

EAST BETHEL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (EDA) MEETING
January 21, 2020

MEMBERS PRESENT: Vice President Dan Butler Catherine Lancrain Brian Bezanson
Tom Schulzetenberg Council Member Randy Plaisance

ABSENT: President Julie Lux Mayor Steve Voss

ALSO PRESENT: Stephanie Hanson, Community Development Director
Jack Davis, City Administrator

1.0 – Call to Order

Commissioner Butler called the regular meeting of the EDA to order at 7:00 pm at City Hall.

2.0 – Adopt Agenda

Commissioner Bezanson moved and Commissioner Schulzetenberg seconded to approve the agenda as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

3.0 – Approve December 16, 2019 meeting minutes

Commissioner Bezanson moved and Commissioner Lancrain seconded to approve the December 16, 2019 meeting minutes as written. Motion passed with Council Member Plaisance abstaining.

4.0 – Oath of Office – Brian Bezanson

Background Information: At the November 18, 2019, the EDA recommended the reappointment of Brain Bezanson. On December 9, 2019, City Council confirmed the reappointment of Brian Bezanson to the EDA.

Commissioner Bezanson took the Oath of Office for a term of six (6) years, expiring on January 31, 2026.

5.0 – Election and Appointment of 2020 EDA Officers

Background Information: Per the EDA By-Laws, the officers of the Authority shall consist of a President, Vice President, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer and a Secretary. A Commissioner must not serve as President and Vice-President at the same time. The offices of Secretary and Assistant Treasurer need not be held by a Commissioner. The By-Laws state the Assistant Treasurer will be the City Finance Director. The By-Laws state the Treasurer shall be the Executive Director of the Authority and that the Executive Director shall be the City Administrator.

EDA Officers for 2019 were: President: Julie Lux, Vice President: Dan Butler, Treasurer: Jack Davis (as specified by EDA By-Laws), Assistant Treasurer: Mike Jeziorski (as specified by the EDA By-Laws), and Secretary: Gail Gessner (appointed by the EDA)

Commissioner Bezanson moved and Commissioner Schulzetenberg seconded to table the election and appointment of 2020 EDA officers until the next meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

6.0 – 2020 Goals and Objectives

Background Information: At the beginning of every year, the EDA adopts a Goals and Strategies Plan. This plan identifies those topics that are priorities for our economic development focus.

The proposed goals and strategies to address our efforts to recruit and retain business include:

- Business Friendly Environment
- Comprehensive Plan
- Financing
- Marketing

- Business Recruitment
- Business Retention and Expansion
- Business Assistance
- High Speed Internet Service

Commissioner Schulzetenberg asked if these goals come from the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Davis said these goals and strategies are a modification of last year's plan with the addition of:

- Identify and target those businesses and industries that are desirable and compatible for the East Bethel market area.
- Utilize data from ACRED and DEED to obtain location needs of identified businesses and develop procedures for contact and follow-up meetings.
- Maintain and expand connections and associations with DEED, MSP, ACRED and other related associations and organizations to develop our profile with these groups and increase our exposure for industrial prospect references.

Mr. Davis suggested the EDA focus on one goal/strategy at each meeting.

Vice President Butler asked if a budget will be added to item IV. Development of a Marketing Plan? Mr. Davis said once a plan is identified a budget could be put into place.

Vice President Butler suggested sponsoring a lunch or dinner for a focus group of businesses outside of the community to find out how they perceive East Bethel from a business standpoint. Council Member Plaisance suggested accessing the Chamber of Commerce to assist with those business connections. It was asked if the Chamber has connected with East Bethel businesses for possible leads of businesses outside of the community to locate in East Bethel. Mr. Davis said a self-assessment of East Bethel should be considered. The assessment would be done by an outside firm such as DEED or Greater MSP. With the information gathered, East Bethel would then revisit the Business Retention and Expansion (BR&E) Plan. It is much easier to retain a business than bring a new one in.

Vic President Butler asked if a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) Analysis is available through Anoka County for East Bethel to use. He believes this would be very helpful for East Bethel.

Commissioner Lancrain has noticed that the family businesses that were here 6-7 years ago are now gone; the family names remain but not the businesses. Those vacancies have not been filled nor do businesses relocating outside of the community leave "moved to" information. She would like to see a main street hub of businesses (grocery store, retail) that could provide a sense of community for East Bethel. That would be difficult to do being East Bethel has four (4) separate zip codes, is part of two (2) different school districts and has three (3) different area codes. Because of this, many people feel disjointed from the East Bethel community. Council Member Plaisance said it would be impossible to make a city center due to the geographical location of East Bethel. The area behind the movie theater and gas station was to be a community center but when sewer and water was installed it became industrial or residential. The City needs to keep "best use of property" in the forefront of decision making.

