

**KANDIYOHI COUNTY AND CITY OF WILLMAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)
JOINT OPERATIONS BOARD OF DIRECTORS (OB) MEETING
MINUTES
September 9, 2021
Community Room, Heritage Bank, Willmar**

Present: Art Benson, Rollie Boll, Donna Boonstra, Jesse Gislason, Les Heitke and Kelly TerWisscha

Ex Officio: Julie Asmus

Staff: Aaron Backman, Executive Director and Sarah Swedburg, Business Development Manager

Excused: Abdullahi Awale

Media: Shelby Lindrud, West Central Tribune

Secretarial: Nancy Birkeland, Legal & Administrative Assistants, Inc.

President Kelly TerWisscha called the meeting to order at approximately 11:03 a.m. and declared a quorum was present.

AGENDA

IT WAS MOVED BY Jesse Gislason, SECONDED BY Rollie Boll, to approve the Agenda and Consent Agenda as emailed. MOTION CARRIED.

CONSENT AGENDA

Approve: 1. Minutes of August 12, 2021 meeting
 2. Financial reports as of August 31, 2021
 3. Payment of bill from Connie Schmoll in the amount of \$3,873.08 for August services as budgeted for the Broadband Planning Consultant

Accept: Committee/Subcommittee Minutes
 1. Agriculture and Renewable Energy Development 7/15/2021
 2. Broadband and Advanced Technology 8/2/2021
 3. Finance 7/27/2021
 4. Marketing and Public Relations 7/26/2021

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

[Shelby Lindrud was excused from the meeting.]

Marketing and Communications Specialist Update. Aaron Backman reported the EDC received 16 applications plus another 5 after the deadline. The review committee, Art Benson, Les Heitke, Backman, Sarah Swedburg and Nancy Birkeland, selected six to interview. One accepted another position prior to being interviewed and another withdrew due to a change at her employment. The applicants were asked to prepare a sample flyer for a developer with information provided by the EDC. The committee interviewed the four applicants yesterday. Backman contacted references for each applicant. The review committee unanimously recommended one of the applicants be hired with and anticipated start date in November. The board will be asked to approve the hiring once a final offer is negotiated with the applicant.

[Lindrud returned to the meeting.]

NEW BUSINESS—There was no new business.

REPORTS

Economic Development Activity. Backman reviewed a Development Timeline for the new logistics facility (see attached) on which EDC staff has been working with the City of Willmar. The company is purchasing approximately 27 acres in the Willmar Industrial Park and another 6 acres of unplatted land. Swedburg indicated the EDC entered into an agreement with the City of Willmar to prepare planning commission packets, hearing notices and council action reports relative to the logistics facility at no cost to the city. The City of Willmar is currently interviewing candidates to replace Dave Ramstad. EDC staff is also working on the first project in the Renaissance Zone in Block 25. Braun Intertec is doing soil borings for an environmental study of Block 25, which is anticipated to be completed by the end of September. Herzog started accepting applications for Phase 2 residents of Unique Opportunities; construction will begin on Phase 3 in October and Phase 4 may also be considered this fall. Herzog has asked the EDC to look for additional construction locations. Suite Liv'n's project is moving forward. The City of Willmar received a signed letter of intent from a Minneapolis developer for a mixed use development between Rice Hospital and the library. Backman noted developers are aware of Willmar's increased population from the 2020 census. President TerWisscha noted multi-family housing is increasing, but single-family homes are not. Swedburg reported she is interacting with a developer on owner-occupied housing and town homes and Backman has spoken with local residential developers. Swedburg stated updating the housing study has been discussed. President TerWisscha noted lots are not available for building and suggested the City of Willmar may need to provide some assistance to get a project started. Other communities in the county are also concerned with single-family housing. Raymond has sold lots to a single-family housing developer and Pennock has lots, but no one is building. Swedburg attended the last New London EDA meeting where the need for single-family housing was discussed, including what space is available and if an abutting township would be agreeable to annexation. Jesse Gislason reported Spicer is also looking at single-family housing, but infrastructure is needed.

Elevate Business Academy. Swedburg reported there are five applicants signed up so far. Classes begin September 16. She received 18 sets of class material so more applicants can be accepted.

Two prospects who attended an informational meeting last night are also interested in assisting as instructors. The EDC is eligible to apply for a Small Business Partnership Program grant of up to \$600,000 through the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) for technical support. The application will receive more points if there is a 50% match. The national program through Rising Tide Capital has Spanish materials, but not Somali so there has been some conversation on getting the material translated into Somali. Each class costs approximately \$35,000 and it is planned to hold two sessions each year. American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds may be able to be used for the program; however, Backman suggested a longer-term funding may be best. There has been no guidance yet on the use of ARPA funds. Discussions have been held on seeking funding from local law firms and accountants, who may also be a possibility for technical support.

