

Meeting Minutes
Economic Development Committee / Planning Commission
Tuesday, July 31, 2012 - 4:30 p.m. - City Council Chambers

Members present: Morack, O'Connell, Steinhorst, Schirpke, Romberg, and Shaw (4:50 pm). Tate excused.

Planning Commission members present: Ron Steinhorst, Gary Henke, Tom Spilman, Steve Thompson, and Doug Noel.

Also present: Mayor Gary Henke, Mike Barrington, Administrator Hager, Wendy Schirpke, and Gary Laeyendecker, Buyer Broker for Commercial Associates.

1. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Morack at 4:30 p.m. O'Connell/Steinhorst to adopt agenda. Carried 5-0.
2. The first item on the agenda was a discussion with Gary Laeyendecker from Commercial Associates of Neenah about a development proposal for the City downtown property, formerly the Wolf River Lumber site. Mr. Laeyendecker was present representing himself as the Buyer Broker for the prospective purchaser of the property, Dennis Hermans of Nicolet Lumber out of Green Bay. They are proposing to purchase the City downtown property and construct three, two-story tall, twelve-unit apartment buildings on the land. A draft of the proposed site plan was distributed along with a set of floor plans for the structures and a set of example photos were circulated. Each rental unit will have direct access to their own garage. They will be one and two-bedroom in size. The three structures will have a value of about \$2.5 million. The developer proposes to utilize conventional financing and not utilize any tax-credits. These will be "market rate" apartments with rents running about \$750-\$850 a month. All the units will be rental units and no condominiums. A project manager will live on site. A concern was expressed that if the City signs the contract, the City loses all control of the property. It was suggested that more specificity can be achieved by the use of a development agreement where the details of the development of the project can be identified such as the future use, development time-line, and establishment of a guarantee of performance. It was suggested that representatives from the Committee and the Planning Commission would find it helpful to visit one of the other developments that the developer has constructed in the area. Mr. Laeyendecker agreed that they are more than willing to negotiate the terms of a development

agreement and that he would be willing to coordinate a tour of a similar development. A motion was made to have Administrator Hager initiate development of a draft development agreement with Mr. Laeyendecker's client to bring back before the Economic Development Committee for review; to initiate a change in zoning to accommodate multi-family use of the property in the future; and to arrange for a tour of a similar development. Motion passed unanimously.

3. The Committee welcomed Wendy Schirpke from Custom Carpets. At the last Committee meeting it was suggested that the Committee invite local business people to visit with them about what the City could do to make them more successful and to find out what are some of the negative aspects that may be working against their business. Wendy, being the daughter of Gordy Schirpke, a member of the Committee, graciously agreed to be the initial person to meet with the Committee as a trial run of the idea for visiting with our local business people. A general discussion was held. The following are examples of questions that were asked: Why did you locate here? What is your background in this business? What kind of unique challenges did locating in New London present? What are the benefits and costs associated with locating your business downtown? Did you get what you needed from the City?

While conducting the interview, the Committee agreed that it would be beneficial to expand the downtown river front façade grant program to encompass the front facades of the downtown businesses along North Water Street and Pearl Street. The Committee also agreed that while parking can be a problem, there is no easy remedy to the issue. The City generally has a minimal amount of regulations that may interfere with business however; signage regulations may need to be reviewed again as we live in changing times. It was noted that the change in smoking laws has made a mess of downtown. It would be nice if the downtown businesses would pay more attention to what their business clients do to the downtown by helping clean up after them.

The consensus of the group was that it was worth proceeding with interviews with our local business people as we can always learn something from one another. These types of visits are also worthwhile to open lines of communication and develop contacts with our business community. When proceeding with future visits with our downtown business people, it was

determined that it was best not to rely on a specific set of questions but rather to enter into an open dialogue among those present.

4. Kent's updates and business visits were reviewed by the Committee. A motion was made to seek funding in the 2013 budget for the requested dollar per capita contribution to the "Ignite Fox Cities" effort. Motion passed unanimously. A motion was also made to ask to re-capitalize the downtown façade improvement grant program in the 2013 budget with \$15,000 and to expand the scope of the program to front façade improvements along both sides of North Water St. and Pearl Street. Motion passed unanimously.
5. At the next Committee meeting in August, Dave Thiel and Nick Thiel will demonstrate the "Locate in Wisconsin" industrial park marketing program for the North East New London Business Center. We will also try and arrange for another business person to interview. It was noted that there may be a need to have a special meeting to further consider a development agreement with Mr. Laeyndecker's client. It was also suggested that it would be good to have Sandy DuFrane present to provide the Committee with an update on activity at the North East New London Business Center.
6. Under "Other Topics" it was suggested that arrangements be made for an "open house" type of activity at the North East New London Business Center where all local area design/build firms would be invited for a "get acquainted" opportunity. Laurie Shaw updated the Committee on the new Chamber of Commerce building and noted how the location has substantially increased traffic and exposure of the Chamber. Laurie thanked the City for being such a good partner with this very successful effort.
7. O'Connell/Steinhorst to adjourn. Carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.