

**MEETING AGENDA
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
SEPTEMBER 8TH, 2020
3:00 PM**

The City of North St. Paul has moved all of its public meetings online effective August 4, 2020. The move to online meeting access via Zoom ensures compliance with the Governor's Emergency Executive Order and face covering mandate while providing our City Council members, staff and residents with safe and comfortable access to public meetings. Access information and links to meetings are available at northstpaul.org. This change to online meeting access will remain in effect until further notice. (Stat. 13D.02 subd. 4)

The meeting was conducted via Zoom.

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. ROLL CALL

Robert Dew, Chair
Richard McNamara, Vice Chair - ABSENT
Don Jensen, Treasurer
Tom Schifsky - ABSENT
Kevin Fuller
Archie Vickerman – ABSENT
Brett Garry, Business Association
Terry Furlong, Mayor/Council Representative -ABSENT
Scott Thorson, Council Representative
Scott Duddeck, Executive Director

Staff/Guest: Olivia Boerschinger; EDA Secretary;

III. ADOPT AGENDA

The agenda was adopted by unanimous consent.

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Approve minutes of August 11th, 2020 meeting

Motion by Thorsen, second by Fuller. The minutes were approved by unanimous consent.

V. MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Note: This is a courtesy extended to persons wishing to address the Authority concerning issues that are not on the agenda. This discussion will be limited to 15 minutes.

VI. AUTHORITY BUSINESS & ACTION ITEMS

A. Items from Council and Staff

City Manager Duddeck was asked to provide an update on the CARES funding and distribution. Mr. Duddeck stated CARES funding was allocated to cover public safety costs and has been transferred into that fund. This process frees up other funds for the City or Council to use towards future expenditures or programs without being bound by the restrictions and time constraints of the CARES funding. Mr. Duddeck stated other cities have taken a similar approach to the CARES funding received.

Mr. Thorsen reported that at the last Council meeting, the EDA levy was reviewed. He confirmed Council voted to continue with the maximum levy for EDA. This will help build the EDA fund balance to allow EDA to be active with projects throughout the City. Council has expressed interest in a plan explaining how the EDA funds intend to be used in the future. Mr. Thorsen asked if creating a more formal budget or plan for the use of funds is something the group should work to develop.

Mr. Thorsen continued that some of the funds freed up by the CARES grant could be used for small business relief. The EDA could provide recommendations to Council regarding a dollar amount and a plan to distribute funds to assist small businesses affected by COVID. He suggests money could be transferred to the EDA for the distribution of a business relief program for those impacted by the pandemic.

Mr. Thorsen summarized stating two items Council may need to see from EDA is a recommendation for the CARES Act funding and how it could be utilized to assist in business relief, and a plan for future development or acquisitions of [properties in town of interest to the EDA.

Chair Dew responded that the EDA will present its annual report to the Council and can include the proposed use of funds stating the importance for the EDA to have funding available and the types of items funding could be used for. Mr. Thorsen agreed that sharing an update on recent EDA projects and what the authority has accomplished in recent years would be beneficial.

Chair Dew returned to the topic of CARES funding stating that the EDA has not had time to fully discuss a business relief program but could make recommendations to Council as needed. If Council were to provide funds for the EDA to distribute as small business relief the EDA would act as responsible stewards of the funds ensuring appropriate use. His focus is to complete the annual report to Council in September or October.

Mr. Thorsen would like to see a discussion at the Council or EDA level regarding the use of funds freed up with the CARES funds. He envisions any kind of business relief program would be run through and addressed by the EDA, with review by EDA and staff as necessary.

Mr. Garry was asked to address any concerns or challenges brought up by local businesses impacted by the pandemic. He stated that businesses are being uniquely affected based on industry and any other restrictions on funding available. Mr. Duddeck added that only three businesses in North St. Paul had applied for Ramsey County's most recent relief funding.

Chair Dew stated that if a relief program were to be distributed at the City level that the EDA would want to ensure it is not done in an indiscriminate manner. He suggests a merit based application as a possibility, but eligibility requirements would have to be established. Mr. Thorsen adds that Council may be seeking specific direction or guidance from the EDA.

