

EAST BETHEL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY MEETING

January 26th, 2015

The East Bethel Economic Development Authority (EDA) met for a regular meeting on January 26, 2015 at 7:00 PM at City Hall.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Dan Butler* Brian Bezanson Steve Voss Julie Lux
Brian Mundle Doug Welter

MEMBERS ABSENT: John Landwehr – excused

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

* Chairperson

Call to Order Mr. Butler called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

Introduction of New Members Mayor Steve Voss and Council Member Brian Mundle Jr. were introduced and welcomed as new members of the Economic Development Authority.

Oath of Office Dan Butler and Brian Bezanson repeated the Oath of Office.

Adopt Agenda **Mr. Bezanson motioned to adopt the January 26, 2015 agenda. Ms. Lux seconded; all in favor, motion carried unanimously.**

Elect President, Vice President, and Treasurer At the February 24, 2014 EDA meeting, EDA officers were elected effective until January 2015. A new President and Vice President need to be elected to serve from January 31, 2015 through January 31, 2016. It should be noted that under the current EDA by-laws the Treasurer should also be elected. This position, by definition, is the City Administrator.

Mr. Bezanson nominated Mr. Butler to remain as President and Ms. Lux to remain as Vice President. Mr. Welter seconded the nomination. No other members were nominated. All members were in favor. Motion carried.

Appoint Assistant Treasurer and Secretary According to the EDA by-laws the Assistant Treasurer and Secretary should be appointed. These are staff positions. The Assistant Treasurer is the Finance Director, and the Secretary is the Recording Secretary. The current Finance Director is Mr. Mike Jeziorski and the City has contracted with Sue Irons as Recording Secretary.

Mr. Butler made the motion to appoint Mr. Jeziorski as Assistant Treasurer and Ms. Irons as Secretary. Mr. Bezanson seconded the motion and all members were in favor. Motion carried.

Approval of Meeting Minutes - November 17, 2014 **Mr. Bezanson motioned to approve the minutes as written. Mr. Mundle seconded; all in favor with Mr. Voss and Mr. Mundle abstaining due to not being a member of the EDA at that time. Motion carried to approve the minutes.**

**Presentation by
Michael Darger –
Business Retention
and Expansion
program**

Mr. Michael Darger from the University of Minnesota Extension Service gave a presentation on the Business Retention and Expansion (BR&E) program. Informational material is attached.

Financial Impact:

The cost of the program is \$12,000.00. Connexus Energy will pay up to \$5,000.00 for a community BR&E program, and they are very interested in working with us on this program. The remaining funds - \$7,000 would need to come out of the EDA project budget and/or the East Bethel Chamber can be asked to participate. Besides the financial commitment, it is important that there be a strong volunteer commitment in order for the program to be successful.

Mr. Bruce Sailor from Connexus Energy shared that his company fully supports the BR&E program. They have provided funding to help locations that they serve with economic development assistance. Connexus would be willing to assist with funding for East Bethel as well.

Our program (established 1990) is a proven approach for involving the community and building consensus to move forward. University of Minnesota Extension provides facilitation, technical assistance, training, and applied research to help communities assess business concerns, understand the structure of the local economy, set priorities, and implement projects that will help make communities more vibrant.

Resources offered through the program include coaching sessions, facilitated meetings, and trainings. Research services, Web resources and a BR&E Course are also available to assist communities in the process.

A Leadership Team introduces and promotes the program in the community, coordinates task force meetings, and organizes immediate follow-up. A Local Task Force engages a broad-based group of local leaders, including representatives of economic development organizations, chambers of commerce, business, government, and educational institutions. Business Visitation Teams are leaders from the task force and community. Each team has two members and visits two to four businesses.

Steps in the program:Research

- Community leaders form a team that plans and conducts the BR&E Strategies project.
- Visitation Teams learn how to use a proven survey instrument to interview businesses in order to learn about their needs, concerns and plans.

Prioritize

- Surveys are reviewed, and trustworthy individuals respond to businesses' immediate needs, including linking businesses to economic development programs and services.
- A panel of University faculty and other economic development experts offer suggested projects to address business needs identified in the survey.
- Survey results are analyzed and documented in a written research report.
- The Task Force uses the report and their knowledge of the community to develop a strategic action plan.
- Implement
- Local teams carry out priority projects identified in the strategic plan.

