

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

**Tuesday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2014 at 8:00 a.m.  
Location – City Hall Council Chambers 1004 East 1<sup>st</sup> Street**

**AGENDA**

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

1. Call to order
2. Consider approval of meeting minutes from September 9<sup>th</sup>, 2014
3. Continued discussion of Downtown Revitalization Program - potentially from Stuyvesant Street on the east to Old City Hall area on west (from November 11<sup>th</sup>, 2014 RDA informal discussion)
4. Consider potential purchase of 913 East Main Street for \$25,000 from Lincoln Community Bank (former Guy's Shop parcel which is now vacant land)
5. Update on Merrill's Idle Industrial Sites Redevelopment grant application to the Wisconsin Economic Development Corp (WEDC) and potential Federal EPA Brownfield's grant application (Former Anson-Gilkey parcel and surrounding area in TID No. 9)
6. Next RDA meeting
7. Public Comment
8. 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. Discuss potential Tax Increment District No. 3 development incentives related for former City fire station (701 East 1<sup>st</sup> Street) if City sells to private sector; and
  - b. Potential property acquisitions to facilitate redevelopment opportunities in Tax Increment District No. 6 (Downtown), No. 3 (East Side), and No. 9 (Wisconsin River area)
9. Adjournment

Agenda Prepared by RDA Secretary Kathy Unertl  
Reviewed by RDA President Bill Bialecki

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Date and time agenda was posted: \_\_\_\_\_ Posted by: \_\_\_\_\_

**City of Merrill  
Redevelopment Authority (RDA)**

(2)

**Tuesday, September 9<sup>th</sup>, 2014 at 8:00 A.M.  
City Hall Council Chambers**

RDA Present: Bill Bialecki, Ryan Schwartzman, David Hayes,  
Ralph Sturm, and Jill Laufenberg

RDA Absent: Karen Karow and Wally Smith

Others: Alderpersons Chris Malm and Dave Sukow, City Administrator Dave Johnson, City Attorney Tom Hayden, Finance Director Kathy Unertl, Mary Rajek from Redevelopment Resources, Mike Morrissey from Morrissey Consulting, City Building Inspector/Zoning Administrator Darin Pagel, Community Development Program Administrator Shari Wicke, Dean Feske from AECOM, and Tonia Speener from Clark Dietz, Inc. - Engineers

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

**Approval of meeting minutes from June 24th, 2014:**

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

**Consider recommendation on proposed development agreement by and between the City of Merrill, Wisconsin and Clark Cup-N-Cone (Tax Increment District No. 3 – East Side):**

Redevelopment project includes property purchase and clean-up, façade improvements, some interior building improvements, and future additional food-preparation equipment. Objective is year-round instead of seasonal business on this highly visible property.

Unertl and Schwartzman advised that financing is through Merrill Federal Savings & Loan Association and a \$45,000 CWED low-interest loan. Schwartzman advised that he recommended a TIF development incentive be requested at the Merrill Community Development Committee. The proposed \$10,000 TIF development incentive will help move site redevelopment forward quicker.

**Motion (Schwartzman/Laufenberg) to recommend the proposed development agreement by and between the City of Merrill, Wisconsin and Clark Cup-N-Cone at 2802 East Main Street (Tax Increment District No. 3). Carried.**

**Update on potential bids for sale/redevelopment of former ranger station parcel (110 East 10<sup>th</sup> Street – Tax Increment District No. 7):**

City Administrator Johnson reported that two bids were received - \$7,501 and \$23,500. Neither bidder had immediate redevelopment plans for the site. Given the minimal bid amounts, Johnson will be recommending that the City's Board of Public Works reject the bids and that the City retain the buildings/site for summer Parks & Recreation Department use.

**Consider draft 2015 Tax Increment District (TID) operating budget and potential TID capital budget requests:**

Unertl emphasized with the expanded TID No. 3 tax increment generated from the new Wal-Mart, that it was now fiscally feasible and strategic to begin transferring TID funding from TID No. 3 to the "blighted area" TIDs – especially TID No. 6 (Downtown) and TID No. 8 (West Side).

In follow-up to the City's new Strategic Plan, Unertl advised that there is \$20,000 split among various TID Districts for proposed Housing Study. Unertl noted that all the TIDs have Personnel Services line items for wages/benefits of City employees working on TID-related projects.

