

CITY COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS
BEMIDJI, MINNESOTA
Special Meeting – March 21, 2006

Pursuant to due call and notice, a special work session of the City Council of the City of Bemidji, Beltrami County, Minnesota, was held on March 21, 2006, at 5:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers of City Hall, Mayor Lehmann presiding.

Upon roll call, the following Councilmembers were declared present: Hellquist, Lehmann, Markeson, Johnson, Downs, Erickson. Absent: Meuers

Other Present: Anne Sand, Tony Mayer, Lori Kramka, Tim Flathers, Andy Mack, Curt Oakes, David Minke, Al Felix, Kay Murphy-Schuett

Mayor Lehmann stated that the purpose of the meeting to discuss the Rako Street property.

Minke stated that the Rako property was purchased with the idea that it would be developed into housing.

Anne Sand, Headwaters Housing Development Corporation (HHDC), stated that they believe the Rako site is a terrific spot for the development of housing. Sand provided an overview of a housing study completed in December, 2005, by Community Partners Research, Inc. which indicated that the City has added approximately 738 new residents through growth from 2000 to 2004 and even without annexation, it is projected that there will be an addition of 680 people by 2010. In addition, age-based projections are expected with large-scale growth in the 25 to 34 year old age range. Sand stated that the HRDC staff sees this age group as one that will need and will purchase the kind of affordable houses that are planned for the Rako Street project.

Sand proposed that the City and Headwaters Regional Development Commission (HRDC) work together to create a housing development on Rako Street site currently owned by the City. The City will then sell the site to the HRDC or the HHDC and continue to work in partnership with the entities to meet the housing needs of all three organizations. Since 1994, the HHDC has built 40 houses in the City and currently building two more with the Technical College and overseeing the construction of another five.

Sand stated the goals of this development are numerous. The development of the Rako Street site will reclaim the site, cleaning it up and turning it into taxable property. The plat will be designed as a mixed-income development. The development will be a landmark project for the City with 15 acres of green space adjacent to the houses and a design that specifically provides for the creation of a neighborhood. It will promote ownership and provide an opportunity for those who wish to buy a house. The site could provide building lots for three existing construction programs – the Bemidji High School, NW Technical College building programs in partnership with the HHDC, and the Institution Community Work Crew in partnership with the Beltrami County Housing and Redevelopment Authority and the Minnesota Department of Corrections.

Sand reviewed the outline for the project stating that the City and the HRDC will work together on the various steps that must be completed to ensure that the development of the site is successfully accomplished.

Downs asked what type of problem does the drainage ditch pose?

Sand stated she has spoken with Mn/DOT and they have informed her that the ditch is deeper than it is needed but it is workable. They have discussed the installation of a large pipe with a cover.

Meuers joined the meeting at 5:55 p.m.

Lehmann stated that he envisioned smaller homes at approximately 900 to 1,000 sq. ft. being built on the property. Homes that are for younger families.

Downs commented that this also might be an opportunity for seniors that are downsizing their home.

Johnson suggested that a partnership with Mike Christiansen, the neighboring property owner, be explored by the HHDC regarding infrastructure.

Discussion continued regarding a development with an alley. It was noted that an alley increases the cost of maintenance.

Sand stated that what the HHDC is requesting now from the Council is a “nod” of their heads that they are agreeable to the development and that staff can work with them.


It was noted that the property was purchased from Mn/DOT and the City will be able to net and use the money toward the construction of the public works facility.

Motion by Johnson, second by Erickson, to direct staff to continue to work with HRDC on the Rako Street project. Motion carried unanimously.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, motion by Meuers, second by Downs, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 6:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Kay Murphy-Schuett
City Clerk