- Task Force evaluates results and decides how to sustain BR&E work.

Members viewed a video of the program and were given the chance to ask questions. Other communities already participating include Blaine, Roseville, Faribault and Belle Plain.

Ms. Winters stated that there are other groups who offer their own BR&E programs such as the Greater MSP group, Grow Minnesota and DEED.

Mr. Mundle asked if the program had been implemented in a community like East Bethel. Mr. Darger stated that they have had several fairly small communities as well as Hugo who received an award for their program. He described the program implemented in Columbus for comparison.

Mr. Bezanson noted Mr. Darger's comment that one community did not do well due to lack of resources. He questioned what type of resources these might be and noted that he did not notice citizen involvement in the program. Mr. Darger stated that there is a high correlation of success with the number of public staff involved.

Mayor Voss commented that he liked the program idea to help the city move forward without forgetting what has been accomplished in the past. He felt the interview with business owners was a very valuable part of the program. Mr. Voss asked what might be warning flags that business owners might be unhappy in the community. Mr. Darger related that some companies have been considering moving out of the state but decided to stay due to the program's influence.

Mr. Welter asked about long term monitoring and communication once the program is completed. Mr. Darger related a study they had done to follow up with communities from several years ago and found that most reported positive ongoing results. Mr. Welter asked about common goals for communities using the program noting that networking seemed to be frequently addressed. Mr. Darger stated other goals include city and business community interaction, workforce issues, increased outreach.

Ms. Lux asked for examples of how the funding is used. The U of M program charges fees for their program because of the time and effort they put into working with the community. They bring in experts in many areas to assist.

Next steps include recommendation of funding for the project and completion of the application. Ms. Winter suggested the information be shared with the Chamber at the meeting of the Board and the general membership meeting as well. The City Council will need to be made aware. There are currently funds available for the program.

The application requires the identification of a task force to show community readiness to participate in the program. Mr. Darger stated that they are short staffed and if the City decides to move forward with the program it would not begin until 2016. There are some preparation steps that could be done this year. The next BR&E course will be next year. It is helpful if a community can send more than one person to attend the course as well as less cost per person to attend.

Mr. Butler thanked Mr. Darger for his presentation.

Mr. Butler made a motion to recommend approval to City Council to fund the BR&E program for the City of East Bethel to commence in FY2016 in partnership with the East Bethel Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Davis commented that the funding should be requested for the FY2016 budget. He suggested making this part of the motion. Mr. Bezanson stated that he felt most members wanted to move forward with the program and that Mayor Voss and Mr. Mundle would present the program to the City Council in a positive manor. Mr. Davis stated that there are two goals for the EDA – to attract new business and to keep and expand the businesses currently operating in the city. Although the first goal is important, he felt it is also very important to ensure that current businesses felt their best interests were a priority for the City.

Mr. Voss stated he thought it would be helpful to get response from the Chamber before making a funding decision.

Mr. Butler withdrew his motion.

City Council Report

Mayor Voss stated there have been two Council meetings in January and a date has been set for the spring town hall meeting on April 23rd. They approved a change in the GIS for community development. Nordin Estates is still a topic with some funding for the resolution of the drainage problem.

Mr. Mundle reported that the Council meetings will begin at 7pm starting in March. East Bethel received an award for water fluoridation – one of only 119 cities in 2013.

Other Business

Ms. Winter reported that the City Council approved a Geographic Information System (GIS) system which she will present to the EDA when it goes live. She anticipates that it will be a tremendous economic development tool for East Bethel. It will give people the ability to go to the website and see property with multiple layers to see where wetlands are and zoning. There will be information on septic systems as well as a better complaint tracking system.

Chamber of Commerce Report

Mr. Butler reported that there is a board meeting of the Chamber on January 27th and a membership drive on February 3rd. The Board members will gather at Aggressive Hydraulics to engage in a telephone drive for membership. On February 12th the monthly meeting for membership will be at the Senior Center with a presentation from the City Finance Director and the new Mayor. Another meeting will also occur with MnDOT and Anoka County Highway Dept. as a result of the previous meeting they had with the Chamber last November. This meeting will occur on January 29th.

Adjournment

Mr. Welter made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 p.m. Mr. Bezanson seconded; all in favor, motion carried.

Submitted by:
Susan Lori Irons
Recording Secretary