicated that this organization was well funded from the private sector and that they had succession planning in place that would help keep the group relevant for quite some time. Sullivan stated that the organization would be successful for the City of Isanti if it generated a single lead.

Member Wimmer questioned how the organization would be funded.

Economic Development Director Sullivan stated that the City of Isanti would not be responsible for any payments to the organization. The majority of the funding for the organization is funded by the private sector (General Mills, 3M, US Bank, etc.) but more populous counties such as Anoka and Hennepin would pay significantly higher “dues”. Greater MSP obtained control of Metro MSP which was an organization that Isanti County previously supported. Greater MSP indicated at the August 9, 2011 meeting that fees for Isanti County would be nominal.

No action was taken on this item.

4. Consider Residency Requirements for Commercial Buildings for Lease

Economic Development Director Sullivan presented the Staff Memo. Sullivan stated that the City of Isanti currently has a residency/local agent requirement for residential property. Sullivan had reservations about implementing a policy that would discourage commercial investment in the City of Isanti but felt that discussion on the topic could be productive. Sullivan noted it is important to keep commercial storefronts fresh and current. Sullivan also noted that RIC Property Management serves as a realtor and property manager for property it lists. The local agent had the ability to maintain the property and make decisions pertaining to the property. This was not true for all other commercial listing arrangements. Economic Development Director Sullivan stated that he could make an effort to work more closely with City Planner Wilson to address outdated signage and maintenance issues as they arise.

Chair Kuechle inquired as to how maintenance issues are currently addressed.

Member Wimmer stated it was covered under the abatement policy for exterior maintenance. He also stated the high commercial vacancies have led to more interaction with land owners to make properties compliant.

Direction was for City Staff to survey other communities to see if there were local residency (Ownership) requirements for commercial property.

5. Other Business / Updates

Economic Development Director Sullivan highlighted the following items.

- a. Update on Special TIF Projects
- b. Shovel Ready Certification
- c. RMW Twins, LLC Project Update
- d. Business Retention Visits

- e. Business Prospects
- f. GPS 45:93 Meeting Agenda
- g. Business Arrivals and Departures in Isanti
- h. Retirement of Irene Bauer
- i. Intent to Withdraw from Isanti County EDA
- j. Performance Center
- k. Lowe's Closes in Cambridge
- l. EDFP Certification for Economic Development Director
- m. Proposed 2012 EDA Budget

Economic Development Director Sullivan highlighted items on the Staff memo.

Economic Development Director Sullivan stated that the RMW Twins, LLC project has been challenging. The project size has been reduced to fit within the financeable budget of the Developer. Preliminary approvals for financing should be received as early as August 26, 2011. Staff has put in a lot of hours on this project and understands the public benefit of this project moving forward. The creation of 11 new job, removal of blight, creation of new tax base and visibility from Hwy 65 are all public benefits

Member Wimmer said he was excited at the new concept that included 40 plus indoor seating, an outdoor playground, potentially a carhop and patio seating.

6. Adjournment

Member Kennedy motioned, seconded by Member Dragisich to adjourn at 7:21 pm. Motion carried unanimously.

Dated at Isanti, Minnesota, this 24th day of August, 2011.

Respectively Submitted,

Sean M. Sullivan, Economic Development Director