

EAST BETHEL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY MEETING

October 20th, 2014

The East Bethel Economic Development Authority (EDA) met for a Regular EDA Meeting on October 20, 2014 at 7:00 P.M for their regular meeting at City Hall.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Heidi Moegerle Dan Butler Bob DeRoche Julie Lux
John Landwehr (arrived after Ms. Allenspach's interview)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Brian Bezanson - Excused

ALSO PRESENT: Colleen Winter, Community Development Director
Jack Davis, City Administrator

Call to Order & Adopt Agenda Mr. Butler motioned to adopt the October 20, 2014 agenda. Mr. DeRoche seconded; all in favor, motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Meeting Minutes September 15, 2014 Mr. DeRoche motioned to approve the minutes. Ms. Lux seconded; all in favor, motion carried unanimously.

EDA Commission position Interviews There was one open position on the EDA due to Mike Conner's resignation. The position will run through January 31, 2018. There were two applicants for the position – Sherry Allenspach and Doug Welter. Ms. Allenspach was interviewed first, followed by Mr. Welter.

Business Development Report Ms. Winters reported the following:

- Expansion of Cambridge-Isanti Insurance Agency completed (23847 Johnson St NE)
- New floor refinishing business has moved into previous Valdars Motors location
- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program at Coon Lake Beach is progressing. We will probably try to get at least 4 septic systems installed this fall yet. The project has been very challenging. Mr. Butler asked about the cost per system. The response was approximately \$20,000 per plat.
- Classic Commercial Park 3rd Addition Plat approved and working on Developer's Agreement
- Continue work on website changes and tools
- Applying for a Met Council grant to assist with the decommissioning of the Castle Towers wastewater facility. This proposal is due November 2nd. Chances of receiving this grant are unknown but it was recommended by the Met Council as a potential source of funding.
- To date there have been 16 new residential home permits issued in the City of East Bethel. In a comparison to the community of Oak Grove, the numbers for Oak Grove are higher due to a large number of inexpensive lots available for sale in a concentrated area.
- Year to date the Community Development Department has received over 13,000 phone calls, emails and counter visits. This is an increase of 156% from

one year ago. We have also issued more building permits than we did in 2012 or 2013. Mr. Landwehr asked where the biggest increase in contacts has been noted. Ms. Winter reported that emails and phone calls are the highest numbers and that counter visits are very low. She estimates that 70 – 75% of her contacts are planning related. She also noted that many of those contacts are realtors and developers. Members discussed options for tracking/categorizing contacts and feedback from customers. Ms. Winters reported that the department has received very positive feedback from customers despite the outcome of the contact whether they receive a positive or negative response to their request.

**EDA Website,
Miscellaneous
Projects Update**

Ms. Winter reported that the website intern, Amy Norling, has been working on several items in support of the EDA page on the website as well as looking at how our website is used. Members were asked to provide input on the products that have been developed in support of economic development. Members reviewed the following:

- Business Resource and Financial Assistance Directory – there are some changes that still need to be made so it will not be going live at this time. Members again discussed how to index this document and suggested a possible Table of Contents at the front of the document as well as an index at the end of the document. Mr. Butler stated he felt the document was ready to be published with the understanding that it will be dynamic and changes will be made as needed. Ms. Winter agreed to recheck the information about the USDA to be sure it is allowed to be published on our website.
- 10 ways Local Government can use Social Media
- Facebook page – Members discussed the possible uses of Facebook, potential staff time and effort required and demographics of users. There is also a requirement for legal standards, social media policies, etc.
- How can we improve our website? Ms. Winter stated they are very open to any suggestions for a “WOW” piece for the EDA page on the city website. It was suggested that what makes East Bethel unique is the rural setting with small corporations as well. Mr. Butler suggested researching products like “Survey Monkey” to elicit feedback from customers using the website.

Ms. Winter proposed having a labor market analyst present at an EDA meeting in the future.

Members again discussed the potential for residents to pay utility bills online. Mr. Davis reported that some costs for utilities are already subsidized in some areas and having to add the fees for paying online would be cost prohibitive. It was felt that there would need to be more residents in order to make paying online cost effective.

Research has been done on both PayPal and Square, and it was felt that the movement in the public is to pay things online so it will be even more of an issue in the future. It may be possible that payment for recurring permits might be able

to pay online and a gradual startup might work better than making the change across several areas.

Members also reviewed the Piwik analysis of the website for the summer months and the analysis for September. These reports have been very helpful in identifying what customers are interested in. Zoning maps are still the most common search. All permits are now online. 58 employment applications have been downloaded which has greatly decreased the amount of time spent emailing to those who request them.

“Municode” is a third party vendor that provides information on the city. They have recently completely revamped their site. This is a service that the city pays for but does not have control over changes made. The site is now easier to search from multiple formats. The city will also need to reevaluate all their GIS systems in order to update as needed.

Chamber Update

Mr. Butler reported there will be a meeting with MnDOT on November 6th to discuss Hwy 65.

Council Report and Other Business

Ms. Moegerle attended the last Chamber meeting with Representative Hackbarth and asked what he felt the Met Council might be able to do for East Bethel. He suggested doing a bonding bill. Mr. Davis reported that he had contacted Mr. Hackbarth and received conflicting information. He has requested clarification.

Candidates' forum 10/23, 7pm at Coon Lake.

Christine Hall made a presentation at the last Council meeting regarding the upcoming elections on November 4th.

Mr. Butler submitted an article about the EDA Commission to the city newsletter and suggested it would be beneficial for the leaders of each city committee to provide an article regarding the work they do.

Vote on EDA Commission Position

Members selected Doug Welter to be recommended to the City Council to fill the vacant position on the EDA Commission.

Adjournment

Ms. Moegerle made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 p.m. Ms. Lux seconded; all in favor, motion carried.

Submitted by:
Susan Lori Irons
Recording Secretary