

APPROVED MINUTES

EAST BETHEL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (EDA) MEETING May 20, 2019

The EDA met on May 20, 2019 at 7:00 pm for the regular meeting at City Hall.

MEMBERS PRESENT: President Julie Lux Dan Butler Tim Harrington Tom Schulzetenberg
 Catherine Lanrain Steve Voss Brian Bezanson

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

1.0 – Call to Order

The May 20, 2019, EDA meeting was called to order by President Julie Lux at 7:00 p.m.

2.0 – Adopt Agenda

Mayor Voss moved and Mr. Bezanson seconded to approve the agenda as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

3.0 – Approve March 18, 2019 meeting minutes

Mr. Butler moved and Mr. Harrington seconded to approve the March 18, 2019 meeting minutes as written. Motion passed unanimously.

4.0 – Discussion of Website

Background Information:

The city's current website content management software will be discontinued at the end of 2019 and must be upgraded to the advanced version. City staff received notice of this change from the website host (CivicPlus), and per the City Administrator's direction, have begun working with CivicPlus staff to prepare for this conversion, including redesign and content transfer.

The new software will offer:

- Mobile-responsive design - A responsive website is one that responds (or changes) based on the needs of the users and the device being used (e.g. text and images may change from a three-column layout, to a single column display).
- More intuitive interface for content editors – The new platform has been built to help backend users work faster, create content more easily, and send communications more quickly.
- Flexible design features - Flexibility in customization allows for the creation and editing of a wide variety of content types, so the website can be better utilized as a tool to amplify communications with East Bethel residents.
- Enhanced security – Information hosting will now be cloud-based instead of server-based, offers 99.7% up-time, and Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS)-attack monitoring so you don't have to worry about potential disruptions, or the safety of resident data.

The predominant part of the information contained on each page of our website will not change. Modifications will be made to the page layout to create the easiest and most-useful experience possible for site users. Possible adjustments may include menu organization, formatting changes to text, and additional visual cues, such as photos/quick links/buttons. Under the current plan, this conversion will have no additional cost to the city.

Staff has taken steps in evaluating website needs:

- Identifying the audience – Classifying who visits/uses the website.

- Identifying needs for the site – Using the list of the various segments of the audience served, determining why they might be coming to the website, and what services and/or information can be provided to them.
- Reviewing the functionality based on comparison with other websites – Identifying areas where the site could be improved, based on content or designs found useful on other government websites.
- Reviewing the functionality based on analytics report history – Staff uses the PIWIK web analytics software program to run monthly and year-end reports on the website traffic. Reviewing these reports helps to track the amount of traffic that individual pages have received and identify which content/features website visitors are currently using and items they are searching for.

Staff is also using this as an opportunity to review the site's compliance with Section 508 (Amendment to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973) accessibility standards and Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG, ver. 2.1 AA), which are technical requirements that explain how to make web content more accessible to people with disabilities.

This project is currently on track to be completed before CivicPlus' end-of-year deadline October 10, 2019. The re-design of the website is free with CivicPlus.

Ms. Carrie Frost, City Administrative Coordinator, explained the need for the website change and reviewed the Phases and Timelines for the implementation of the new website.

The Website Project Team viewed 100+ websites for content and ease of use. The top three sites were:

- Belvedere, CA – design and layout, easy to read font, news and announcing meetings and events, community spotlights, hours listed on main page, phone number and usable link

Mr. Butler suggested the phone number be listed at the top of the page. Mr. Butler also noted that the need for five clicks from the landing page to the bottom of the page is way too many clicks.

Ms. Frost noted that the hope is to revamp the current mega menu and to keep it simple – more of a redesign than redoing the whole website. Having these four heading on the mega menu is ideal: City Hall, Our Community, City Business, I want to.

- Murphy, TX – clean look, button-less links, 3 clicks to the bottom, get informed header, story links always visible, footnotes at bottom of mega menu headings, tabbed modules on the widgets doubles the usable space

Mr. Butler asked if the footnotes could be changed as needed/wanted. Ms. Frost will check into it.

- Greensboro, NC – “How can we help you today” in lieu of “Search” for the search bar, 2 clicks to the bottom, different foot notes under Mega Menu headings, able to hide quick links, tabbed widgets, meetings and events listed without having a full calendar

Mr. Butler asked what company produced Greensboro's website. Ms. Frost said she believes it is Granicus, which is a website competitor of CivicPlus. Mr. Butler said he believes Granicus in a much better website producer. Ms. Frost reminded everyone that the upgrading of the website is free with CivicPlus; going with Granicus would cost money.

Mr. Schulzetenberg asked if the website team found sites that were better or worse for mobile viewing. The new upgrade will adjust the format of content based on the mobile device being used.

