

**City of Merrill
Joint Review Board**

**Tuesday, September 2nd, 2015 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), Brian Dasher (Merrill Area Public Schools representative), Bob Weaver (Lincoln County representative), and Amanda Kostman (public member)

Others Present: Finance Director/RDA Secretary Kathy Unertl, Sean Lenz and Patrick Malloy from Ehlers & Associates, City Administrator Dave Johnson, City Attorney Tom Hayden, Dewey Pfister, and several other members of the public

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

Confirm representation:

Representation remains the same as October 2013 Joint Review Board except for Merrill Area Public Schools and Public Member.

New MAPS representative is Director of Finance Brian Dasher. Mayor Bialecki advised that the Merrill Common Council had concurred with his recommendation of Redevelopment Authority Commissioner Amanda Kostman as potential Public Member.

Appointment of Public Member:

Motion (Weaver/Bialecki) to appoint Amanda Kostman as Public Member. Carried.

Election of Chairperson:

Motion (Weaver/Kostman) for Bialecki to continue as Chairperson. Carried.

Discuss responsibilities of the Joint Review Board:

Sean Lentz from Ehlers & Associates explained the responsibilities of the Joint Review Board and 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 and when tax increment is proposed to be shared.

Discuss responsibilities of the Joint Review Board (Continued):

The 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.

Review and discuss proposed project plan amendments and TID creation:

Lentz and Malloy used a power point presentation to highlight the proposed TID amendments and creation. Topics covered included how TIF works, eligible project costs, the proposed actions to various Merrill TIDs, project costs, why boundary amendments, overviews of each TID status, and process timelines.

Malloy distributed printed copies of the draft project plans which were previously e-mailed.

- TID 3 – Project Plan Amendment in order to share increment with TIDs No. 6, 7, and 8
- TID 3 – Project Plan and Boundary Amendment
- TID 6 – Project Plan and Boundary Amendment
- TID 7 – Project Plan and Boundary Amendment
- TID 8 – Project Plan and Boundary Amendment
- TID 10 – Creation [Proposed as “Blighted” Area TID]

Lentz, Malloy, and Unertl highlighted the changes being proposed for existing TIDs. Some parcels are being deleted to reduce “decrement” which has occurred in TIDs No. 6, No. 7, and No. 8. All the City’s “blighted area” TIDs have negative fiscal balances as of 12/31/2014. The eastside TID No. 3 (which is Mixed Use TID) has positive cash flow and sharing of tax increment is proposed.

Unertl advised that potential TIF owner-occupied roof loans are being proposed for all TID Plans. Due to Federal/State requirements, over 75% of the applicants for CDBG (Community Development Block Grant) loans are being turned down since no owner-equity. The City just demolished/razed three homes on the block east of the new Merrill Fire Station. All three properties had delinquent property taxes. There are other delinquent tax parcels being added in each of the TIDs (except proposed No. 10).

Unertl advised that two parcels (i.e. a church and Fox Point parcel) are being deleted from TID No. 7 and moved into proposed new “blighted area” TID No. 10. The Fox Point parcel has had an almost \$400,000 assessment reduction which is eliminating the tax increment that TID No. 7 has been able to generate.

**Review and discuss proposed project plan amendments and TID creation
(Continued):**

City Administrator Johnson highlighted positive new developments and redevelopment opportunities throughout Merrill. Unertl reported that the City has a Downtown Vision Plan and Westside Renewal Plan is being presented to Merrill Redevelopment Authority. City staff and economic development consultants are pursuing developer for the Lincoln House site which is in TID No. 6.

The Wisconsin Economic Development Corp. (WEDC) awarded a \$417,000 Idle Sites Grant which is being used to complete demolition of Anson-Gilkey site; acquisition and then environmental clean-up/demolition of Page Milk; and trailhead improvements and expansion of the River Bend Trail to the east. This redevelopment area is in TID No. 9.

Next Joint Review Board meeting date:

Merrill Common Council action on Redevelopment Authority (RDA) recommendation is anticipated on Tuesday, September 22nd, 2015. Unertl reported that publication of the Joint Review Board meeting agenda is planned for Friday, September 25th, 2015.

Consensus for Joint Review Board to meet on Monday, October 6th, 2015 at 4:00 p.m.

Adjournment:

Motion (Weaver/Bialecki) to adjourn. Carried. Adjourned at 5:20 P.M.

Minutes prepared and submitted by:

Kathy Unertl, Finance Director/RDA Secretary