

**City of Merrill
Redevelopment Authority (RDA)**

**Tuesday, March 4th, 2014 at 8:00 A.M.
City Hall Council Chambers**

RDA Present: Bill Bialecki, Ryan Schwartzman, Wally Smith, David Hayes,
Ralph Sturm, and Jill Laufenberg

RDA Absent: Karen Karow

Others: City Administrator Dave Johnson, Finance Director Kathy Unertl, City Attorney Tom Hayden, Susan Ryman from Lincoln County Economic Development Corp (LCEDC), Mike Morrissey from Morrissey Consulting, Kristen Fish and Mary Rajek from Redevelopment Resources, City Building Inspector/Zoning Administrator Darin Pagel from Northwinds Inspection, Community Development Program Administrator Shari Wicke, Dean Fenske from AECOM, Dewey Pfister, Christine Vorpapel, and Collin Lueck from FotoNews

Call to Order: Chair Bialecki called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

Approval of meeting minutes from January 7th, 2014:

Motion (Schwartzman/Sturm to approve the meeting minutes. Carried.

Update and discussion on Lincoln House (Tax Increment District No. 6):

City Administrator Johnson reported that it would cost an additional \$11,000 to remove both basement slabs to facilitate redevelopment of the site. Mayor Bialecki and Kristen Fish from Redevelopment Resources emphasized that a “clean site” would be most attractive for redevelopment. Mike Morrissey from Morrissey Consulting noted easier long-term maintenance based upon his experience in Wausau. Sturm commented that it was a matter of time for ground/pavement shifting if just breaking up slab and burying. Unertl advised that the City of Merrill/RDA has a substantial investment in this site.

Motion (Schwartzman/Laufenberg) to authorize an \$11,000 change order with C&D Demolition to remove both basement slabs from the Lincoln House site. Carried.

Update on 913 E. Main St. and potential amendment of TID No. 6 boundary:

City Building Inspector Darin Pagel advised that there is on-going structural evaluation of the 913 East Main Street building (i.e. former Guy's Shop/Karate) due to the roof collapse. It is likely that demolition will be the only option. Unertl noted that this site is not within the TID No. 6 boundary and that any consideration for amending the TID would be after demolition occurs. Bialecki also strongly recommended waiting on any potential TID No. 6 boundary amendment.

Update on façade evaluation and potential options for 403 W. Main St. (St. Vincent building in Tax Increment District No. 8):

Unertl distributed a building analysis report prepared by Stacy Ness from Kye Studios on 403 West Main Street. Sturm questioned why doing anything for property owner not asking for help. Further that TIF should be used to increase property valuations, bring in new businesses, and new jobs.

Laufenberg emphasized that at the public hearing on TID No. 8 amendment, Unertl reported that the RDA was interested in broader historical neighborhood preservation. Morrissey and Unertl noted that the white bubble façade does not fit with adjacent properties. The potential availability of grant funding through the Wisconsin Economic Development Corp. (WEDC) was noted.

The building analysis report will be provided to the property owner and meeting scheduled to discuss potential interest and options.

Next RDA meeting: Tentatively scheduled for Thursday, April 3rd at 8:00 a.m.

Public Comment: Christine Vorpapel emphasized the importance of historical renderings of potential façade restoration projects, such as 403 West Main Street. She also advised that there is potential grant funding, as well as historical preservation credits available.

Closed Session:

Chair Bialecki read the following: The RDA may convene in closed session per Wis. Stats. Sec. 19.85(1)(e) - deliberating or negotiating the purchasing of public properties, the investing of public funds, or conducting other specified public business, whenever competitive or bargaining reasons require a closed session to consider potential development incentives for proposed redevelopment projects in Tax Increment District No. 3 (East Side) and No. 8 (West Side).

Motion (Schwartzman/Smith to convene in closed session. Carried on roll call vote at 8:35 a.m.

During the closed session, there was discussion on potential TIF development incentives. City staff and contractors will continue negotiations with potential developers.

Adjournment from Closed Session:

Motion (Schwartzman/Smith to adjourn the meeting at 9:16 a.m. Carried.

Minutes prepared by RDA Secretary Kathy Unertl