

City of Merrill
Meeting of Redevelopment Authority (RDA)

Tuesday, August 29th, 2017 at 8:00 a.m.
City Hall Common Council Chambers

RDA Present: Bill Bialecki, Ryan Schwartzman, Karen Karow, Clyde Nelson,
and Tony Kusserow

RDA (Excused): Jill Laufenberg and Tim Haight

Others: City Clerk Bill Heideman, City Administrator Dave Johnson,
City Attorney Tom Hayden, Finance Director Kathy Unertl,
Public Works Director Rod Akey, City Building Inspector Darin
Pagel, and Ken Maule from Lincoln County Economic Development
Corp. (LCEDC)

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

Consider approval of RDA meeting minutes from August 8th and Joint COW-RDA meeting minutes from August 8th:

Motion (Karow/Nelson) to approve the meeting minutes from August 1st.

Public Comment: None.

Discussion of future directions related to housing in City of Merrill:

Bialecki noted that housing building sites remain in Nicklaus and Semling Additions. Both development areas have ended up auctioning off remaining vacant lots.

Nelson reported on \$99,000 priced home that sold in less than four hours after listing. There is low housing inventory in the \$100,000 to \$150,000 range.

Karow asked about condos in Merrill besides Thielman St. Johnson advised that there are two four-plex condos on Johnson St. and Heritage Ct. Karow noted that some older residents were more interested in owning vs. renting.

Unertl highlighted the City of Marshfield housing incentive program which is targeting new residential construction (one or two family units). This new incentive program began June 1st, 2017. Schwartzman concurred with considering some type of new housing construction incentive, as well as toward water and sanitary sewer connections for existing homes requesting annexation into the City of Merrill.

Maule provided an update on potential concept for Kienitz vacant parcel. The preliminary plan was for nine four-unit rental buildings with single level (i.e. no steps). There has not been recent contact from this potentially interested construction contractor. RDA Commissioner consensus to issue Request for Proposal (RFP) for single-level residential development (either rental or condos) on the Kienitz parcel.

Discussion of future directions related to housing (Continued):

Pagel emphasized the need for incentives for in-fill development. Unertl advised that the City of Merrill still does not own most of the vacant lots that have resulted from razing of “blighted” structures. However, Lincoln County appears to be making some progress with delinquent tax foreclosure process. Pagel reported that the Merrill Zoning Board of Appeals has never turned down a proposal for new housing on a non-conforming lot.

There was also discussion about need to issue Request for Proposal (RFP) for development on the former Anson-Gilkey property along the Wisconsin River. Johnson advised that RFP will be issued as soon a Certified Survey Map (CSM) is completed for the new cellular tower site. Karow suggested that condos might be appropriate for this site.

Schwartzman also expressed interest in encouraging broader housing rehabilitation. Unertl noted that the existing Community Development (CDBG) loan programs have income restrictions.

As to potential down payment assistance program, RDA Commissioner preliminary reaction is that if a potential new home owner could not save enough for down payment, it might be fiscally challenging to handle future home maintenance costs.

Next RDA meeting: Tuesday, October 3rd at 8:00 a.m.

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:

- a. Consider approval of closed session minutes from August 1st
- b. Potential purchase of properties and potential TIF development incentives in TID No. 3 and TID No. 4 to facilitate new commercial developments

Motion (Schwartzman/Kusserow) to move to closed session. Motion carried on 5-0 on roll call vote at 8:22 a.m.

City staff provided updates on potential property acquisitions and potential TID development agreements within TID No. 3 and TID No. 4. Per RDA Commissioner consensus, City staff will continue negotiations.

Adjournment: Motion (Schwartzman/Karow) to adjourn at 8:43 a.m. Carried.

Minutes prepared by RDA Secretary Kathy Unertl