**TID No. 3 (East Side)**

Since the Hwy 64/Pine Ridge Ave. infrastructure has not yet been accepted, the City has not yet paid the \$400,000 development incentive to Wal-Mart. Pending items include stormwater drainage issue from driveway to Wal-Mart across S. Pine Ridge Ave. Additional right-of-way is needed by McDonald's corner and the sidewalk needs to be reconstructed with ADA ramp toward State Highway 64.

**TID No. 4 (Thielman St. /N. Pine Ridge Ave.)**

The stormwater culvert replacement under Thielman St. is now planned for early 2015 bidding. Objective is to try to obtain more than one bid for this construction project.

City staff anticipates an announcement shortly related to the former Wal-Mart space.

**TID No. 5 (State Hwy 107/Taylor St Area)**

Proposed installation of new streetlights in this underserved area, including industrial park (i.e. Commerce Street by Russ Davis Wholesale has no streetlights).

**TID No. 6 (Downtown Area)**

Unertl noted that the 2013 City borrowing for the Courtview access project was \$137,500. Unertl suggested with the River Bend Trail development, that this was the time to move forward with downtown planning, including building facades along the Wisconsin River and City-owned public parking lot north of the railroad tracks. City staff and contractors continue to work on marketing the Lincoln House site for potential multi-story redevelopment.

### TID No. 7 (North Center Ave. Area)

Updates on environmental work related to former dry cleaner site were provided by Dean Feske from AECOM and Unertl. Wisconsin DNR has just approved a waiver to use AECOM, without bidding for environmental contractors, to continue environmental monitoring well and analysis work that the firm has been involved in for almost a decade. City would like to eventually recover State of Wisconsin reimbursements through the Dry Cleaner's Environmental Remediation Fund (DERF).

Laufenberg questioned the timing for Pine Ridge Restaurant development incentive payments. Unertl verified that the \$10,000 next payments would be in 2016 and 2017 when the new building is generating tax increment (i.e. no 2015 amount).

### TID No. 8 (West Side Area)

Now that the Hurd – Superseal development incentive is a grant rather than a loan, Unertl will be recommending borrowing the \$200,000.

Based upon exterior renovation work, it is unclear what is happening with 1502 West Main Street redevelopment project (Mark Raymer) or when it might be completed. Unertl has included potential \$25,000 development incentive in the 2015 budget.

As of end of May 2014, the \$200,000 loan from 2013 to Merrill Area Development Corp. (MADC) for 201 South Prospect Street site has been repaid to the City of Merrill. The City has also paid off the Zastrow's development incentive to MADC (TID No. 4).

### TID No. 9 (Wisconsin River/South Center Ave. Area)

Bids are pending for demolition/clean-up of the former Anson-Gilkey property buildings. Sturm strongly recommended getting performance bond to ensure that demolition work is completed in timely manner in contrast to Lincoln House demo. Sturm disagreed that the extreme winter temperatures should have prevented equipment operation.

Unertl advised that potential demolition/environmental work at DC Motors parcel that the City of Merrill is condemning was missed in the draft budget. Estimated \$150,000 to \$200,000 range to remove this "blighted" building. City staff will be reviewing potential State environmental grant funding options.

**Next RDA meeting:** At the call of the RDA Chair.

**Public Comment:** None.

**Adjournment:**

**Motion (Schwartzman/Hayes) to adjourn the meeting at 8:50 a.m. Carried.**

Minutes prepared by RDA Secretary Kathy Unertl

(3)

**City of Merrill  
Redevelopment Authority (RDA) – Informal Discussion**

**Tuesday, November 11<sup>th</sup>, 2014 at 8:00 A.M.  
City Hall Council Chambers**

RDA Present: Bill Bialecki, Ryan Schwartzman, and Amanda Kostman

RDA Absent: Jill Laufenberg, David Hayes, Karen Karow and Wally Smith

Others: Alderperson Chris Malm, City Administrator Dave Johnson, City Attorney Tom Hayden, Finance Director Kathy Unertl, Mary Rajek from Redevelopment Resources, City Building Inspector/Zoning Administrator Darin Pagel, and Community Development Program Administrator Shari Wicke. Mike Morrissey from Morrissey Consulting participated via phone.