Discussions around what would be required of businesses to apply or receive funds are important.

Chair Dew highlights that business attraction and retention is a key part of what the EDA does, so assisting the facilitation of relief funds to local businesses would be something the EDA can assist with. His concern would be the investment and time of vetting and review processes involved with any type of relief program. He opens this topic up to other EDA members for discussion.

Mr. Fuller states the constraints experienced by utilizing other federal funding programs. Other relief funds may not allow the business to receive funds from other relief programs. He suggests there may be alternative forms of relief that could be provided to businesses such as property tax assistance. Mr. Thorsen adds that it could be challenging to restrict how businesses use the funds, but emphasizes the importance of vetting businesses to ensure they have a need and have been negatively impacted by the pandemic. Mr. Duddeck also adds Council or the EDA would have to determine what types of businesses would be eligible to apply, stating that brick-and-mortar businesses may have different needs than home occupations.

Mr. Jensen agrees with the EDA assisting with the facilitation and distribution of a potential relief program. He stated his original understanding was that the CARES funding and the Council would set any parameters regarding eligibility for funds. Mr. Duddeck clarified that the CARES funds have been distributed to public safety and are no longer restricted to be used by November. The business relief program funds being discussed would not have to be distributed by November. To avoid further delay, Mr. Thorsen suggests the EDA provide some recommendations to Council.

Chair Dew states the potential in a merit-based application process with tiers of different award levels. A methodology for how to review the applications would need to be decided upon by the EDA. Mr. Thorsen points out the similarity to the PPP funding program. Mr. Dew highlights some of the more detailed business criteria required to determine eligibility of funds for the PPP program. Mr. Duddeck suggests getting more input from the business community regarding what needs are most important presently.

Chair Dew wraps up discussion asking staff to develop a draft merit-based application for the EDA and Council to review at future meetings. Mr. Thorsen agrees with the approach.

- i. Community Center – potential sale**
- ii. Former BP site – potential development**
- iii. Budget Update**
- iv. LCA Funding Eligibility Update**
- v. Welcome Packet/New Resident Survey**
- vi. Development Updates**

Mr. Duddeck provides development updates starting with the downtown street and utility project. The final building demolition for the development project occurred last week. The street work continues with curbs being poured this week and asphalt paving beginning next week. The new development plans to begin excavation in the next few weeks.

Mr. Duddeck continues by stating the Anchor Block storage facility development is progressing. Kwik Trip is working on plans for submission to the Planning Commission and Council in the next few months. Pending approval and sale, construction would begin in spring of 2021. The Anchor View apartment's construction is aiming to begin construction in late September or early October. The Community Center is available for potential sale, with three interested parties.

Mr. Duddeck provided a brief budget update and announced position eliminations that occurred in preparation for the upcoming 2021 budget year.

Mr. Duddeck shares plans from a developer interested in the former BP site. The site sketch proposes a laundromat with a small drive-thru coffee shop attached. He asks for feedback from the EDA while sharing the concern of the right-of-way with this property. Various EDA members shared concern regarding right-of-way and access to the property in the future. Mr. Fuller if there was contamination on the site. Mr. Duddeck confirmed site closure from MPCA was received before the City acquired the property. The City is prepared to start demolition shortly.

B. Discuss EDA direction and focus

i. Review EDA by-laws

Mr. Dew asked if any members had a chance to review the EDA by-laws that were sent out prior to the meeting, and for any comments. Mr. Dew has reviewed the by-laws, and does not have proposed changes, and suggests EDA members email staff prior to the next meeting with any questions, concerns, or proposed changes.

VII. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

VIII. TREASURER REPORT

IX. CHAIR REPORT

X. MAYOR REPORT

XI. REPORTS FROM EDA MEMBERS

Mr. Fuller asked Mr. Duddeck about the project impacting the pond behind Reflex Medical. Mr. Duddeck stated a redesign occurred as the groundwater was higher than anticipated in the area. He anticipates it being completed this fall.

XII. FUTURE BUSINESS

The next regular EDA meeting is scheduled for October 13th at 3:00 p.m.

XIII. ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 4:04pm.