

City of Isanti
Economic Development Authority
Regular Meeting Minutes of
September 23, 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 Larson to approve the agenda without modifications.

Motion carried unanimously.

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

Duff stated that on page three of the minutes she desires more information on her statements as the context of what she stated is not accurate.

Wimmer stated that Duff could restate how she would like the minutes to read or ask for the item to be tabled. Duff requested if the meeting is taped. Vita stated it is.

The item was tabled until the next EDA for Staff to review the tape and revise page 3 on Duff's comments and to re-submit the minutes.

3. Public Hearing

Vita gave a Staff report.

Kuechle discussed the minimum wage change within the document and the Federal wage change. Wimmer stated that the changes are just within the Industrial Park section of the guidelines.

Public Hearing opened at 7:06pm.

No public comments.

Public Hearing closed at 7:07pm.

Larson stated that the Federal minimum wage should be the City's minimum wage.

Motion by Larson, second by Wimmer to recommend to the City Council to modify the minimum wages for the Industrial Park Job Goals from \$6 for Commercial businesses to state per Federal Minimum Wage. Motion carried unanimously.

4. Joint Meeting of the City of Isanti Economic Development Authority and the Isanti Area Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors

Members of the Isanti Chamber of Commerce including: John Bettendorf, Jan Peterson, Dustin Schroeder, Kris Scherer, Tracy Niefert, Greg Owens and Peggy Durkot.

Kuechle began that the intent of the meeting is to discuss the cooperation and how to get projects completed and understanding the Chamber. Kuechle stated that he is a Chamber member. Kuechle stated that he is interested in Isanti.

Wimmer stated that Greg Owens and he are the original founders of the ICP. Wimmer stated that the intent of this joint meeting is to determine what the ICP is to be and its mission. Wimmer stated some of the projects that ICP worked on and passed onto the EDA for their consideration. Wimmer iterated how the ICP needs to be a good group with a mission.

Bettendorf stated that he began with the ICP half way through and saw some of the projects that were completed. Bettendorf stated that a challenge of the ICP is time commitments of its members. Bettendorf stated that some ideas are an ambassador group and/or a transportation group. Bettendorf stated that direction for the ICP is welcomed. Bettendorf questioned how to move forward.

Wimmer stated that the group would meet monthly or quarterly. Wimmer stated that his vision of ICP is a think tank. Wimmer stated that he would like the ICP to be similar to the Cambridge Development Alliance. Wimmer stated that some projects take time and people volunteering to assist on the projects need to know the time commitment.

Duff stated that she has been on the EDA since it began. Duff stated that she believes that the EDA should tackle more projects. Duff commented that she believes that the ICP is handling projects that the EDA could complete. Duff stated that Vita works for the City and that Vita's role for the ICP needs to be defined. Duff commented that time needs to be spent on valuable areas. Duff gave her appreciation to Owens and other ICP members.

Larson stated that it is important for Isanti to have a group similar to the Cambridge Development Alliance (CDA). Larson stated that the CDA has been able to complete many projects and that they have funds to complete the projects and assist the City. Larson stated that the ICP could be like the CDA. Larson stated that she wants the City to be a partner with the ICP. Larson stated that the EDA needs to discuss the vision and goals of the ICP. Larson commented that the ICP is important for Isanti.

Wimmer stated that the CDA brought money to help Cambridge grow. Wimmer discussed some projects that the CDA helped Cambridge achieve. Wimmer stated that a group like the CDA takes business commitment.

Duff questioned how the ICP determines its projects. Duff stated that she thought projects would come from the EDA.

Wimmer stated that the ICP is a partnership where certain projects seemed logical to start with the ICP. Wimmer stated that a mission and how to get there is important for the ICP. Wimmer stated that everyone's time is valuable.

Larson stated that a partnership has give and take from both sides. Larson stated that maybe the money is not here today, but in the future, money might be available. Larson commented that the ICP benefits the City.

Wimmer stated that the CDA had funds dedicated at its inception. Wimmer stated that he looks at the ICP as a sounding board for ideas and input on matters. Wimmer stated that the ICP needs a path in order to succeed.

Duff stated that open lines of communication is needed.

Bettendorf stated that he is understanding that the EDA wants to keep the ICP advisory, wants to know the ICP agenda and where information is coming from. Bettendorf stated that Owens has ideas for ICP's future.

Wimmer stated that Owens has an idea on welcoming businesses. Wimmer stated that an offshoot of ICP might be business owners welcoming businesses and showing them Isanti and its nuances. Wimmer stated that Hockert Sales is happy with Isanti and Isanti's response to his business.

Bettendorf stated that the ICP can be advisory. Bettendorf questioned how often the ICP should meet.

Owens stated that he has been on the ICP since it began. Owens stated that the ICP is advisory and Staff completes the nuts and bolts of projects. Owens stated that the people on ICP have businesses to run. Owen commented that the ICP has great potential. Owens further commented that the ICP could be a source of funds in the future, but right now, funds are tight. Owens stated that the CDA has been around for 40 years. Owens commented that communication between the City and the Chamber is vital. Owens stated that he knows that people are willing to bring businesses to Isanti. Owens stated that he has offered to visit businesses to show Isanti's interest in their businesses.

