



**Economic Development Authority
Regular Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, August 8, 2023
3:00 PM**

North St. Paul City Hall – Council Chambers
2400 Margaret Street

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Dew called the meeting to order at 3:02 PM.

II. ROLL CALL

EDA Members

Robert Dew, Chair

Terry Furlong, Vice-Chair

Josef Matthews

Tom Schifsky

Chris Thorsen

Tim Cole, Council Representative

absent

John Monge, Mayor

Staff/Ex-Officio Members

Brian Frandle, Executive Director

Brandy Howe, Treasurer, Community Development Director

Brett Garry, Business Association Representative

absent

Chris Cherne, EDA Secretary

III. ADOPT AGENDA

Chair Dew requested a motion to adopt the agenda.

M/Furlong, S/Schifsky.

Motion carried 6-0.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Approval of 07-11-2023 Minutes

Chair Dew requested a motion to approve the July 11, 2023 meeting minutes.

M/Furlong, S/Matthews.

Motion carried 6-0.

V. PRESENTATION

A. Open Window Productions Marketing Video

Open Window Productions (OWP) shared their first of two North St. Paul promotional videos with the EDA. The first is intended to demonstrate North St. Paul as a great place to conduct business. They hope to shoot the Fall Roundup Parade and Music in the Park for the 2nd video, which will have an emphasis on North St. Paul being a great place to live and visit.

Schifsky stated that he is impressed with the video and that it is straight to the point while holding the audience's attention. Matthews concurred. Furlong stated a lot of the video was focused on retail. Furlong and Dew asked if the video could show more of the manufacturing and industrial aspects of the City. OWP confirmed they still have some budget to capture additional media. If

there are specific requests, they are happy to take those. OWP will return with the revised video and their 2nd video in October. Staff will work with OWP so they can capture the demolition of the Lillie Building.

B. Metropolitan Consortium of Community Developers (MCCD) Services

Tyler Hilsabeck and Luis Mendoza from MCCD spoke about what the organization does and how it engages with Ramsey County and its cities. MCCD is a nonprofit organization that has been active in the Twin Cities for over 20 years and operates under the name “Open to Business”. The contracts are typically through counties and allow cities to promote MCCD services such as free assistance to local business owners with business planning, budgeting and marketing. MCCD typically sees about 700-800 business owners per year.

If MCCD does not have the resources to assist a business owner, they share contacts that would be able to provide pro bono or low-cost services. MCCD typically serves traditionally underserved populations such as underinvested, BIPOC, low-wealth individuals but works with any business at any stage. MCCD is a nontraditional financier of small businesses and can provide start up loans for up to \$25,000 with a goal that the business can later get a traditional loan.

Dew recommended the EDA participate and advertise MCCD’s services. He indicated that there has been some talk about dispersing EDA funds for a reason such as this and it might make sense to have outside assistance from MCCD in the future.

VI. MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

No public comments.

VII. EDA DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS

A. Discussion – Façade Improvement Program

Howe reported that the City of North St. Paul previously had a contract with MCCD for a façade improvement program in the downtown district. Although there was little response in the past, there appears to be an interest now. Staff is seeking direction on whether the EDA is interested in establishing a façade improvement program.

Dew stated that if the EDA wants to participate in a façade improvement program, there should be some guardrails that bring businesses into compliance with design standards or guidelines. Matthews stated a definition of aesthetics would be important. Eligible projects could be expected to meet design criteria.

Howe stated that the EDA should determine what the ultimate goals for this program would be. Dew stated that as improvements continue to be made downtown there will be a number of businesses influenced to do the same and therefore be aligned with the rest of the downtown. Thorsen agreed that a façade improvement program would be helpful as a number of businesses need improvement.

Dew indicated interest in a two-tiered façade improvement program. One tier would be dedicated to minor/simple improvements, while the other tier would cover larger improvements and require matched funds. The EDA asked staff to conduct a façade analysis on current downtown buildings and to draft up a program modeled by other cities’ programs to revisit at a future meeting.

VIII. TREASURER’S REPORT

A. August 2023 Treasurer’s Report

Howe provided the August 2023 Treasurer’s Report.

IX. UPDATES

A. Staff Updates

- **Downtown Parking/Green Space:** The City Council considered the project at their recent meeting, but did not approve the request as they wanted clarification of what the cost would be for getting a water connection from the site to the street. Howe confirmed it would be \$15,000 to tap the water from the street. The City Council will discuss the project again when they reconvene on August 15. Thorsen stated the City Council should understand that the lot is intended to be developed in the future and that he does not want to see the City spend a lot of money to tear up the site in the next couple years. Schifsky concurred and cautioned against putting more money into the lot than what it is worth. The EDA has already decided they would participate on some level and awaits the decision from the City Council.
- **Lillie Redevelopment Project:** Jim LaValle recently dropped off a check for the development agreement. He closed with the bank and has pulled demolition permits.
- **City Lot at 17th Ave and Delaware:** The City Council heard proposals from 2 developers and directed staff to provide more details at their next meeting on August 15.
- **City Lots at Margaret Street:** Mr. Dobbs will be presenting his garage condominium proposal at the City Council Workshop on August 15.
- **Pine Tree Center:** Dew stated that the lot is continuing to fall into a state of disrepair and asked staff to stay on top of the code enforcement of the property.
- **Pizza Factory:** There were no updates.
- **Reflex Medical:** There were no updates.
- **EDA Bylaws:** There were no updates.

B. EDA Member Updates

Thorsen called Gary Mulcahy to see how things were going. He emphasized that the EDA voiced support for the project and that he hopes the City Council will take that into consideration. Mulcahy hopes to start the project in 2024 if approved to do so. Dew stated that Mulcahy's proposal is 60% City land and 40% his own land. Dew emphasized garage condominium facilities are becoming very popular and are getting approved in surrounding cities.

Mayor Monge toured the student build project at 2170 Eldridge and was impressed. They are hoping to start the foundation for the next build soon. There is already some market interest in the build. Mayor Monge also shared that there was a great turnout for the National Night Out event at City Hall with approximately 150 people attending.

X. **ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Dew requested a motion to adjourn the meeting.
M/Furlong, S/Schifsky to adjourn the meeting at 4:34 PM.
Motion carried 6-0.

The next regularly scheduled Economic Development Authority meeting is Tuesday, September 12, 2023 at 3:00 PM.

Members, please notify any planned absences to:

Chris Cherne
EDA Secretary
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