

OLIVIA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY MINUTES

Wednesday, August 23, 2023

CALL TO ORDER AND DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM

The regular meeting of the EDA was called to order by Chair Baumgartner at 12:00 P.M. at the Olivia City Council Chambers.

Members Present: Cathy Baumgartner, Chuck Brown, George Ebbers, Michelle Hanson, & Jon Hawkinson & Tom McDonnell.

Staff Present: Elizabeth Torkelson, City Administrator; Susie Lang, EDA Director; Marissa Catillo, Planning and Zoning Administrator.

Others Present; Antonio Rosell, Community Design Group; Scott Tedrick, Renville County Register.

Welcome to new City Administrator Elizabeth Torkelson and introductions of the EDA Board Members.

AGENDA ADDITIONS/APPROVAL

Motion by Ebbers, second by Hanson: to approve the revised agenda as submitted. Motion passes unanimously.

MINUTES OF THE July 26, 2023 MEETING

Motion by McDonnell, second by Brown: to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of July 26, 2023. Motion passes unanimously.

Downtown Revitalization Conversation- Antonio Rosell

Rosell of Community Design Group provided a recap of the current Comp Plan project. More than 700 people have participated in the various surveys that have been conducted over the past year as part of the project. The Comp Plan Steering Committee is reviewing the People & Trends chapter now and plan to meet again in September. Rosell shared that Steve Dirks was actively involved in the Comp Plan, and his passing along with the closing of the multi-generational Dirks Furniture store, located in downtown Olivia has triggered some “what now” conversations. There was a comment section on one of Rosell’s surveys and, Rosell read some of the more negative remarks about downtown Olivia. The surveys, results and comments can be found at <https://olivia.mn.us/comprehensive-plan/>. Comp Plans look at the community today, ten years in to the future and 20 years from now. Olivia’s population trends were then shared with the board, they paint a picture of decline for the community and region. Many factors play into this trend and communities are then faced with the decision on accepting,

slowing or reversing the trends. One factor that has slowed the population loss in Olivia starting in the early 1980's, is the increase in the immigrant population. This is a cause for celebration along with the 950 jobs that are held in Olivia by "commuters". More recently, remote work opportunities now allow the luxury of quality-of-life based motivation when deciding where to live for individuals and families. Activities, events, opportunities and beauty play into quality-of-life metrics. Rosell encouraged the EDA board to keep this in mind when investment opportunities come along and to be intentional on how the city of Olivia wants to present its self. Rosell explained that the strategic vision of downtown is a different component than the Comp Plan and worth exploring. Rosell suggested doing a Strategic Vision of downtown and estimates a consultant costing between \$10,000-\$15,000. The southwest Initiative Foundation has suggested that they could be of assistance in this phase, with a grant of up to \$4,000. This could encompass a plan to try and capture those commuters who work here already and come up with creative way to encourage affordable housing, housing for all stages of life, promotion of positive assets, and scalable entertainment ideas for residents and visitors.

Rosell exited the meeting.

AMENDMENT TO PURCHASE AGREEMENT

Motion by Brown, second by Hawkinson: to approve the extension of the deliverables time period in regards to the Bayberry purchase agreement. Lang shared that it took longer to get the required items together than expected. This will not affect the closing date; everything is still on track for an October 1st closing.

Tedrick exited the meeting.

CLOSED MEETING

At 12:40 P.M. Chair Baumgartner temporarily recessed the regular meeting and entered into a closed meeting to discuss the potential sale of real property identified as 35-06843-00. Chair Baumgartner reopened the meeting at 1:07 P.M.

POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING SALE OF REAL PROPERTY

Motion by Ebbers. Seconded by Hanson. To explore the land swap concept. Motion passed with all members in favor.

UPDATES AND RELATED ITEMS

Lang shed that she has had more conversations with Judy Dirks and was given the full tour of all of the buildings that make up Dirks Furniture. The County HRA/EDA is part of these conversations too. Meetings have been requested with Chrysler to further explore the sale of the building and lots but no meeting time has worked out as of late. Coffee and Conversations will be held on Monday, August 28 from 10am-1pm as a meet and greet event for the

community and the new City Administrator Elizabeth Torkelson. The open position on the EDA Board as well as other city boards and committees will be posted on the city's Facebook page. It was all suggested that the city consider doing a revamp of the city website.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by McDonnell second by Ebbers: to adjourn the meeting at 1:21 P.M. Motion passed unanimously.

Submitted by,
Susie Lang