The current EDA website page was viewed for content. Surry County, NC was used as an example of what the EDA's stand alone page could look like.

Ms. Frost asked the EDA members what type of content they would like on the EDA website page.

- The EDA page and the Economic Development page are often confused. It was suggested that one page be created for the EDA and separate page be created for Economic Development with links to each page.
- “Create an account” on the current main page to sign up for notifications and/or Community Voice.
- Link to MNCAR and ACRED
 - The link to ACRED is needed for start-up businesses and existing businesses to know what East Bethel has to offer and what help is available to start-up businesses
- Link to East Bethel jobs
- Featured properties
- Current development in City
 - Current commercial projects to be put on the initial start-up page
- Include GIS map
- Include drone video

Mr. Butler noted that photos were to be submitted by May 17. Was the drone video submitted? Ms. Frost said several screen shots from the video and stills were submitted. Mr. Schulzetenberg noted that having the drone video on the landing page could be quite attractive, however, if the user’s internet connection is slower it is not a pleasant experience. Ms. Frost did note that if the website is visited more than once a day, seeing the video again and again would not be necessary, so an option to skip the video may be needed.

The June 3rd City Council work meeting will be dedicated to discussing the website upgrading. It is posted on the city website and will be sent via the notification system.

Mr. Butler noted that the access to the website is almost 40% mobile. He would like to see the information searched for by mobile included on the EDA webpage. In Google Analytics, actual locations can be pulled up by people accessing the website; this feature should also be included on the webpage. Ms. Frost did say there is a lot of analytical information that city staff has not delved into.

What other information needs to be on the EDA page?

Ms. Winter would like the EDA to state what their top priorities are as to what needs to be included on the EDA page. This is a good starting point to move forward. What she heard tonight was:

- Open to Business
- ACRED and other links
- Drone video be made prominent on site
- Starting a new business
 - Links to help
 - East Bethel jobs
 - East Bethel workforce
- Static map of available development sites
- More demographic information
 - Types of families moving to East Bethel
 - Lower land values
 - Top educational city
 - Emphasize development growth, include pictures
 - New Housing
 - Senior living
 - Apartment complex

- Viking Preserve development

Mr. Butler talked about the tagline of “Rural Character Metro Connection”. Because not all parts of East Bethel are readily connected. Mayor Voss said there will be a longer discussion about the marketing tagline for East Bethel. Mr. Butler said there are sections of the city that are still dial-up, so he would not like to put connection in the tagline.

Mr. Schulzetenberg asked if the “12th lowest tax rate in Anoka County” listed on the East Bethel Snapshot sheet is amongst any city in Anoka County? Ms. Winter said East Bethel is right in the middle for Anoka County. Mr. Schulzetenberg asked if it is possible to develop that even further, i.e. among cities of 10,000 or more East Bethel is in this bracket. Mayor Voss said he believes all 17 cities in Anoka County are included in the statement.

The content update deadline is the end of August. After that any new content will not be added until switched over to the new site. Staff is hoping to get started on content updates and get that in place before everything is switched over.

The City Council work session is to get feedback on what people want quick access to, what types of information are people looking for that may not be on the website, what information do they think is not there but is not readily found, get more analytics of who actually uses the website, etc. Mayor Voss suggested sending out links to the Belvedere, CA, Murphy, TX and Greensboro, NC websites so that people have a chance to view them beforehand. Ms. Frost said that can be done.

5.0 – City Council Report

Mr. Harrington reported:

- Council approved the 2019 JPA Street Maintenance Projects
- 2018 audit was presented and a resolution accepting the audit was passed
- Passed Sunrise River Watershed Management Organization (SRWMO) 2020 budget
- Townhall meeting was well attended
 - MNDOT was present to discuss the Reduced Conflict Intersections (RCIs)
- Approved 2020-2024 Roads Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)
- Approved administrative lot split for 20940 East Bethel Blvd.
- Tuesday, May 28th at noon is the groundbreaking for Cedar Creek Senior Living
- Booster Days is looking for volunteers for the dunk tank

Mayor Voss reported:

- The RCI is open
- Council received notice of resignation from the Community Development Director, Colleen Winter. Ms. Winter has accepted a position closer to family. Her resignation is a loss to the City of East Bethel and all that she had done for the city over the last couple of years is greatly appreciated. Mr. Harrington added that Ms. Winter made his job much easier over the years and thanked her for everything.

6.0 – Adjournment

Mr. Butler moved and Mr. Schulzetenberg seconded to adjourn at 7:55 pm. Motion carried unanimously.

Submitted by:

Gail Gessner

Recording Secretary