Township Broadband Projects. Swedburg received communication from Charter with a new configuration of its project. Charter has proposed four projects, one of which was approved by the county. The National Telecommunications and Information Administration grant application was submitted in mid-August for a \$28 million project in seven counties; 88% of the project would be funded by the grant and 12% would be contributed by Federated Telephone Cooperative. The state Border-to-Border Grant Program has not yet opened as it is awaiting information on whether or not ARPA funds can be used. Prinsburg's project is moving along with Arvig. Swedburg has received calls from other townships interested in a broadband project. Vibrant Broadband needs to increase the minimum speeds for its project on the east side of the county if ARPA funds will be used. Vibrant's project is semi wireless and semi fiber. The county is very committed to broadband and plans to use about 75% of its ARPA funds for broadband projects. When in Willmar, Swedburg spoke with the DEED Commissioner and Amy Klobuchar's staff about broadband issues to raise their awareness.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Agriculture and Renewable Energy Development. Swedburg reported a couple of new people are interested in joining the committee. Kandi Land Farm gave a presentation at the last committee meeting on its family activities planned for this fall.

Business Retention and Expansion/Recruitment (BRE). Backman reported the BRE subcommittees continue to meet. Plans are being made for the West Central Minnesota Area Job Fair to be held October 13, 2021 at Ridgewater College, dependent upon COVID. Businesses have been registering. Swedburg has been working with a group relative to manufacturing month in October. The EDC will have an ad in a virtual magazine. There may be in-person or virtual tours of local manufacturing businesses for high school students. Preliminary plans are being done for businesses to produce virtual tour videos for next year.

Finance. Backman stated the committee will meet next week to consider a loan request for a Raymond business. The loan to Amin Grocery closed last week and the loan to Groom Zone will close the end of September.

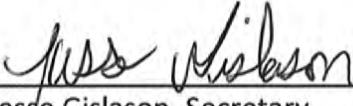
Marketing and Public Relations. Swedburg noted EDC staff has been gathering EDC marketing ideas and materials for the new staff person to update.

Leisure Travel. No report.

WHAT'S UP? President TerWisscha reported TerWisscha Construction continues to make progress on Simply Shrimp. He noted there is a lot of activity happening in the county. His business has hired some staff, but still has about 20 openings. Gislason and his partner are getting Alley on Ash open full time and looking for staff. Asmus reported the work on First Street is done and Highway 12 is also re-paved. Rollie Boll believes there will be an early harvest and it will be better than anticipated. Commodities dropped some, but are still high. Donna Boonstra reported her projects are moving ahead and product is arriving. Lindrud interviewed her for the upcoming *Impact* magazine. Construction on the north and south gaps of Highway 23 are on time and on budget. Bid opening for the north gap will be done November 10th. She spoke with Michelle Fischbach's staff and letters were sent to all Minnesota congressional representatives either thanking them for requesting congressionally directed funding or voicing concerns to those who did not. Congressional representatives will be attending future board meetings. Heitke noted the grand opening for the Flags of Honor will be September 11. He also provided information on The Fortress, which provides housing for about 25 men who are going through recovery or following incarceration; the men apply to live at The Fortress. He provided this information to Bridget Paulson of Central Minnesota Jobs & Training Services, which has a retraining program. Swedburg noted Kueppers is breaking ground on the housing project by PetSmart at the end of the month.

NEXT MEETING—The next board meeting is 11:00 a.m., Thursday, October 14, 2021 at the Community Room of Heritage Bank, Willmar and via Zoom video conference.

ADJOURNMENT—There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 12:40 p.m.



Jesse Gislason, Secretary

APPROVED: 10/14/2021



Art Benson, Vice President

Development Timeline – New Logistics Facility in Industrial Park 4th Addition

☒ = Task Completed

Developer submits fully complete construction drawings and specifications ASAP for Building Official & State Review

- **Note:** 2-3 month processing time because there is an 8-12 week delay in State plan reviews (Submitted by City to State). Therefore building permits may not be issued until sometime between November - December.

☒ August 4 – Planning Commission Meeting

- Major Subdivision Application – Initiated by City
 - Plat Provided by Developer - Planner distributed survey to four Department Directors: (1) Engineering, (2) Fire, (3) Police, and (4) WMU (electric & water) for their review and any requirements that developer must incorporate
 - NOTE: Since site abuts County Road 5, the new plat must also be sent to County for 30-day review period (To September 4)
 - Director contacted County Engineer Mel Odens requesting a reduction in the 30-day review time. Mel plans to respond Aug 9-11 with his plat comments and other requirements in order to shorten timeframe.
- Planning Commission Meeting
 - Land Sale Review/Approval by Planning Commission (Followed by 2 meeting process with City Council - Aug 16 & Sept 7)

☒ August 10, 10am – Submittal Due Date for August 16 City Council Agenda Items (Prepared by Director)

- Council Action Request (CAR)
 - Approve early access license agreement (Resolution) to allow RDC National, Inc. to perform initial grading work, but no construction of improvements allowed until Plat Approved, Closing completed and Permits issued
 - Approve Purchase Agreement (Resolution)
 - Introduce ordinance authorizing land sale and set public hearing at next Council meeting (1st of 2 meetings on Aug 16th - 2nd meeting on Sept 7th)
- CAR
 - Resolution in support of developer's application for major subdivision / replat (b/c city is property owner)
 - Resolution in support of developer's rezoning application (b/c city is property owner)
 - Resolution initiating vacation of 32nd Street SW between Trott and Willmar Aves and utility easements (b/c city is property owner) with supporting documents:

