

City of Merrill  
Redevelopment Authority (RDA)

Tuesday, March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2015 at 8:00 A.M.  
City Hall Council Chambers

RDA Present: Bill Bialecki, Ryan Schwartzman, Karen Karow, Wally Smith,  
Jill Laufenberg, and Amanda Kostman

RDA Absent: David Hayes

Others: Alderpersons Dave Sukow and Chris Malm, City Administrator Dave Johnson, Street Commissioner Dick Lupton, City Attorney Tom Hayden, Finance Director Kathy Unertl, Ken Maule from Lincoln County Economic Development Corp., Kristen Fish and Mary Rajek from Redevelopment Resources, Scott Meitus from The Windward Group, City Building Inspector/Zoning Administrator Darin Pagel, Community Development Program Administrator Shari Wicke, City Attorney Administrative Assistant Diane Wais, Tonia Speener from Clark-Dietz, Christine Vorpapel, Dynamo Creative Marketing, and Dewey Pfister

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

**Public Comment:** None.

**Approval of meeting minutes from March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2015:**

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

**Update on delinquent tax foreclosure acquisition, demolition schedule, and planed redevelopment opportunity – 900 E. 1<sup>st</sup> St.:**

Unertl and Pagel provided update on status. City paid Lincoln County \$14,298 for delinquent taxes through TID No. 6. Low bid for demolition and back filling to support the alley was \$32,680 from C&D Excavation. Pagel reported that North Star Environmental conducted asbestos and other environmental testing. Unfortunately, it was necessary to remove items left by the previous owner and tenants (such as used tires and automobile engines).

Laufenberg asked about potential environmental contamination. Pagel advised that no reports to Wisconsin DNR; however, C&D Excavating will be watching as demolition work proceeds.

City staff will issue Request for Proposals (RFP) for site redevelopment as soon as the demolition work is completed.

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**Consider purchase of vacant property from Kwik Trip to facilitate potential future new development (referred from March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2015 Committee of Whole meeting)**

Johnson advised that Kwik Trip is interested in selling the unneeded vacant land west of their dumpsters and that there is an adjacent property owner interested in purchasing and developing. Rather than leaving the vacant property, the City/RDA would purchase and then issue RFP for sale and potential new development. Entire costs of land acquisition would be offset by future property sale.

**Motion (Schwartzman/Laufenberg) to recommend negotiations with Kwik Trip to acquire the property.** Motion carried.

**Status Update on Idle Sites Grant from WEDC:** City of Merrill has been awarded \$417,250 to help redevelop the Wisconsin River frontage east of North Center Avenue.

The grant will assist in completing demolition of former Anson-Gilkey building foundations, acquisition/demolition of former Page Milk and former Merrill Pavers, as well as street/utility extensions and River Bend Trail parking lots (at Park Street and Kyes Street) and path extension to the east from current ending point at Park Street.

Mayor Bialecki thanked Redevelopment Resources, Ken Maule from Lincoln County Economic Development Corp., and City staff for preparing this successful grant application within the WEDC tight timeframe.

**Presentation and discussion Downtown Revitalization Plan:**

Kristen Fish and Mary Rajek from Redevelopment Resources presented power point information from the Downtown Vision Plan. With most traffic entering East Main Street from the east, recommendation is for potential angle parking on the north side of the street. The River Bend Trail provides a strategic opportunity to enhance the back sides of East Main Street buildings. Appendix A provides views from the trail.

Coming from the January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2015 downtown property owner/business meeting, there was considerable input, interest, and “can do” attitude from private sector.

Key for Lincoln House site redevelopment is securing commercial tenant(s) for the 1<sup>st</sup> floor. Page 40 of the Vision Plan is sketch of former Guy’s Shop parcel as potential public gathering space. Page 51 of the Vision Plan includes potential investment matrix and phases.

As for next steps, Mayor Bialecki suggested potential joint Committee of Whole/RDA meeting and inviting downtown property owners and business representatives.

**Review and discussion of Housing Strategic Action Plan Proposal:**

Given the major RDA projects (including Idle Sites Grant and Downtown Vision Plan), Mayor Bialecki suggested waiting for further consideration. **RDA Commissioner consensus to bring back in Fall 2015 for review and discussion.**

**Next RDA meeting:** Tuesday, May 5<sup>th</sup> at 8:00 a.m.

**Closed Session:** 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. 9 (Wisconsin River area) and TID No. 6 (Downtown)

**Motion (Schwartzman/Karow) to move into closed session.** Carried on roll call vote at 9:00 a.m.

Updates provided on potential acquisitions, including discussion of downtown property with delinquent taxes back to 2008. City will have title search conducted on the downtown parcels and bring back to next RDA meeting.

**Adjournment:** Motion (Schwartzman/Karow) to adjourn. Carried at 9:15 a.m.

Minutes prepared by RDA Secretary Kathy Unertl