

**CITY OF MERRILL
Redevelopment Authority (RDA)**

**Tuesday, May 5th, 2015 at 8:00 a.m.
Location – City Hall Council Chambers 1004 East 1st Street**

AGENDA

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

1. Call to order
2. Pending Mayoral appointment of Tony Kusserow to replace David Hayes who resigned
3. Public Comment
4. Consider approval of meeting minutes from March 31st and April 21st, 2015
5. Update on pending Wisconsin Legislation related to TIF Study Committee recommendations
6. Status update on Idle Sites grant activities (Tax Increment District No. 9)
7. Follow-up on Downtown Vision Plan potential implementation including:
 - a. List from Chamber downtown business group
 - b. Recommendation from Board of Public Works related to City parking lot #3 and Scott and Cleveland Streets between East Main St. and East 1st St.
 - c. Potential implementation feasibility and costs for downtown wireless (requested by RDA Commissioner Laufenberg)
 - d. Discussion of additional potential implementation steps
8. Next RDA meeting
9. 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. Potential property acquisitions to facilitate redevelopment opportunities in TID No. 6 (Downtown) and Tax Increment District No. 9 (Wisconsin River area)
10. The RDA may reconvene in open session to take action on closed session property acquisition matters
11. Adjournment

Note: A potential quorum of the Common Council could attend the meeting for information. There will be no Common Council action taken.

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Date and time agenda was posted: _____ *Posted by:* _____

City of Merrill
Redevelopment Authority (RDA)

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Tuesday, March 31st, 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 3rd, 2015:

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

Update on delinquent tax foreclosure acquisition, demolition schedule, and planed redevelopment opportunity – 900 E. 1st 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.

Consider purchase of vacant property from Kwik Trip to facilitate potential future new development (referred from March 16th, 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 20th, 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 1st 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 5th 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

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**City of Merrill
Redevelopment Authority/Committee of Whole
(joint meeting)
Tuesday, April 21, 2015 at 6:00 P.M.
City Hall Common Council Chambers
1004 East First Street**

Redevelopment Authority members present: Bill Bialecki, Ryan Schwartzman, Wally Smith, Jill Laufenberg, and Amanda Kostman (Karen Karow excused)

Committee of the Whole members present (5 of 9): Mayor Bill Bialecki, Alderman Ryan Schwartzman (Third District), Alderwoman Kandy Peterson (Fourth District), Alderman John Burgener (Fifth District), and Alderman Tim Meehean (Eighth District).

Other attendees: City Administrator Dave Johnson, City Attorney Tom Hayden, Finance Director Kathy Unertl, City Clerk Bill Heideman, Street Commissioner Dick Lupton, Lincoln County Clerk Chris Marlowe, Ken Maule from Lincoln County Economic Development Corp., Mary Rajek from Redevelopment Resources, Gene Bebel from River Bend Foundation, Jerry Ratliff from Merrill Courier/FotoNews, and about fifty to sixty interested individuals

Call to order

Mayor Bialecki called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M. Bialecki advised that public comment would be held at the end of the meeting.

Review and discuss Downtown Vision Plan

Information was in the meeting packet. Mary Rajek from Redevelopment Resources highlighted the vision plan via a power point presentation.

The plan is a conceptual vision for the downtown, not a formal redevelopment plan. Rajek noted potential small scale, impact level, and transformative impacts. There are over one hundred taxable properties in the downtown area with a good business mix and with several hundred individuals employed.

The intersection of Stuyvesant St. and East Main St. has about 13,000 vehicles a day. This heavily traffic intersection is the key gateway into the historical downtown area. Besides the Gateway District, three additional areas were identified - Riverfront Alley D District, Main Street District, and First Street District. Several sketches of potential

Review and discuss Downtown Vision Plan (Continued)

parking and other improvements were featured. Other key recommendations include blight elimination and commercial façade rehabilitation. A conceptual new building on the Lincoln House site was shown, as well as drawing of potential pocket park on the former Guy's Shop vacant parcel. Increased pedestrian and bicycle access to the downtown is anticipated from the River Bend Trail. Rajek recommended making an investment in the City's historical downtown.

Bialecki commented on City/RDA redevelopment efforts throughout the City of Merrill. Every effort is made to rehabilitate buildings; however, that is not always feasible which results in demolition. Almost all of these razed buildings have had delinquent property taxes so the City/RDA objective is to transfer to owners whom will pay property taxes.

