

City of Isanti
Economic Development Authority
Regular Meeting Minutes of
August 25, 2009
Isanti City Hall

1. Call To Order

a. Pledge of Allegiance

Pledge taken.

b. Roll Call

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

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Community Development Director Vita

c. Agenda Modifications

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

2. Oath of Office for Branden Apitz

Oath taken.

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

Motion by Wimmer, second by Dragisich to approve without modifications. Motion carried unanimously.

4. Park & Ride – Commuter Rail Discussion

Vita gave a presentation on the memo and the attached maps. Kuechle questioned the outcome desired on the project. Wimmer stated that he is looking for input on the 1) current downtown parking needs; 2) a park & ride; 3) Heartland Express bus line in Isanti. Rider-ship in the community has increased. The Heartland Express also has a bus running just in Cambridge; in the future Isanti may also have a need for a regular bus to meet bussing requests; and 4) Commuter rail. Cambridge will receive the Passenger Rail line, should we work on a bus to bring people to the commuter rail location.

Kuechle questioned if the City has data on interest on a park & ride. Vita stated that the City has not completed a formal survey. Vita continued that she has received requests for a park & ride within the community for transportation needs.

Apitz questioned if there is a commuting survey. Kuechle questioned if MNDOT knows the number of commuters. Vita stated that in approximately 2004 a commuting survey of the county was completed. Vita stated that she is unaware of a current commuter study.

Apitz questioned if the locations identified on the map are the only locations for a park & ride. Wimmer stated that the City owns the property, but for A1. Vita stated that these are preferred

options as they are close to the anticipated future rail stop and in the downtown to help downtown business growth.

Kuechle questioned if A1 is owned by the City. Vita stated that it is not.

Wimmer stated that the Development Advisory Committee looked at the location south of the Post Office and next to City Hall. Wimmer stated that the location next to City Hall ties the two parking lots together. Wimmer questioned the cost of A1. Kuechle stated approximately \$40,000. Vita reminded the Authority members that, as stated within the memo, TIF 9 TIF redevelopment rules might have been extended by the new Statute rules by the legislature. Vita stated that Staff has asked our new consultants to look into the deadline. Vita indicated that if the district does fall within the new rules, additional time will be available to use the TIF 9 funds.

Wimmer stated that the City is working on a multi-modal plan. Wimmer stated that he wanted to bring the park & ride discussion to the EDA for more people to review and give comments. Wimmer questioned if the EDA had a preference to the park & ride location. Apitz stated that he prefers to tie the Community Center and City Hall together. Apitz stated that parking is needed at both locations. Kuechle questioned which plan is more centrally located. Wimmer stated that he believes that the City Hall site is more centrally located. Wimmer stated that the properties along First Avenue are zoned for business. Wimmer stated that the properties south of the post office are zoned in the transitional district. Wimmer informed that he prefers tying in the Community Center with City Hall. Wimmer stated that he believes that the City needs to make walking more inviting with better designs to encourage walking.

Kuechle questioned the access to the A2 parking location. Wimmer stated via City Hall parking lot, the alley south of City Hall and the Community Center. Apitz stated that the park & ride location can start with A2.

Wimmer questioned the location behind the post office. Vita stated that the location was presented as a way to clean up Eagle Park and make the area look better. Wimmer stated that he wants to “get rid of” the area. Wimmer stated that he believes that the A2 site is a better site for park & ride.

Motion by Kennedy, second by Wimmer to recommend to the City Council Park & Ride A2 option as the preferred option to the City Council. Motion carried 5- 0.

5. Marketing Inquiry

Vita presented the memo stating that the project would have a warm welcome to those looking at the website with weekly fresh information to bring people back to the site. Wimmer stated that the information would personalize the viewing experience. Apitz, who company is the City’s website host, stated that the calendar, news/events areas are very well hit already. Apitz suggested a pop-up window for the weekly updates. Wimmer stated that we would like to see a welcome and a weekly event / update. Dragisich stated that the weekly update could spotlight a business within the City. Wimmer stated that economic development projects could be spot-lighted. Wimmer informed the EDA that the City has shied from choosing one business over another.

Apitz stated that a survey of interested businesses could take place and the selection of the highlighted business could be drawn from a hat from the interested businesses. Dragisich stated that photos and a bio of the business could be a part of the project. Dragisich indicated that this would

be completed weekly or bi-weekly. Wimmer stated that the spotlighted business could be the businesses in the recent business retention meetings.

Apitz discussed how items could be moved around the home page for the project.

Vita stated that events, activities, accomplishments in the community could be highlighted.

Kuechle stated that he is not keen on highlighting a business. Kuechle stated that the website should have links to businesses. Vita stated that the website does link currently to businesses. Kuechle stated that he feels uneasy about businesses being promoted on the City website. Wimmer questioned if people would believe that the informational piece on the business would be looked at as the City promoting the business. Wimmer stated that the project should focus on projects.

Discussion took place on the website home page and how it needs to be organized. Vita affirmed that this is her project, but she has not had the time to dedicate to the matter. Apitz stated that if the weekly promotional website discussion takes place, it needs to be continued. Wimmer stated that keeping a website fresh takes a lot of work; more than most people may think.

Kuechle stated that the items to be placed on the website should be schedule and known in advance to assist in the planning of topics. Kuechle stated that the EDA needs to be kept informed on the progress of items on the City website.

6. EDA By-Laws Modification

Kuechle stated that the proposed changes look good. Vita informed that the City attorney has given his approval. Kuechle stated that the document outlines age definitions; an ex-officio position for the age group of 14 to 18 years.

Motion by Kennedy, second by Wimmer to approve the EDA bylaw changes as outlined in the memo. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Kennedy, second by Wimmer to recommend to the City Council modify the enabling resolution with the same changes. Motion carried unanimously.

7. Vita Economic Development Training Update and Staff Recommendation

Vita presented a Staff memo on the training and Staff recommendations for the EDA to consider as an outcome of the training.

Wimmer stated that at the last County EDA, each City was asked to inform the County on their economic development updates. Wimmer informed that at the meeting City of Cambridge staff informed the County EDA that they receive their leads from George Johnson. Wimmer stated that Isanti has done a good job with economic development not having a force like George Johnson feeding businesses to our City Staff. Wimmer stated that the City of Isanti has done a lot of work in economic development.

Wimmer stated that a strategic plan will show existing business owners are the City's best cheerleaders. Wimmer stated that the business visits have produced positive outcomes.

8. Other Business / Updates

a. New Business Consultant update

Northland Securities is the City's new vendor. Staff have met with Northland's Staff on projects and is working to get them up to speed.

b. County EDA Update

Wimmer stated that the County EDA finally realized that the confidentiality agreement is illegal and they shred the agreements.

c. Downtown Chamber Committee

Vita presented the Staff notes.

d. Business Retention visits

Wimmer stated that he and Vita met with UPS. Wimmer stated that UPS discussed multi-modal transportation. Wimmer stated that UPS would like to ensure that business and interested people are aware of their services and center in Isanti. Wimmer stated that he was impressed at their desire to volunteer in the community.

Wimmer stated that they also met with Boeke's Woodshop. Wimmer stated that Boeke's Woodshop has adapted to the economy. Wimmer stated that when asked of any concerns, Boeke stated that they felt their taxes are too high.

e. Downtown Parking Signage update

Vita informed that they are up.

f. Other

Kuechle stated that the intersection project at TH 65 and CSAH 5 is working well.

9. Adjournment

Kennedy motioned, seconded by Dragisich to adjourn at 7:45 pm. Motion passed unanimously.

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

Respectively Submitted,

Carla MK Vita, Community Development Director