

CITY COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS

BEMIDJI, MINNESOTA

Work Session – Monday, September 9, 2013

Pursuant to due call and notice, a work session of the City Council of the City of Bemidji, Beltrami County, Minnesota, was held on Monday, September 9, 2013, at 5:30 p.m. in the Conference Room of City Hall, Mayor Albrecht presiding.

Upon roll call, the following Councilmembers were declared present: Albrecht, Hellquist, Johnson, Olson, Erickson, Thompson Absent: Meehlhause

Staff Present: City Manager John Chattin, City Clerk Kay Murphy
Other Present: Dave Hengel – Greater Bemidji; Aaron Chirpich - HRDC

Amendment to Agenda

Motion by Johnson, seconded by Thompson, to add discussion regarding appointing an alternate on the Joint Planning Board. Motion carried unanimously.

Alternate for JPB

Mayor Albrecht stated that the Joint Planning office is asking the City and Northern Township to appoint alternates to serve on the Joint Planning Board due to Bemidji Township not attending the meetings.

Motion by Thompson, seconded by Hellquist, appointing Councilor Olson as the City's alternate on the Greater Bemidji Joint Planning Board. Motion carried unanimously.

Update – Greater Bemidji

Dave Hengel, Greater Bemidji Executive Director, provided an update on the 2013 Work Program initiatives and outcomes. He reported that they have support from 52 other organizations and investors as well as the City. They are working on developing a Mn Innovation Institute which would provide high skilled training for manufacturers. Marketing of Bemidji continues. They have partnered with the Chamber and an economic development section will be included in the next tourism guide for the Bemidji area. Hengel stated that marketing of the south shore development is their number one priority. In addition, they are working other projects which include the rail corridor redevelopment, airport development and biomass.

Rail Corridor Redevelopment Project

Aaron Chirpich, HRDC, stated that the City owns approximately 20 acres of land that was a former rail corridor between Lake Irving and downtown Bemidji. He reviewed a proposed work program stating that there will be public input through stakeholder focus groups and open houses for the general public. The first open house is tentatively planned for October at City Hall.

Discussion continued regarding the geographic scope of the project. Chirpich and Hengel suggested that the Council may want to consider including an area that is south of the corridor in North Lake Irving as well as the former Pamida location and Union Square.

Hellquist asked what incentives would be available for potential developers. He also suggested that the RDG plan should be revisited.

Hengel responded there are no incentives; it is more about the vision for the area.

Motion by Thompson, seconded by Johnson, to expand the geographical area to include the Pamida property, North Lake Irving area and Union Square for planning purposes. Motion carried with Hellquist voting no.

Chirpich stated that a task force consisting of community members plus staff would work toward a redevelopment plan that would include an examination of the site's benefits and challenges and detail what would be needed to pique the interest of a developer. The taskforce includes representatives from the Northwest Minnesota Foundation, Engineering/Environmental, Banking/Finance, Trail/Active Living, Utilities, Downtown Development Authority, businesses in the area, Bemidji Leads, two City Councilors and two community members. In addition, a staff team would include Aaron Chirpich-HRDC, Dave Hengel-


Greater Bemidji, Tiffany Fettig–HRDC, John Chattin-City Manager, Craig Gray-City Engineer; and Mayana Rice-Joint Planning Office.

Motion by Johnson, seconded by Thompson, to appoint Councilmembers Olson and Erickson to the Rail Corridor Community Task Force. Motion carried with Thompson voting no.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, motion by Olson, seconded by Hellquist, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 7:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Kay M. Murphy
City Clerk