**Call to Order:** Since no RDA quorum, the group began informal meeting at 8:10 a.m.

**Update and discussion of Downtown Revitalization Program:**

Morrissey emphasized primary City/RDA objectives have been building tax base and job creation. Key program components will need to include continued “blight” elimination and building façade financing.

Downtowns are all about people – place to live, shop, and gather for events. Having a plan with action items is critical, as is implementation strategies. There are potential different levels of impact:

- Small scale – such as benches, bike racks, and destination businesses.
- Impact scale – such as public parking and other infrastructure improvements.
- Transformative scale – investments that inspire change.

Bialecki strongly recommended making reinvestment in the Courthouse block. Pagel advised on current plan to remove about thirteen trees from this site. Rajek commented that one of the highest traffic count locations is the area by Lincoln Community Bank (i.e. Hwy 64/Stuyvesant St.). This location has one of the best views of the Lincoln County Courthouse clock tower.

The importance of programming was mentioned, including potential relocation of farmer’s market to downtown instead of Normal Park. Kostman requested consideration of outdoor seating at restaurants and near the bookstore if public open space were created. These are the type of gathering/social amenities that a younger demographic is looking for.

Unertl noted existing downtown business group events such as chili cook-off. Unertl also advised that Laufenberg had suggested some type of broader linkage to the City's historical logging past. There is currently a log on the east side of the Courthouse. Morrissey suggested considering potential statute in the round-a-bout.

Unertl reported that the mid-October walking tour participants highlighted recent positive City investments, such as the black metal fences constructed by the Street Department and the Highway 64 decorative retaining wall across from ACE Hardware. A potential new retaining wall could replace some of the asphalt paving on the backside of Nienow Law Office parcel.

Seeing an area during daylight and night makes a difference. Unertl reported that there is only one streetlight on River Street between Park Street on the east to the Courtview access street area. No lighting under the Center Avenue Bridge. Although the graffiti has been painted over, perhaps some type of public art might be appropriate. Morrissey also suggested including expanded holiday lighting on the Center Avenue bridge railing.

How to connect the Park Street end of River Bend Trail to the downtown was discussed. Massive numbers of trucks are often parked everywhere in this area. River Street is the only legal connection since the path is on the south side of the railroad tracks.

Both Schwartzman and Rajek noted that the common downtown issue is the hours that businesses are open. Having businesses to go to after 5:00 p.m. or on weekends is important to vitality of downtown area.

Malm noted importance of physical appearance of properties (especially in summer months), including negative impression of weeds growing through sidewalks or along buildings. Johnson reported that one option is City spraying sidewalks to kill weeds although that comes with a taxpayer cost.

Looking for additional input from Redevelopment Authority Commissioners, Alderpersons, and City departments. The City's team will continue to meet with ideas and develop some conceptual sketches of potential improvements.

**Next RDA meeting:** Tuesday, December 2<sup>nd</sup> at 8:00 a.m.

**Adjournment:** Meeting informally adjourned at 8:57 a.m.

Discussion Summary prepared by RDA Secretary Kathy Unertl

**City of Merrill**

**Downtown Redevelopment Plan**

**Preliminary Outline – November 2014**

**Process:**

- **Initial Assessment**
- **Stakeholder Participation**
- **Plan Preparation**
- **Presentation to RDA**
- **Implementation**

**Redevelopment Projects - Levels of Impact:**

- **Small Scale**
  - **Creating Amenity-based Investment**
- **Impact Scale**
  - **Installing Infrastructure Improvemer**
- **Transformative**
  - **Inspiring Change**

**Organization & Implementation:**

- **Staffing: City Staff, Engr, Design, Economic  
Development Advisors**
- **Financing**
- **Timing & Phasing**

## **Merrill – Downtown Walking Tour: ‘Initial Impressions’**

October 21, 2014 (Bialecki, Johnson, Speener, Rajek, Ness & Morrissey)

