

**City of Merrill
Joint Review Board**

**Tuesday, September 10th 2013 at 4:30 P.M.
City Hall Council Chambers, 1004 East First Street**

Members Present: Mayor Bill Bialecki (City of Merrill representative), Jane Kittel (Northcentral Technical District representative), Kelly Collins (Merrill Area Public Schools representative), Bob Weaver (Lincoln County representative), and Ralph Sturm (public member)

Others Present: Finance Director/RDA Secretary Kathy Unertl, Brian Reilly from Ehlers & Associates, City Administrator Dave Johnson, City Attorney Tom Hayden, Alderpersons Dave Sukow and Kandy Peterson, Dewey Pfister, several other members of the public, and student taping from Merrill Productions

Call to order Chair Bialecki called the meeting to order at 4:30 P.M.

Review and consideration of October 6th, 2011 meeting minutes:

Motion (Sturm/Weaver) to approve the Joint Review Board meeting minutes from October 6th, 2011. Carried.

Confirm representation and discuss responsibilities of the Joint Review Board:

Representation remained the same as October 6th, 2011 except for Merrill Area Public Schools. New MAPS representative is Board of Education member Kelly Collins.

Brian Reilly from Ehlers & Associates explained the responsibilities of the Joint Review Board including reviewing "A Guide for Joint Review Board Members" from the Wisconsin Department of Revenue. Reilly noted that the primary purpose of a Joint Review Board is to ensure that all taxing jurisdictions are represented and allowed input when the creation of Tax Increment District is being considered.

The three primary decision criteria for the Joint Review Board are whether the development expected in the TID would occur without the use of tax increment financing; whether the economic benefits of the TID as measured by increased employment, business and personal income, and property value, are insufficient to cover the costs of proposed improvements; and whether the benefits of the proposal outweigh the anticipated tax increments to be paid by the owners of property in the overlying taxing districts.

Overview, discuss, and review Project Plans for:

- TID 3 – Project Plan and Boundary Amendment
- TID 4 – Project Plan and Boundary Amendment
- TID 5 – Project Plan Amendment
- TID 8 – Project Plan and Boundary Amendment
- TID 9 – Creation [Proposed as “Blighted” Area TID]

Copies of the draft project plans were distributed to Joint Review Board members. Reilly highlighted key sections of the project plans.

Reilly and Unertl highlighted the changes being proposed for existing TIDs, as well as why deleting parcels from TID No. 3 and moving “blighted” properties into proposed new TID No. 9. Unertl noted the mixed-use TIDs have 20 year lifespan while a “blighted” area TID has 27 year lifespan. The major 2013 expenditure from TID No. 3 is \$400,000 for the State Highway 64/Pine Ridge Ave. intersection improvements needed for the new Wal-Mart development site, as well as resolve long-standing traffic safety/congestion issues.

TID No. 4 was created in 2007 as mixed-use TID. Unertl advised that proposed boundary amendment area includes Pine Ridge Plaza and existing leased Wal-Mart site. These are two of the ten highest valued properties in Merrill and the City/Redevelopment Authority would like to see higher density redevelopment.

TID No. 5 was also created in 2007 as mixed-use TID. There is no change in boundary, just updating the project expenses and development projections. Unertl emphasized that key infrastructure being planned is street lighting within ½ mile of the TID boundary – especially given the tens of thousands of vehicles that go to the Merrill Area Recreation Complex and new Northcentral Technical College’s Public Safety School of Excellence on Champagne Street.

TID No. 8 was created in September 2011 as “blighted” area TID with 27 year lifespan. Unertl advised that adding additional parcels that had to be dropped in 2011 due to large City-owned vacant parcel. Now adding these Alexander Street parcels, as well as Precision Laser which is currently does not have City water and sanitary sewer services.

TID No. 9 is proposed for creation at Special Merrill Common Council meeting on Tuesday, September 24th. More than 50% of the area is “blighted” as determined by the City Building Inspector’s assessment. One property being dropped from the “blight” finding is Merrill Equipment, so that will be reflected in final TID Plan lists and maps. Unertl noted that the area on the north side of the Wisconsin River is included in a 2007 Waterfront Plan. Interest from property owners will determine how future redevelopment occurs and what TIF infrastructure/development incentives might be requested.

Unertl distributed TIF development incentive overview and fiscal projections related to Burgener Contract Carriers, LTD. Without TIF, this proposed 7,000 sq. ft. new steel-frame building and up to ten new jobs would not happen. Proposed TIF development incentive is \$75,000 to be paid over a five year timeframe as new tax increment is generated. A formal development agreement will be available at the final Joint Review Board meeting.

Next Joint Review Board meeting date:

Joint Review Board will meet on Monday, October 7th, 2013 at 3:30 p.m.

Public comment:

Joe Rudolph from Merrill Equipment expressed concern with preliminary “blight” finding related his business property. Unertl advised that City management has removed Merrill Equipment from the list of “blighted” properties in proposed Tax Increment District No. 9.

Adjournment:

Motion (Weaver/Sturm) to adjourn. Carried. Adjourned at 5:25 P.M.

Minutes prepared and submitted by:

Kathy Unertl, Finance Director/RDA Secretary