



City of North St. Paul
Economic Development Authority
Regular Meeting Minutes

February 14, 2023
3:00 PM

I. Call to Order

Chair Robert Dew called the meeting to order at 3:01 PM.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

III. Roll Call

Robert Dew, Chair
Terry Furlong, Vice Chair
Kevin Fuller
Tom Schifsky
Archie Vickerman
Tim Cole, Council Representative
John Monge, Mayor

STAFF/EX OFFICIO MEMBERS

Brian Frandle, Executive Director
Brandy Howe, Treasurer/Community Development Director
Brett Garry, Business Association Representative
Chris Cherne, EDA Secretary

Members Present:

Robert Dew, Chair
Terry Furlong, Vice-Chair
Tom Schifsky
Archie Vickerman
Tim Cole, Council Representative
John Monge, Mayor

Members Absent:

Kevin Fuller

Staff/Ex Officio Members:

Brian Frandle, Executive Director
Brandy Howe, Treasurer/Community Development Director
Brett Garry, Business Association Representative
Chris Cherne, EDA Secretary

IV. Adopt Agenda

Chair Dew asked for a motion to adopt the 02-14-2023 EDA meeting agenda.
M/Furlong, S/Schifsky.
Motion carried 6-0.

V. Approval of Minutes

A. Approval of 01-10-2023 EDA Meeting Minutes

Chair Dew asked for a motion to approve the 01-10-2023 EDA Meeting Minutes.
M/Vickerman, S/Schifsky.
Motion carried 6-0.

VI. Meeting Open to the Public

This Open Forum is an opportunity for persons to address the Economic Development Authority on items not on the agenda. A completed public comment form should be presented to the staff liaison prior to the meeting. Comments will be limited to 3 minutes per person. While the Authority may ask clarifying questions of the speaker, no formal action by the Authority or discussion will be held on these items.

No public comments.

VII. Authority Business & Action Items

A. Marketing Video by Open Window Productions

Howe stated that she and Communications Consultant Kari Erpenbach met with Open Window Productions to discuss the scope of work of the marketing video. The total cost of the marketing video is \$10,649.95. The cost-share proposal between the EDA, HRA, and City Council was approved by the City Council on 02-07-2023.

Chair Dew stated that the EDA is prepared to commit to 50% of the total costs. The HRA is expected to confirm their commitment on 02-21-2023.

Chair Dew asked for a motion to authorize staff to execute the contract with Open Window Productions on condition of HRA approval of participation in a cost-share of the remaining 25%.

M/Furlong, S/Vickerman.
Motion carried 6-0.

B. 2022 Annual Report

Chair Dew stated that he prepared a draft of the 2022 annual report and received no comments for revision. Vice-Chair Furlong mentioned double checking for typos.

Chair Dew asked for a motion to approve and authorize staff to submit the 2022 Annual Report to the City Council for review at their February 21, 2023 regular meeting on condition of fixing typos.

M/Vickerman, S/Schifsky.
Motion carried 6-0.

C. EDA Meeting Frequency

Howe stated that Chapter 34.05(E) of the City Code states the EDA "shall meet quarterly and at such other times as necessary." She inquired whether the group would like to continue

meeting monthly.

Chair Dew stated that the EDA met quarterly when at that point they did not have a lot of business to conduct. At some point the EDA switched to monthly meetings to keep the ball moving on activities. Chair Dew stated that in terms of the meeting frequency going quarterly, he has a little concern about the things the EDA is actively engaged in and the Authority may find itself too far between meetings to discuss things that require action. Now that there are full-time staff working on things between meetings, the EDA now has flexibility to cancel meetings if needed and meet the next month.

Vice-Chair Furlong stated the bulk of the work they have done over the past few years was good for monthly meetings, but if there is not much on the agenda he does not mind canceling a meeting for a month. Member Vickerman expressed agreement.

Member Schifsky expressed interest in continuing monthly meetings but making them shorter. Chair Dew stated that making meetings shorter is an option as the agenda is set by staff needs, the Chair and the Mayor.