☒ August 13 – Additional PC Applications Due Date

- Application & Fee for Land Use Plan Review - Satisfactory application, attachments, & fee must be received no sooner than 16-days prior to a Planning Commission meeting
- Application & Fee for Rezoning of Property from G/I to I-1 - Satisfactory application, attachments, & fee must be received no sooner than 16-days prior to a Planning Commission meeting

August 16 - City Council Meeting

- Approve **Purchase Agreement** (Resolution)
- Introduce ordinance authorizing land sale and set public hearing at next Council meeting (1 of 2 meetings - 2nd meeting on Sept 7)
- Approve **early access license agreement** (Resolution) to allow RDC National, Inc. to have early access to site to begin grade work, but no construction of improvements allowed until Plat Approved and Permits issued
- Adopt Resolution initiating **vacation of 32nd Street SW** between Trott and Willmar Aves and utility easements forward to Planning Commission (September 1)
- Adopt Resolution in support of **major subdivision** application
- Adopt Resolution initiating **rezoning of property** from G/I to I-1

August 31, 10am – Submittal Due Date for September 7th City Council Agenda Items (Prepared by EDC)

- CAR - Public Hearing to Adopt Ordinance authorizing **land sale**
- CAR - Adopt Resolution setting public hearing (9/20) to **Vacate Street & Utility Easements**

September 1 – Publishing Deadline for Public Hearing Notice in West Central Tribune on Saturday Sept 4 (At least 10-days prior to September 15 Planning Commission meeting)

- Public Hearing for **Map Amendment Rezoning**
- Public Hearing for **Major Subdivision**

September 1 - Planning Commission Meeting (EDC & City Attorney should be in attendance)

- Review of Council-initiated **Vacation of Street & Utility Easements**; forward recommendation to City Council (September 7 & 20)
- Review of **Land Use Plan Review**

September 7 - City Council Meeting (Day after Labor Day - Presented by EDC)

- Public Hearing to Adopt Ordinance **authorizing land sale**
- Adopt Resolution setting public hearing (9/20) to **Vacate Street & Utility Easements**

September 8 – Submittal Due Date for September 15th Planning Commission Agenda Items (Prepared by EDC)

- Public Hearing for **Map Amendment Rezoning**
- Public Hearing for **Major Subdivision** *Consolidated Preliminary & Final Plat Approval

September 14, 10am – Submittal Due Date for September 20th City Council Agenda Items (Prepared by EDC)

- CAR - Public Hearing to Adopt Resolution **Vacating Street & Utility Easements**
- CAR - Draft **Development Agreement (Resolution)**
- CAR - Review/Approval of **Major Subdivision (Resolution)**
 - Consolidated Preliminary & Final Plat Approval, conditioned on successful closing on Developer's purchase of real property
- CAR - Introduction of Ordinance to **Rezone Property** from G/I to I-2 and set public hearing (10/4)

September 15 - Planning Commission Meeting (EDC & City Attorney should be in attendance)

- Public Hearing for **Map Amendment Rezoning**; forward to City Council (Sept 20 & Oct 4)

- Public Hearing for **Major Subdivision**; forward to City Council (September 20)
 - Consolidated Preliminary & Final Plat Approval, conditioned on successful closing on Developer's purchase of real property
- September 20 - City Council (Presented by City Attorney or EDC)**
- Public Hearing to Adopt Resolution **Vacating Street & Utility Easements**
 - Adopt resolution vacating street and utility easements, conditioned on (1) successful closing on Developer's purchase of real property; and (2) recording of final plat dedicating replacement easements
 - Review/Approval of **Development Agreement (Resolution)**
 - Review/Approval of **Major Subdivision**
 - Consolidated Preliminary & Final Plat Approval (Resolution), conditioned on successful closing on Developer's purchase of real property
 - Introduction of Ordinance to **Rezone Property** from G/I to I-2 and set public hearing (10/4)
- September 21 – City Staff Final Plat Review**
- **Final Plat submitted to Planner for Staff review**, prior to signing mylars of plat for recording
- September 21-30 – Closing**; pending Developer approval of Rezoning Public Hearing being incomplete
- September 27 - Submittal Due Date for October 4th City Council Agenda Items (Prepared by EDC)**
- **CAR - Public Hearing to Adopt Ordinance Rezoning Property** from G/I to I-2
- October 1 – Recording of Instruments in following order:**
1. Resolution **Vacating 32nd Street ROW** and Easements (after expiration of 10-day appeal period)
 2. Final plat
 3. Quit Claim Deed
- October 4 – City Council (Presented by EDC)**
- Public Hearing to Adopt Ordinance **Rezoning Property** from G/I to I-2
 - Adopt, assign # & publish rezoning ordinance, conditioned on successful closing on Developer's purchase of real property