

City of Merrill
Meeting of Redevelopment Authority (RDA)

Thursday, February 20th, 2020 at 8:00 a.m.
City Hall Common Council Chambers

RDA Present: Ken Maule, Clyde Nelson, Tony Kusserow, Steve Sabatke, Sheila Polak, Lori Anderson-Malm, and Derek Woellner

Others: City Administrator Dave Johnson, City Attorney Tom Hayden, Finance Director Kathy Unertl via phone conference, Public Works Director/City Engineer Rod Akey, Bill Bialecki from Lincoln County Economic Development Corp., and representative from Merrill Productions

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

Consider approval of RDA meeting minutes from January 8th, 2020:

Motion (Maule/Kusserow) to approve the meeting minutes from January 8th. Carried.

Public Comment: None.

Update on proposed Ryan Ott Construction residential development plan (former Kienitz parcel – TID No. 11):

Johnson reported that Ryan Ott has decided to just pursue single-family home construction. RDA Commissioners noted that the development agreement has a May 31st construction start date. A Request for Proposals (RFPs) will be issued if construction isn't underway by then.

Follow-up on employee count information from FreMarg Innovations (1101 N. Mill St. – TID No. 7):

For the \$100,000 loan to become a forgivable TID No. 7 grant, a total of fifty employees must be retained for two years. RDA Chair Nelson advised that he had reviewed the draft letter restarting the two-year employee count monitoring period effective mid-December 2019. Polak suggested also including ending mid-December 2021 timeframe in the letter.

Update on Impact Seven's Waiver of Purchase Option (former Fox Point site – TID No. 10):

Impact Seven provided a waiver of purchase option dated January 27th, 2020. Another potential developer had expressed potential interest; however, that firm also decided against extending their residential developments further north.

Update on Impact Seven's Waiver of Purchase Option (former Fox Point site – TID No. 10) - Continued:

There was extensive discussion about need for workforce housing; for young families; and affordable units. Sabatke has proposed nineteen lot development site. Public Works Director Akey reported that concept could involve about \$800,000 in infrastructure improvements.

Ehlers & Associates is assisting Finance Director Unertl in reviewing options for the \$500,000 Note Anticipation Note (NAN) balloon payment that is due 10/1/2021. Akey and Unertl emphasized that it is OK to wait for development to occur.

After discussion of 30 to 60 days for response to Request for Proposals (RPFs), RDA Commission consensus to advertise the development site with proposals back in 45 days.

Status review and discussion of City-owned development sites:

- TID No. 11 – 5.314 acres at corner of State Hwy 107/Edgewater Dr. – City Attorney is checking with Rock Ridge Apartments as to their interest in potential Phase 3. If not pursuing Phase 3, City staff will issue Request for Proposals (RFPs).
- TID No. 8 - .382 acre site at corner of W. Main St./S. Prospect – former bank and parking lot which had been lease to Merrill Area Housing Authority during their Stonebridge and Park Place construction projects. City staff will issue Request for Proposals (RFPs).
- TID No. 9 – 14.74 acres of former Anson-Gilkey frontage on Wisconsin River. LCEDC Bill Bialecki is working with local businesses and financial institutions for potential housing development.
- TID No. 9 – 2.12 acres of former Page Milk site. Although finally City-owned through Lincoln County delinquent tax foreclosure, there are Federal tax liens from the previous property owner's business.
- TID No. 3 – 4.300 acres on Thielman Street. Proposed site for future City water tower. Fill from the elevated hill could be used for N. Pine Ridge Ave. extension to Lincoln County Hwy G.
- 66.719 acres for future Industrial/Business Park – Lincoln County Hwy G. The property purchase is financed through TID No. 4.

Maule noted that the State Hwy 107 Industrial Park has no available development sites owned by Merrill Area Development Corp. (MAD). Akey provided background on why the site was purchased for future manufacturing developments without requiring extension of water and sewer service east of US Highway 51.

Review and discussion of “Efficient and Strategic TID Use: A Guide for Wisconsin Municipalities” from The Center on Wisconsin Strategy (COWS):

RDA Commissioners discussed the December 2006 report. Nelson noted that RDA should keep the concepts in our tool box. Woellner highlighted need to have Joint Review Board members' consideration when new TIDs created. City of Merrill is using TIF to drive employment. Other ideas listed in the report include potential job training funding and energy efficiency retrofits.

The COWS report will be provided to the next Joint Review Board meeting.

Next RDA meeting: Wednesday, March 4th at 8:00 a.m.

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: Negotiation for proposed new restaurant site acquisition(s) in TID No. 3 and TID No. 4 (East Side)

Motion (Maule/Kusserow) to move into closed session. Carried 7-0 on roll call vote at 8:45 a.m.

Bill Bialecki from Lincoln County Economic Development Corp. provided an update on both potential new restaurant sites. There will be additional negotiation and further information at the next RDA meeting.

Adjournment: (Kusserow/Maule) to adjourn at 9:16 a.m. Carried.

Minutes prepared by RDA Secretary Kathy Unertl