Chair Dew stated that an item can be inserted under staff reports regarding whether it makes sense to schedule a meeting for the following month. There are certain things that the EDA must do at every meeting. Chair Dew asked staff to confirm what is needed at each meeting.

D. EDA Appointments

Howe stated that staff received three applications for appointment to the EDA, and two of the applicants are here today to see how the meeting functions. The Mayor and City Council will make an appointment at a future council meeting.

Chair Dew stated that at present the EDA is full. Kevin Fuller requested a replacement; that is the current seat the EDA is seeking to fill. The EDA has viable candidates and should be thinking forward about filling the next seat. At some juncture, the Mayor will have to make a recommendation for appointment to the Council. Member Fuller will have to resign for a new member to come in. Member Schifsky's term ends at the end of the month, but it will be extended through Council approval. Councilmember Cole stated the terms are staggered and incoming members finish the term when resignation occurs.

Mayor Monge expressed thanks to the committees helping with the appointment process.

Chair Dew requested staff get an accounting of where everybody's terms officially sit.

VIII. Discussion Items

A. Parklet

Chair Dew requested the terminology of "parklet" be dropped and changed to avoid locking the parcel of land as a park. Howe recommended "Green Space".

Howe showed the two green space options illustrated in the packet. The main difference between the two

is the center walkway. The intent of the green space is to clean up/beautify the parcel of land in a temporary use that may be part of a larger project at some point.

Chair Dew stated that the EDA received rough costs from WSB in early 2022. The EDA did authorize and execute some soil borings to make sure the old basement of the medical building was not intact or flooded. If a future redeveloper came, the EDA wants to show it didn't want to pay for improvements and have them destroyed shortly after. As spring and summer approach, it would be ideal to get the green space in place. The EDA needs to briefly revisit the plan options and/or confirm the plan and give direction to staff to verify costs and work out where the money will come from to get this effort done.

Chair Dew stated that the EDA previously approved the second of the two plans in the packet, consisting of an art block, picnic table, and center sidewalk. The hard surface is located in the center to avoid it becoming a smoking space for surrounding businesses. It would be beneficial to share costs with other departments such as public works. Chair Dew asked if cost-sharing has been discussed at the city management level.

Executive Director Frandle stated that he will confer with Public Works on the project.

Chair Dew stated if the city can't participate, the EDA is not willing to write a check to make this happen. If the costs can't be shared, the project will probably die a quick death. If the city is interested in picking up different portions of the work, the EDA is more willing to go out to bid for the work.

Executive Director Frandle stated he would like to have a conversation with Finance Director Daniel Winek to discuss this further.

Chair Dew asked for input from EDA applicants Josef Matthews and Chris Thorsen.

Mr. Matthews stated the green space is a great idea, but the EDA probably shouldn't cut a check for the full cost.

Mr. Thorsen stated that the area has been used as a parking lot forever and guessed that it will be treated as a parking lot for the future. If there are goals to develop that property, Thorsen recommended paving it all, as people would continue to drive over the sod unless it is curbed in or surrounded by knee-high fence.

Chair Dew stated that the property has proven to have some challenges due to it being a tight site. One of the things the EDA has tried to do is to not let areas be unnamed and used. When prospective developers come down to look, the EDA wants to keep the City and downtown district looking good. With the car show activities, this was a good way to provide a little soft space within downtown. That harkens back to the Redevelopment Master Plan, which is an effort to create some of these softened green spaces within downtown. These opportunities were bypassed when the Sentinel was built, and the EDA does not want to limit pedestrian traffic. The longer term vision is that there is some level of focus on Seppala. The City has turned its back on Seppala in the past. Over the years, planners have said Seppala is unique and should be much greater than an alleyway. In order to do that, there needs to be a connection between 7th and Seppala. If the EDA can secure their contributions, staff will ask WSB to get a bid package. It would be good to have the project done by summer.

B. River of God Church

Howe stated that Chair Dew, City Manager Frandle and the Pastor of River of God Church will meet on February 28th to discuss the vision of the Redevelopment Master Plan and how it relates to the River of God Church.

