

# EAST BETHEL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY MEETING

April 20, 2015

The East Bethel Economic Development Authority (EDA) met for a regular meeting on April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2015 at 7:00 P.M at City Hall.

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

MEMBERS EXCUSED: John Landwehr Brian Bezanson

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

1. **Call to Order** Mr. Butler called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.
2. **Adopt Agenda** **Mr. Welter motioned to adopt the April 20, 2015 agenda. Mr. Mundle seconded; all in favor, motion carried unanimously.**
3. **Approve March 16, 2015 Meeting Minutes** **Mr. Butler motioned to approve the minutes as written. Mr. Mundle seconded; all in favor. Motion carried to approve the minutes.**
4. **Presentation by Tim O'Neill, Dept of Employment and Economic Development Labor Analyst**

Tim O'Neill is the Department of Employment and Economic Development's (DEED's) regional analyst for the seven-county Twin Cities region of Minnesota. He presented information related to business trends, economic development and overall demographics for the East Bethel area.

Mr. Butler noted a recent article in the Star Tribune by Jackie Crosby about the aging workforce. Mr. O'Neill stated he hadn't seen it but that the issue is a big one at this time. The article also notes that there is a fair percentage of people who are moving to nearby states.

Mr. O'Neill stated that the data he gathers comes from the US Census Bureau and the American Community Survey. For communities the size of East Bethel the best data come from the 5 year estimates. The Metropolitan Council website also has a map section in the research and analysis section of their site. Mr. O'Neill stated he would send the data/PowerPoint that he assembled for the City to the members.

The department is focusing on better aligning graduates from programs and immigrants coming into the area with what the local businesses need in their workforce. A helpful tool on the DEED website is the new cost of living calculator. It allows calculation of the basic cost of living requirements for typical families and individuals in any county in MN.

MN gained over 13,000 jobs in the first quarter of this year. Since September of 2009, the state has gained 224,000 jobs. Unemployment is at 3.7% and has been for the last eight months. There are different levels of unemployment but the current rate is considered as good as it can get.

Current concerns include the fact that wages have not grown since the recession in

2009, even accounting for inflation. This means many of the newer jobs are part time. The average number of hours worked per week is increasing. Another concern is that MN has some of the starkest disparities between white and minority employment. The state has a new initiative to address this issue. Current labor force participation is at 74% which is one of the highest in the country.

Anoka County's unemployment rate is at 4.2%. During the years 2006 – 2009 East Bethel lost over 500 jobs. Employment has grown by 10% since then, faster than MN's 7% growth over the same period. The three largest areas of growth in employment in East Bethel are construction, trade, transportation and utilities and professional business services. Manufacturing data cannot be reported on for East Bethel because there are few businesses in this area and data might be identifiable. This would break privacy rules.

East Bethel data shows that 82% of residents drive alone to work and the average commute is 38 minutes. Population in East Bethel is expected to grow and the current average age is 40.5 years old. It was noted that some of the data is from 2011 but this is the most current data that has been gathered and analyzed.

A copy of the presentation will be sent to Colleen Winter, Community Development Director.

**5. Discussion re:  
Marketing Piece  
for Area Businesses**

Mr. Butler queried the members about an interest in putting together or working with the East Bethel Chamber of Commerce to have promotional materials located at area businesses. The Chamber currently has a sub-committee for marketing and is in the process of developing a folder containing information about the EB Chamber, a letter from the EB Chamber President, a networking brochure to get to know the community and membership application. They would like to have a letter from the City of East Bethel included in the packet as well. Their hope is that the packet will be ready to go in June.

Ms. Winter stated she had discussed the packet with Jody Milbrandt of the East Bethel Chamber of Commerce that day. Ms. Winter shared the contents of the packet and what it would look like and compared it to what the City already has as part of their marketing tools.

Mr. Welter noted that it seemed there were two different purposes for the packets. The one for the Chamber is intended to be used by new members for networking with other members and collecting business cards, etc. Mr. Welter stated he thought the packet Mr. Butler was suggesting would be more for the general public/community members.

Mr. Butler agreed. His vision included places of interest like the golf course and restaurants that may not necessarily be a member of the Chamber of Commerce. He did not feel that Chamber members would be against participating in marketing of this kind because the purpose would still be to interest people in what East Bethel has to offer. Members discussed possible options for this kind of marketing tool. Mr. Butler stated he will take the suggestion to the Chamber to see if they have interest in assisting with this kind of marketing. Ms. Winter noted that there is a board meeting next week where this could be discussed.