Since RDA Commissioners, Alderpersons, and City staff could not respond to public comment, Schwartzman requested that floor privileges be granted to deal with two dark clouds in the room. In response to questions about B&D Auto and Trophy Bar, Mayor Bialecki, City Administrator David Johnson, and RDA Commissioners emphasized that the City of Merrill would not be using eminent domain to condemn and raze buildings. Johnson advised that properties need to be maintained in compliance with City ordinances.

Trina Johnson strongly encouraged traffic and parking analysis of the Riverfront-Alley District. With former Thelma's building currently vacant, there are far less vehicles parking than in previous years. Safety concerns related to 3 – 6 p.m. drop off/pickup of kids at Dorinda's Dance Studio were also expressed.

No action taken at this time. Redevelopment Authority will continue to discuss the vision plan and potential implementation strategies.

Public Comment

Michael Caylor, Jr. read from a written statement regarding expenditures for Redevelopment Resources/Morrissey Consulting, City management staff, debt service, and non-union compensation study.

Adjournment

Motion (Schwartzman /Smith) to adjourn. Carried. Adjourned at 7:15 P.M.



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To: Wisconsin State Legislature
From: Lobbying Corps of the League of Wisconsin Municipalities
Date: February 18, 2015
Re: **TIF Study Committee Recommended Legislation**

The League of Wisconsin Municipalities strongly supports all eight bills recommended by the Study Committee on the Review of Tax Incremental Financing. On February 11, the Joint Legislative Council unanimously approved introducing all eight bills, which are summarized below:

- LRB-1063-1: Redetermination of base value for tax incremental districts.
- LRB-1064/2: Extending the option on designating of tax incremental districts as distressed or severely distressed.
- LRB-1065/1: Increasing the maximum amount of a community's equalized value that can be included in its TID districts.
- LRB-1066/1: Inclusion of vacant land within the boundaries of a tax incremental district and exclusion of tax-exempt city-owned property from the initial tax incremental base of a tax incremental district.
- LRB-1067/1: TIF project plan amendments and extending the life of a tax incremental district if the district is adversely impacted by statutory changes, such as the state's recent buy down of the tech college tax rate.
- LRB-1068/1: Modifying the requirements for sharing tax increments by tax incremental districts, limiting the participation of certain special purpose districts in tax incremental district financing, and authorizing any tax incremental district to use allocated tax increments donated from another tax incremental district.
- LRB-1069/1: Standing joint review boards, annual joint review board meetings, annual reports on tax incremental districts, and granting rule-making authority.
- LRB-1070/1: Industrial zoning requirements in tax incremental districts, planning commission notice for tax incremental district amendments, obsolete references relating to tax incremental districts, allocation of tax increments, joint review board reviews, and calculation of levy limits following dissolution of a tax incremental district.

The League urges you to support enactment of each of these bills. Thanks for considering our comments.

STRONG COMMUNITIES MAKE WISCONSIN WORK

From Wednesday, April 22nd, 2015 meeting attended by Merrill City Administrator David Johnson:

Here are the things that the Chamber downtown business group wants to see done first.

- 1) Angle parking on Main St. [Including block in front of COSMO]
- 2) City purchase of former Guy's Shop and development of a "pocket park" with a water feature
- 3) Remove poles and overhead lines behind Main St. businesses.
- 4) Re-pave city public parking lot west of Trophy Bar, add some decorative green space and trees
- 5) Remove poles and overhead lines in alley between Main St. and 1st St.

Potential Wireless Network – Downtown Area

I received a budgetary proposal from CDW to extend our wireless network to the east side downtown area. This system will cover the East Main Street downtown area between Scott Street and North Center Avenue.

The total estimated cost for this project is \$24,981. An itemized list is as follows:

Outdoor Wireless Access Points: (wireless users connect their devices to these)
\$3881 each. 4 needed. Total: \$15,524 If we wanted to do a smaller area, we could reduce the number of Outdoor Wireless Access Points.

Point to Point Wireless: (communication back to City Hall from Downtown area)
\$1,642.42 each. 2 needed Total: \$3,285

Licensing: \$3,452

Engineering design/configuration: \$2,720 Engineering services are estimated to be 16 hours (\$170/hour). This is probably on the high side as I can do some of the configuration myself.

Ronald Turner
Information Technology Manager
City of Merrill