

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

**Tuesday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2014 at 8:00 A.M.  
City Hall Council Chambers**

RDA Present: Bill Bialecki, Ryan Schwartzman, David Hayes, Karen Karow, Wally Smith, and Amanda Kostman

RDA Absent: Jill Laufenberg

Others: Alderperson Chris Malm, City Administrator Dave Johnson, City Attorney Tom Hayden, Finance Director Kathy Unertl, Street Commissioner Dick Lupton, Kristen Fish and Mary Rajek from Redevelopment Resources, City Building Inspector/Zoning Administrator Darin Pagel, Community Development Program Administrator Shari Wicke, Mike Morrissey from Morrissey Consulting, Tonia Speener from Clark-Dietz, Scott Voigt, and Jeremy Ratliff from Merrill FotoNews/Courier

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

**Approval of meeting minutes from September 9<sup>th</sup>, 2014:**

**Motion (Schwartzman/Hayes) to approve the meeting minutes. Carried.**

**Update and discussion of Downtown Revitalization Program:**

There will be a January meeting with downtown business and property owners. Bialecki advised that Lincoln County plans on planting new trees around the Courthouse after thirteen were removed.

**Consider potential purchase of 913 East Main Street for \$25,000 from Lincoln County Bank (former Guy's Shop which is now vacant land):**

Wally Smith asked whether Lincoln Community Bank has had any commercial interest in the site. Scott Voigt urged not taking off the tax base for open space. Voigt wondered if adjacent commercial property owners have been asked about their potential interest.

Voigt suggested that the site could facilitate a walkout basement access. He recommended that the RDA Commissioners think about the long-term. Unertl reported that the assessed land valuation for the site is \$37,800. Unertl also advised that the RDA is interested in multi-story redevelopment on the former Lincoln House site (with commercial on 1<sup>st</sup> floor and several floors of residential).

### **Consider potential purchase of 913 East Main Street** (Continued):

Both Voigt and Karen Karow asked about potential litigation between property owners/insurance companies due to the collapsed former Guy Shop building roof? City Building Inspector Darin Pagel reported that the exposed “blighted” wall of the adjacent building owned by Merrill Federal Savings & Loan has building exterior repair orders. Page emphasized that the demolition of the former Guy Shop building just exposed the bad condition of the adjacent building.

Amanda Kostman expressed support for keeping the site as open space. It would be a great place for a break when shopping downtown. Mike Morrissey emphasized the importance of bring people downtown for events to transform the area.

Ryan Schwartzman suggested waiting a month to see if there is any other potential commercial redevelopment interest.

### **Update on potential grant applications:**

Through a team effort between Redevelopment Resources, Lincoln County Economic Development Corp., and City staff, a solid grant application was prepared and submitted to the Wisconsin Economic Development Corp. (WEDC) for Idle Manufacturing Site Redevelopment. Area covered in the grant application included former Anson-Gilkey property, former Page Milk property, and former Merrill Paving property (all in Tax Increment District No. 9). City/RDA should be notified by end of January 2015 if the grant is awarded.

Unertl advised that team is reviewing Federal EPA Brownfield's grant application information. However, it might be premature to submit an environmental clean-up application for the Page Milk site.

**Next RDA meeting:** Tuesday, January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2015 at 8:00 a.m.

**Public Comment:** Scott Voigt recommended pursuing #18 on the downtown initial impressions list – consider trenching overhead utilities (to extent financially feasible). Voigt described the lines as ugly.

**Closed Session:** Unertl advised that there would be no need for closed session related to potential redevelopment of the former fire station. Bialecki read the following notice:

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 property acquisitions to facilitate redevelopment opportunities in Tax Increment District No. 6 (Downtown), No. 3 (East Side), and No. 9 (Wisconsin River area)

**Motion (Schwartzman/Karow) to move into closed session.** Carried on roll call vote 8:35 a.m. City staff provided updates on various potential properties.

**Adjournment: Motion (Schwartzman/Karow) to adjourn.** Carried at 8:50 a.m.

Minutes prepared by RDA Secretary Kathy Unertl