Ms. Winter stated that the Chamber will be requesting a welcome piece from the

Mayor for their packet.

Mr. Mundle wondered about the amount of information that might be included. He suggested that something be developed and then assess the applicability of the information. Mr. Butler stated he thought only the name of the place of interest and the location would be the information included in the item. Mr. Mundle felt a theme should be discussed and dedicated to the piece and then follow through with the information i.e.: exciting businesses, bars and restaurants, entertainment, curiosity places within the City or a mix of those.

Mayor Voss suggested the item be used to point people to the City's website with the website address listed and/or a QR code on it to use with mobile phones.

## 6. Business Development Report

Ms. Winter reported the following:

- Continue to meet with MNDOT, Anoka Highway Dept. re: Service road options for Hwy 65

Ms. Winter shared that there was a great turnout at the last breakfast meeting hosted at the Senior Center and catered by Jill Hoffman. Sheila from MN Dot presented at the meeting with good results.

- Referred three individuals to our Open to Business representative

Ms. Lux asked if the City Council had approved the recommendation for the BR&E program. The response was that yes the program has been approved.

- Established Leadership Team for BR&E and will be meeting with the U of MN representative next week

Ms. Winter noted that the Leadership Team met with Mr. Ahmed to discuss initial plans. Tentative target for the business surveys is September.

Mr. Welter commented that the team would like to have a member from the City Council as part of the task force so that there is some continuity between the plans that the City is making and what the task force comes up with as part of the process. He stated that there is minimal involvement until they go to training. One of the important areas where this participation is needed is when the team looks at the analysis and decides what projects they want to take on. Mayor Voss requested that Mr. Davis add this item to the agenda for the next Council meeting.

- Working with an individual who is interested in opening up a microbrewery
- Working with an individual who is interested in building a wedding event venue

Harlan Mayer is a local real estate agent who has several properties for sale including all the Sylvester properties. There have been several people interested in the different properties.

- Met with representatives from Brown-Wilbert, Inc.; a company that manufactures septic tanks and burial vaults, about possible locations in East Bethel

This business is more industrial and the property they are interested in is not zoned for this. There will be a meeting at the Planning Commission next week to discuss this

issue. The property in question is at the corner of 221<sup>st</sup> Street and Hwy 65.

- Have received and met with a number of individuals who are interested in developing their properties for residential. Currently working with Met Council regarding interpretation of our Comprehensive Plan and future land use plan Ms. Winter stated that the City believes the plan allows for 2 - 2½ acre lot density, but the Met Council maintains that it is 1 lot per 10 acres. Mr. Mundle asked if the Met Council offered any explanation as to why the zoning density was changed. Ms. Winter explained that the zoning has not changed but there is a zoning map that shows the “1 per 10” and Met Council states that is the plan that the City of East Bethel must follow. The City feels the map designation was a mistake and that the original 2 - 2½ acre lots should stand. Mayor Voss suggested that the City engineer may be able to assist with the discussion. Ms. Winter stated she felt the issue would eventually come before the City Council.
- Community Development Block Grant program at Coon Lake Beach is in process

To date, the Community Development Department has handled 4,130 contacts (only items that require action) including emails, counter visits and telephone calls. They average about 30 visitors a day. March 2015 Piwik Analysis at attachment 6.1.

**7. Chamber of Commerce Report**

There was a presentation by City Staff at the Chamber meeting as well as information provided about the BR &E initiative and Open to Business.

**8. City Council Report**

Mr. Mundle reported that the bond refinance resulted in over \$1,000,000 saved which was more than expected. They approved the CUP for Beaverbrook Sportsmen’s Club to expand. The Town Hall meeting will be held on April 23<sup>rd</sup> at 6pm for the open house. Arbor Day activities on April 25<sup>th</sup> include tree planting at 10am.

Mayor Voss reported that Hunter’s Inn has reopened for business thanks in no small part to City staff.

**9. Other Business**

None

**10. Adjournment**

**Mr. Butler made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:05 p.m. Mr. Welter seconded; all in favor, motion carried.**

Submitted by:  
 Susan Lori Irons  
 Recording Secretary