1. Create a downtown ‘Gateway’ or entry feature at Stuyvesant
2. Acquisition of properties in 1300 block of E. Main Street
3. Install signage – Downtown Welcome (and way finding)
4. Install ornamental Lighting
5. Develop angled parking in selected areas on Main Street
6. Construct Main Street intersection ‘Bump-outs’
7. Streetscape sidewalks (w/ paver accents)
8. Install lighting, landscaping, painting/directions to Bicycle Trailhead
9. Enhancement of River Street and Park Street intersection (then south)
10. Improve River Street (from Park) leading west
11. Remove outdated & deteriorating fences, retaining walls, etc.
12. Provide lighting under bridge (and along upper railing as entry accent)
13. Convert unused rear parking lot into green space.
14. Overhaul of entire riverside alley and parking lot areas (pavement, lighting, landscaping, etc.)
15. Improve rear of E. Main Street building aesthetics
16. Enhance building porches, decks, painting, windows, gardens, etc.
17. Centralize trash receptacles/stations
18. Consider trenching overhead utilities (to extent financially feasible)
19. Acquire former Guys Shop parcel and create green space
20. Main Street hardscape, lighting, seating, signage
21. Main Street amenities: landscaping, benches, banners, bike racks, etc.
22. Enhance Courthouse block as focal point; lighting, landscaping,
23. Create public art in downtown & on Law Enforcement Center walls
24. Install ornamental lighting on 1<sup>st</sup> Street/2<sup>nd</sup> St to Cleveland Street
25. Clean-up and landscape southeast corner of Main & Center Street
26. Create pedestrian friendly Main Street from Stuyvesant west to Center
27. Reconfigure to combine alley drive and parking into one area

Lincoln County Land Record



**Request:** 25131061230300  
**PIN:** 251-3106-123-0300  
**Parcel:** 34-0096-002-845-00-00  
**Municipality:** City of MERRILL

Report Generated:  
 11/24/2014 at 10:50:54 AM



For reference purposes only.

No warranties are expressed or implied for the data provided.

**View Type:** Internal

**Account:** User

**(1) General Parcel Information:**

**PIN** 251-3106-123-0300  
**Parcel Number** 34-0096-002-845-00-00  
**Parcel Status** Active  
**Sale Type** NOT OPEN MARKET  
**Sale Date** 11/20/2013  
**Sale Amount** \$0.00  
**Transfer Tax** \$0.00  
**Deed Type** Quit Claim  
**Deed Reference** D0505253  
**Mailing Address** LINCOLN COMMUNITY BANK  
 1400 E MAIN ST  
 MERRILL, WI  
 54452

*Former Guy's Shop site*  
*\$25,000 Purchase Price*  
*for vacant land*

**(2) Parcel Owners Names:**

Owner # 1 LINCOLN COMMUNITY BANK

**(3) Parcel Addresses:**

Address # 1 913 E MAIN ST MERRILL, WI 54452

**(4) Parcel Descriptions:**

Year	Acre	Description
1994	N/A	T B SCOTT LBR CO 3RD ADD'N LTS 5-6-7 BLK 1 *2845

**(5) Parcel Assessment:**

Year	Use	Acre	Land Value	Improvement Value	Total Value
2000	COMMERCIAL	0.00	\$37,800.00	\$54,800.00	
	Totals for 2000	0.00	\$37,800.00	\$54,800.00	\$92,600.00
1995	COMMERCIAL	0.00	\$30,200.00	\$49,300.00	
	Totals for 1995	0.00	\$30,200.00	\$49,300.00	\$79,500.00
1994	COMMERCIAL	0.00	\$27,700.00	\$40,300.00	
	Totals for 1994	0.00	\$27,700.00	\$40,300.00	\$68,000.00

**(7) Recent Taxes:**

[View](#) Payoff Statement (for current month of all unpaid taxes, interest, and penalty)

Year	Description	Due	Paid	Unpaid	Description	Value
2013					Fair Mkt. Value	88,000.00
	General Net	2,535.37			Wood Fair Mkt. Value	0.00
	Lottery Credit	0.00				
	General Tax	2,535.37	2,535.37	0.00	Land	37,800.00
	Special	0.00	0.00	0.00	Use Assessment	0.00
	Wood	0.00	0.00	0.00	Improvement	54,800.00
	Other	0.00	0.00	0.00	Wood	0.00
	Totals:	\$2,535.37	\$2,535.37	\$0.00	Total Assessed Value	\$92,600.00