Chair Dew stated that when we paint a vision like that of the Redevelopment Master Plan, we will be drawing circles and boxes on top of existing properties. These meetings allow an opportunity to engage with them and explain the EDA perspective on why their property has

shown up in the plan as something other than what it currently is. It is not about pushing anyone out but, dealing with the reality that over time something else is likely to happen in their area. The River of God Church happens to be the first the EDA engages with.

C. McKnight Turn Lane

Chair Dew explained there is some scheduled work to occur on McKnight by the county. The EDA sees an opportunity to create a left-hand turn to get to Target. The EDA approached the county which seemed quite open to allowing that to happen. The EDA is in the midst of playing that out. If there is an opportunity, the Authority does not want to pass on it. The EDA does not want to pay for this, but it would make the lots over there more attractive for private development.

Howe stated there are no updates. Staff requested a cost assessment from WSB and are waiting to hear back.

D. Pine Tree

Chair Dew stated that the entire Pine Tree Center building appears to be vacant with the exception of Pizza Factory. It appears to be in disrepair. It raises the question of what is happening there. The EDA wants to take some affirmative steps to reach out and see if they have a vision or plans.

Howe stated she spoke with the Pizza Factory business owner to discuss relocation options. Howe left the door open to the business owner and would update the EDA once he is ready to talk.

Furlong stated the owner has been great in the community and is in a hard position right now due to the building's condition. He doesn't know the future of the building. If there is some way the City can help, that would be good. Furlong expressed that he thinks the building could be shut down from code enforcement very soon.

Member Vickerman asked what would be the next step.

Chair Dew stated the Pizza Factory is a longstanding business in the community and requested a deeper conversation with the owner of the business and the owner of the building.

Councilmember Cole mentioned that there was a pizza place in the past looking at a space at Polar Plaza. That space might still be open.

IX. Treasurer Report

A. January 2023 Treasurer Report

Howe updated the EDA on the January 2023 numbers:

The beginning fund balance was \$468,362.38.
Assets included cash of \$411,834.51 and land of \$49,248.22.
Revenue of \$201.13.
Expenses of \$7,486.78.
Ending Fund balance was \$461,082.73.

Chair Dew asked at what point the funds for 2023 hit the account. Executive Director Frandle stated that he would follow up with Finance Director Daniel Winek.

X. Executive Director Report

No report.

XI. Chair Report

No report.

XII. Mayor Report

No report.

XIII. Reports from EDA Members

Vice-Chair Furlong mentioned that on Saturday, February 18th at 9:00 AM, the Historical Society will go into the Lillie Building one last time to recover old documents from the basement. If anyone wants to help, they are welcome to come. The developer plans on using some of that history in the new project.

XIV. Reports from Staff

A. Lillie redevelopment project update

Howe updated the EDA on the Lillie project schedule and secured grant awards.

B. Vang Project

Howe updated that Vang is looking to fill a \$3 million gap and is looking at other funding options. They have not opted to extend their MOU with the EDA.

XV. Closed Session

Chair Dew explained that the EDA will enter into a closed meeting as permitted by Section 13D.03 MN Stats.

Robert called for a motion to open the closed session at 4:30pm.

M/Furlong, S/Cole.

Motion Carried 6-0.

The EDA discussed property located at 2535 Division St N, the EDA's potential to purchase it, the financial mechanisms that might come into play to make that happen, as well as the issues surrounding the current operating business that may remain.

Chair Dew called for a motion to exit the closed session at 4:39pm.

M/Furlong, S/Vickerman.

Motion carried 6-0.

XVI. Adjournment

Chair Dew requested a motion to adjourn the meeting.

M/Vickerman, S/Schifsky to adjourn the meeting at 4:41 PM.

Motion carried 6-0.

The next EDA meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 14, 2023 at 3:00 PM.

Members, please notify any planned absences to:

Chris Cherne
EDA Secretary
651-747-2440

chris.cherne@northstpaul.org