



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

March 14, 2023
3:00 PM

I. Call to Order

Chair Robert Dew called the meeting to order at 3:00 PM.

II. Roll Call

Robert Dew, Chair
Terry Furlong, Vice Chair
Josef Matthews
Tom Schifsky
Chris Thorsen
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
Josef Matthews
Chris Thorsen
Tim Cole, Council Representative
John Monge, Mayor

Members Absent:

Tom Schifsky

Staff/Ex-Officio Members Present:

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

III. Adopt Agenda

Chair Dew asked for a motion to adopt the 03-14-2023 EDA meeting agenda.
M/Monge, S/Cole.
Motion carried 6-0.

IV. Presentation

A. Recognition of Departing Members

Mayor Monge recognized outgoing EDA members Archie Vickerman and Kevin Fuller with a certificate and thanked them for their dedicated service to the EDA.

V. Approval of Minutes

A. Approval of 02-14-2023 Meeting Minutes

Chair Dew asked for a motion to approve the 02-14-2023 EDA meeting minutes.

M/Furlong, S/Monge.

Motion carried 6-0.

VI. Commissioner Training

City Attorney Soren Mattick provided training on the responsibilities of the EDA. Mr. Mattick covered open meeting law, data practices, conflicts of interest, gift law, the role of the City Manager and the rules of order. After questions from the EDA, Mr. Mattick provided the following information:

- When the EDA is in a closed session, the group cannot vote. Consensus can be gained, but a motion cannot be made. Staff get directions from a closed session and there will be bare-bone minutes. If a motion is made, it needs to be listed in minutes. Any paperwork needs to come back in open session as that is when financial approval occurs.
- If there is a conflict of interest, the EDA member must refrain from comment and abstain from any vote on the matter.
- If the EDA does not have a quorum, it is recommended they should postpone or wait until the next meeting for discussion.
- If an EDA member wants to participate via zoom and does not vote, they are allowed to do so. Members of the public are free to join virtually as they wish.

VII. 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 comment.

VIII. Action Items

A. Pizza Factory

Chair Dew recounted the previous meeting's discussion regarding the Pine Tree Center and Pizza Factory's future at that site. Chair Dew, Furlong and Howe met with the owner of the Pizza factory and

Tracy Luther, owner of the property at 2543 7th Ave E, to try and facilitate an opportunity to keep Pizza Factory within the city and move them downtown. Both parties expressed interest in exploring the possibility. Dew and Furlong asked staff to get a proposal from an architect for a rough drawing to see if the building would work for both parties. Howe contacted a few architecture groups to get a quote and received one from Little Box. Little Box Architecture specializes in small-scale downtown restaurants.

Dew stated that the EDA has an option to either do nothing or follow their charter and attract/retain business, especially downtown. Dew proposes the EDA authorize funds to get the process started and show that there is a win-win deal for both parties. Member Thorsen asked if the EDA has a set policy about helping existing businesses stay in business or if there is a specific procedure. He stated he is all for keeping the restaurant and he has equal concern for other businesses in the City. Dew responded that there is not a general process. Over the years, the EDA has helped a number of businesses. The EDA tries to be proactive, but it does not have a checklist of criteria for EDA assistance.

Member Thorsen asked how the EDA can come up with a process that is fair to everyone and ensures that everyone is heard. Dew suggested the City use the weekly newsletter to advertise the EDA or give more presentations to the Business Association. The EDA wishes to help connect the dots for folks and provide them with guidance and expertise. It is an open invitation to all businesses. If the EDA wishes to be more proactive, they should do formal outreach. Dew asked staff to draft sample newsletter/promotion content that can be provided at the next meeting.

Chair Dew requested a motion to approve the proposal from Little Box Architecture.
M/Thorsen, S/Matthews.
Motion passed 6-0.

IX. Discussion Items

A. Pine Tree Center

Howe reached out to Crossroads Realty to contact the owner of the Pine Tree Center. The owner believes it is a good residential site for approximately 40 condominiums. He is looking to sell it for \$1.1 million.

Chair Dew stated the property is in a state of blight. This is a situation where the EDA could do a number of things: do nothing, get involved and attempt to steer it in some direction or get the word out to developers. There is a fairly significant shortfall in affordable housing in the community, and the Pine Tree Center could fill this void.

Member Thorsen stated that relocation of Pizza Factory leaves the site vacant. He expressed faith that the market will take care of the parcel.

Cole and Matthews expressed the opinion that the EDA should move forward to dip their toes into the situation. Staff have been requested to look at next steps through Crossroads Realty and connect with the property owner to find out their intent and whether they want to redevelop. If they do not intend to redevelop the property, there should be a discussion about whether the EDA can gain some control over it for a period of time in order to go through an RFP process and see who is willing to come into that spot.

B. Downtown Green Space (2579 7th Ave)

Howe stated that she reached out to the Public Works Director to get updated cost estimates. Staff are still working on getting those items.

C. River of God Church

Chair Dew stated there was a meeting with the Pastor of River of God Church and his brother, a board member, to discuss their facility and the neighboring property's desire to expand. Dew stated that they were understanding as it was premised around the Redevelopment Master Plan. They enjoy being downtown and would like to remain central downtown. Vice-Chair Furlong stated the meeting went well. The Pastor is aware of Reflex Medical's desired expansion. There might be an opportunity for that to happen. The Pastor would like the EDA to assist him with staying in North St. Paul.

Dew questioned what the Church would need if they were to move. They weren't entirely sure. Dew stated it would be good to go back to Reflex Medical and let them know the Church would be open to move. It may be beneficial to ask Reflex to fund the initial information gathering for the Church's potential relocation.

D. Margaret Street Development Site

Dew explained that the City had a development agreement with JB Vang, who let the agreement lapse. Dew presented a concept layout by Gary Mulcahy to create man-cave condos. Gary Mulcahy owns the adjacent property. Dew stated that he agreed to test the waters with the EDA before Mulcahy takes the next steps. He assured Dew it would be architecturally top notch and would pair well with events such as the car show. One of the things that the Redevelopment Master Plan identifies for that area is structured parking and downtown green space. Mulcahy was open to preserving the north end of that site for green space. Dew stated it is probably not the use people typically think of for those parcels. If the EDA wishes, his team will bring information to the next meeting about how this use has benefited other communities.

Thorsen noted that Mr. Mulcahy has been a client of his for many years, and he would abstain from any comment or vote. Cole, Furlong and Matthews look forward to hearing more.

X. Treasurer's Report

A. February 2023 Treasurer's Report

Howe provided the February Treasurer's Report to the EDA.

XI. Adjournment

Chair Dew requested a motion to adjourn the meeting.

On motion by Vice-Chair Furlong, seconded by Council Representative Cole, with EDA members Matthews, Mayor Monge, and Chair Dew voting aye, EDA member Thorsen voting nay.

Motion carried 5-1 to adjourn the meeting at 4:48 PM.

The next EDA meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 11, 2023 at 3:00 PM.

Members, please notify any planned absences to:

Chris Cherne
EDA Secretary
651-747-2440
chris.cherne@northstpaul.org