Kuechle questioned the amount of money to start. Wimmer questioned what would be done with funds. Kuechle questioned what the ICP would like to have. Wimmer stated that it depends what the ICP is going to do. Wimmer stated that the CDA has millions. Wimmer stated that he likes the idea of Isanti businesses visiting other businesses. Wimmer commented that often projects are confidential, especially during negotiation. Wimmer stated that the ICP could recruit businesses. Wimmer commented that he looks for the ICP to give advice. Wimmer stated that the ICP could look at the City and find ways to improve.

Bettendorf stated that the Chamber could meet on EDA topics every other month.

Niefert stated that sharing views is important. Niefert stated that in a partnership, no one rules the other.

Wimmer stated that a partnership has ideas from all sides. Wimmer stated that using City resources for a project takes City approval. Wimmer stated that he is looking for ideas.

Peterson stated that the Chamber is excited to participate in projects. Peterson comments that the Chamber Board wants their advice taken seriously. Peterson stated that communication is important from all parties.

Duff stated that the ICP represents Isanti. Duff stated her concern on duplication of work and how Isanti is represented. Duff is concerned that the ICP is working on projects that the EDA could be handling.

Owens stated that Vita presents a monthly memo to the EDA on what the ICP is working on. Owens stated that he has attended many EDA meetings.

Duff stated that Owens has been good at communicating.

Wimmer stated that he would like to know how the Chamber and ICP could advise the City on improving the economic climate in Isanti.

Duff stated the need to bring the EDA, ICP and Chamber together every so often. Wimmer stated that the EDA could attend a Chamber meeting.

Bettendorf stated that he is hearing to keep the ICP, keep it as advisory, and before expending money, the ICP needs City approval.

Larson stated that with time the ICP can be like the CDA.

Durkot stated that communication lines need to be open.

Peterson stated the need for recognition on both ends.

Kuechle stated that the development of strategic groups to buy land and hold until the City can purchase and exist.

Bettendorf stated that the last Chamber luncheon was a good meeting. Bettendorf stated that the BMX event was discussed. Bettendorf commented that the need for a hotel is a priority. Bettendorf stated that he knows that the hotel is an EDA priority. Bettendorf stated that he received a question on why the City does not open a hotel to meet the need.

Wimmer stated that a hotel is the City's number 1 priority. Wimmer stated that he and Staff have met with many hotel groups. Wimmer stated that the City has many incentives, high property values, but the economy is not great. Wimmer stated that the City would be happy to support a group with a hotel.

Bettendorf stated that a cooperative group to help build Isanti would be beneficial.

Wimmer stated that he wants Bettendorf to bring the ICP discussion to the next Chamber Board meeting. Wimmer stated that he wants a mission statement and what the ICP should accomplish.

Wimmer stated that he further would like to see goals and a Chamber full vote on its support of the ICP.

Duff thanked the ICP for all its work.

5. Annual CEDS Report

Vita gave a Staff presentation.

Larson stated that she met with an Allina representative and that the CEDS should include a clinic. Larson stated that the clinic would probably not get CEDS funding, but a clinic listed on the CEDS could assist in other grants and funding for a clinic. Larson stated that the CEDS should include a clinic.

Wimmer stated that the Federal EDA has already given significant funds to Cambridge and Mora on industrial parks and they do not want to see the industrial parks fail.

Owens stated that the CEDS should include transportation including rail and bus.

Larson stated that transportation should be tied to a park and ride for a future commuter rail station. Larson stated that purchasing a bus costs money.

Wimmer stated that a Park and Ride and Bussing could be part of downtown redevelopment. Larson stated that she agrees. Wimmer stated that the narrative should tie transportation and the downtown together.

Consensus to have the same City of Isanti CEDS priorities as seen earlier this year adding a clinic and making the narrative include transportation for the downtown.

6. County EDA Update

Wimmer stated that the meeting was productive. Wimmer stated that the City of Isanti rail site is one of the preferred sites, the other being Cambridge. Wimmer stated that the Commissioners like that the City owns our land in our proposed site. Wimmer stated that the BNSF comments should be forth coming.

Wimmer stated that the County EDA is working on County Tax Abatement. Wimmer stated that the City of Cambridge is working on their tax abatement policy currently. Wimmer stated that he raised a concern on how the incentives will work. Wimmer stated that the County EDA created a sub-committee on the tax abatement policy of which he and Vita are a part of.

Wimmer stated that the County's consultant praised Isanti for our tax abatement policy and how it weans businesses off of governmental support.

7. Other Business / Updates

a) Downtown Update

Vita presented.

b) Other

8. Adjournment

Wimmer motioned, seconded by Duff to adjourn at 8:09 pm. Motion passed unanimously.

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

Respectively Submitted,

Carla MK Vita, Community Development Director