

City of Isanti
Economic Development Authority
Regular Meeting Minutes of
August 26, 2008
Isanti City Hall

1. Call To Order

a. Pledge of Allegiance

b. Roll Call

Members Present: Chair Larry Kuechle, Louise Duff, Sue Larson and George Wimmer

Members Absent: David Jadinak

Staff Present: Community Development Director Vita

c. Agenda Modifications

None.

Motion by Wimmer, second by Duff to approve the agenda without modifications. Motion carried unanimously.

2. Approve Minutes of July 2008 Regular Economic Development Authority Meeting

Larson motioned, seconded by Wimmer to approve the minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

3. Isanti City Partnership Quarterly Update

A) Chair Owens presentation

Greg Owens, ICP Chair, discussed the memo that was presented to the EDA. Owens stated that earlier in the day the ICP discussed transportation issues. Owens questioned if a joint EDA and Chamber meeting should take place to give the ICP direction. Owens stated that the summer has been difficult to meet.

Kuechle stated that he observes the feeling that the ICP is feeling worn. Owens stated that the group wants to accomplish items and the last quarter they have not accomplished a lot. Owens stated that he is looking for the EDA and Chamber to give direction.

Wimmer stated that the ICP issue is direction. Wimmer stated that the question is whether the ICP should continue; if so, what avenue should it pursue. Wimmer stated that the ICP needs to pull in the same direction.

Duff stated that when the ICP started, she thought it would be temporary. Duff questioned if government has grown too big and if the ICP is handling issues that the EDA should be addressing. Duff stated that it is important for business input. Duff stated that the ICP is not to give recommendations to the City Council. Duff stated that she wants to see the EDA with more value and tackling more items.

Wimmer stated that the vision of the ICP in the beginning was an advisory body, not a working body. Wimmer stated that he has frustrations on what the expectations are.

Duff stated that she appreciates the ICP, but questioned if it is in the best avenue.

Owens stated that a joint EDA and Chamber meeting would be noteworthy. Owens stated that he believed that the ICP was recommending to the EDA. Owens stated that the ICP realizes that it is only an advisory committee.

Wimmer asked Owens what is his vision of the ICP. Owens stated a good-will ambassador. Owens stated that he envisioned the ICP making trips to businesses and promoting Isanti. Owens stated that the ICP worked on the tax abatement policy. Owens stated that the ICP should be a think-tank.

Wimmer stated that many business recruitment ideas are confidential and the EDA is public record. Wimmer stated that if the ICP is to continue, the role has to be specific. Wimmer stated that the ICP does bring items to the EDA for their review.

Owens stated that some property owners do see a benefit with the ICP.

Duff stated that she encourages businesses to attend the EDA meetings. Duff stated that she values the business person's thoughts and feedback.

Kuechle stated that the advantage of the ICP has been its connection to the business community.

Wimmer stated that the ICP taps into the business person's knowledge as many business owners are very busy.

B) Joint Meeting Discussion

Vita questioned if the EDA desires a joint meeting and if so, when.

Duff stated that the regularly scheduled EDA meeting in September should be pursued. Wimmer stated that Staff needs to find the availability of the Chamber Board to attend the meeting and have a quorum.

Larson stated that visioning should occur at the joint meeting. Duff stated that the purpose is visioning. Kuechle stated that they could see where the Chamber is at and brainstorm together. Larson stated that they could find what the ICP can do. Duff stated that first the question needs to be raised on whether the ICP should continue. Duff stated if the ICP continues, then its role needs fine-tuning. Wimmer stated that the ICP needs goals.

4. Land Use Guideline review

Vita presented a Staff memo.

Duff stated that the Federal Minimum wage verbiage needs modification. Wimmer stated that the only language change is within the Commercial section.

Motion by Wimmer, second by Duff to call for a public hearing on modifying the land use guidelines on the minimum wage requirements. Motion carried unanimously.

5. TIF De-certification Funds

Vita presented a Staff memo. Wimmer stated that DAC met earlier that day on a downtown parking plan and park and ride. Wimmer stated that the park and ride would be for an evolution for a commuter rail stop.

Kuechle questioned the amount of parking in the downtown. Wimmer stated that the concept is a foundation to cover parking requirements for businesses and to assist in a future park and ride for commuter rail. Duff stated that the downtown has never been dead as it has been today. Duff stated that the downtown has plenty of parking, but people do not want to walk. Duff discussed downtown parking locations. Duff questioned the need for more downtown parking. Duff stated that the downtown has adequate parking, but people are too lazy to walk.

Vita discussed the downtown parking images prepared by the City's consulting engineer.

Wimmer stated that the downtown currently has adequate parking, but there is not enough parking for a park and ride. Wimmer stated that it is important for Isanti to have a rail stop.

Duff stated that it is important to plan for future parking. Duff stated that she does not believe that currently downtown parking is ever half full. Duff stated the need for planning for commuter rail.

Wimmer stated that education on the location of parking spots is important. Wimmer stated that parking is important to downtown businesses.

Duff stated that downtown parking could be a challenge for downtown businesses for aesthetically pleasing back of the business parking.

Vita discussed the TIF 9 deadline for the usage of the dollars from the Federated Co-op project

Duff stated that the funds could also be used for a property east of the railroad tracks that could be acquired and cleaned up. Duff stated that the property is good for commuter rail for future plans.

Wimmer stated that the City wants tax paying businesses.

Kuechle questioned if the State has funds for a park and ride. Duff stated that the cost for park and ride should be investigated. Duff stated that the state will pay for half of the cost for ride share.

Wimmer stated that it is important to plan for the downtown parking future. Wimmer stated that most cities have open areas waiting for development for handling transportation options.

Larson stated that the State does not have funding for parking areas. Larson stated that the League is looking at funding options. Larson stated that she prefers the parking lot south of Isanti Custom Meats. Larson stated that she believes that the City is behind with plans for commuter rail and we need to show ridership for a commuter rail stop. Larson stated that the Comprehensive Plan has park and ride shown. Larson stated that the TIF funds should be funded for park and ride.

Motion by Larson, seconded by Wimmer to recommend to the City Council the placement of the excess TIF 5 funds for a future park and ride, location unspecified.

6. County EDA Update

Wimmer stated that the County supported the Cambridge inter-city rail site. Wimmer stated that the County did not set a levy, but they are looking to allocate 40 to 45 thousand dollars for the 2009 EDA budget. Wimmer stated that the County EDA is looking at whether having a tax abatement policy or taking individual requests. Wimmer stated that he does not want a policy to preclude what type of project that a City could bring to the County.

Wimmer stated that the rail industrial park is planned for discussion at the next meeting.

7. Other Business / Updates

A) Downtown Update

Vita presented an update.

Duff stated that the Isanti Fall Music Fest was formerly in the downtown. Duff stated that the idea of the original event was to bring people to the downtown after the Main Street reconstruction project.

Wimmer stated that the IFMF is a function of the Chamber. Wimmer stated that the City does not allocate funds for the event.

B) Isanti Retail Meats Project Update

Vita presented an update.

C) Other

8. Adjournment

Duff motioned, seconded by Larson to adjourn at 7:50 pm. Motion passed unanimously.

Dated at Isanti Minnesota, this ____ day of August, 2008.

Respectively Submitted,

Carla MK Vita, Community Development Director