

City of Merrill  
Redevelopment Authority (RDA)

Tuesday, December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2016 at 8:00 A.M.  
City Hall Common Council Chambers

RDA Present: Bill Bialecki, Ryan Schwartzman Amanda Kostman, Tim Haight,  
and Jill Laufenberg

Absent: Karen Karow and Tony Kusserow

Others: Alderperson Mary Ball, City Clerk Bill Heideman, City Administrator  
Dave Johnson, Finance Director Kathy Unertl, City Attorney Tom  
Hayden, Public Works Director Rod Akey, City Building Inspector  
Darin Pagel, and Mary Rajek from Redevelopment Resources

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

**Public Comment:** None.

**Consider approval of meeting minutes of November 1<sup>st</sup>:**

**Motion (Schwartzman/Laufenberg) to approve the November 1<sup>st</sup> RDA meeting minutes.** Carried.

**Consider recommendation to purchase 2101 Logan Ave. (former Merrill Pavers property):**

Johnson advised that the City has a written sale agreement from Mathy Construction for \$30,000. The two-acre property is adjacent to the former Anson-Gilkey property that is owned by the City of Merrill. In addition to having a larger redevelopment site, Johnson noted that the River Bend Trail will also be extended further to the east along the Wisconsin River.

The Idle Sites Grant will cover 30% of the purchase price and demolition costs. TID No. 9 will cover the balance of the acquisition and demolition expense.

**Motion (Schwartzman/Kostman) to recommend purchase of 2101 Logan Ave. (former Merrill Pavers property) for \$30,000.** Carried.

---

**Follow up discussion on how to obtain public input related to housing needs and potential future City directions for developing housing strategy:**

Mary Rajek from Redevelopment Resources highlighted proposed local housing demand and factors assessment proposal, as well as draft potential survey questions. Efforts would be made to obtain survey input through area employers/employees, City website, and other social media approaches. Bialecki asked about potential cost. Based upon time and material expenses, Unertl projected less than \$5,000.

Kostman suggested potentially having focus group with area realtors and lenders first. Haight noted that there were too many open-ended questions. Rajek acknowledged need to restructure the draft questions.

Bialecki emphasized that Art Lersch's (U.W. Extension) brief survey to area employers documented that there is a housing shortage in the community. Johnson reported that there is no building contractor developing single-family spec houses in Merrill.

RDA Commissioner discussion focused upon:

- Timing for public input?
- Need for public education and engagement (such as fact sheets as to what new rental housing is under construction and what is planned).

Phase 1 of the Premier Apartments by Merrill Area Recreation Complex will be 36 two-bedroom market-rate apartment units with attached garages. Two additional phases of market-rate rentals might be constructed based upon Phase 1. The Horizon/Merrill Area Housing Authority (MAHA) proposal for the former Fox Point site involves 60 townhome units for family rentals with household income restrictions on 51 of the units. The results of the WHEDA tax credit application will not be known until about May 2017.

- Need for expanded input from employers, as well as employees both living in the area and those commuting to Merrill to work.
- Rentals are in higher demand, especially for younger individuals.
- Based upon other Wisconsin communities with comparable aging population demographics, Unertl suggested that there probably is a market in Merrill for single-level rental duplexes.

Rajek will follow-up with Art Lersch and Amanda Kostman in early 2017.

**RDA meeting:** Next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2017 at 8:00 a.m.

**Adjournment:** Motion (Schwartzman/Laufenberg) to adjourn at 8:35 a.m. Carried.

Minutes prepared by RDA Secretary Kathy Unertl