Mr. Davis did note that there have not been any discussions with the owner of the Hwy 65/Viking Blvd. NW quadrant in the last six months.

Commissioner Schulzetenberg said further refinement of the City website could also be a goal for the EDA to work on. Mr. Davis said the website is the face of the City and continued upgrading of the website and its contents is very important. Commissioner Lancrain said the new website is vague looking. Could pictures taken in East Bethel be used to reflect what the City has to offer? Mr. Davis said the pictures used can be updated.

Commissioner Bezanson said one thing that came out of the Comprehensive Plan and the 80 Voltage Study is that East Bethel is a rural community with easy access to the metro area. Mr. Davis said that is apparent in the drone video with the Minneapolis skyline in the background.

Commissioner Lancrain asked how the EDA can build on getting more information out about East Bethel's identity and what it has to offer.

Council Member Plaisance said it needs to be decided what type of community is wanted by and for the residents. It has been identified that it would be nice to have a downtown location, more businesses. That is what the BR&E was all about. East Bethel is at a crossroad of how it wants to drive the train and where it wants to go. A lot of that has to do with the website and social media. What type of community does East Bethel want to build? Outreach has been increased via use of the drone video(s). He doesn't believe East Bethel will be a "downtown city" like Cambridge or Isanti. He believes a closer look is needed at how people are doing their purchasing. He would like East Bethel to have a grocery store, more fast food options, and coffee chain(s), however, he does not see East Bethel being in a system with big box stores. Many retail items are now being purchased online. Do people want to purchase online in lieu of going to stores? That is a factor that will affect the direction in which the City goes. Would people rather have service businesses in the community?

Vice President Butler believes the City needs to take into consideration the trend of rural cities with a population of less than 12,000 having their downtowns dry up or does East Bethel want a Blaine type of downtown? Commissioner Lancrain said there is a transition of purchasing via the internet vs. store fronts. However, she believes people value local businesses; she supports local businesses and would like to see more locally owned businesses in East Bethel. There is a value to having an interaction with someone willing to give you personalized service. She believes it's a difficult time to start up a storefront business and that is why there are more home businesses. Which brings up the need for high speed internet (HSI). Vice President Butler agrees HSI is a priority goal for the EDA. HSI has financial implications for the community and residents. Mr. Davis did share there are Blandin Foundation grant monies available to aid areas not served or underserved by the internet.

7.0 – 2020 Projects

Background Information: The initial list of projects scheduled for 2020 include:

- 187th Ave to Viking Blvd Service Road and Elevation Project – June 30th break ground
- Completion of the Cambia Hills and Cedar Creek Senior Living Projects – spring
Cedar Creek Senior Living has an office/showroom in Building by Design
- East Bethel Village Apartments – Phase 2 – early fall for site plan review
- Redevelopment Projects – TBD
- Broadband/High Speed Internet Initiatives

8.0 – Business Activity Report

Background Information: The following is a list of meetings, discussions and actions that have supported City marketing activities for development projects between December 16, 2019 and January 21, 2020:

- Staff is continuing to work with the developer for the Prairie Pines Subdivision to find alternative solutions for access issues to this development.
- Staff is working with the owners of the property at 209th/Hwy 65 for their plans for retail site at this location. Ms. Hanson is working with the bank to figure out what to do with lot splits and one company that would like to locate there.
- The East Bethel City Council and Elevage Development Group signed a Memorandum of Understanding that commits the City to commence City water and sewer installation on the site by June 30, 2020 and Elevage to begin their Phase I portion of the project by June 30, 2021. Ms. Hanson has been in contact with the Elevage group and is hoping to see a full submittal of a preliminary plat plan by the end of January/beginning of February in order to start the plan review. The hope is to have something to go before the Planning Commission in March with a public hearing and before City Council in April.
- Discussions have begun with ACRED regarding strategies to improve and expand broadband/high speed internet service and explore potential grant fund sources. Discussed with Ms. Hajder the possible formation of a focus group between East Bethel, Isanti County, Ham Lake, and Blaine to discuss internet services. Zale, Midco, Connexus Energy and Century Link would also be a part of the group. Ms. Hajder will report back to Ms. Hanson with progress updates. The City may apply for a \$75,000 grant to help with internet projects. More information is needed at this time. Vice President Butler believes the grant comes from the State. Mr. Davis clarified the grant would be from the Blandin Foundation.
- City Council and Staff are working with State Storage on a revised site plan for their location at Hwy 65/Sims Road.

9.0 - City Council Report

Background Information:

The City Council Representative will present an update of Council activities for the previous month that relate to EDA projects and interests.

Council Member Plaisance reported:

- The East Bethel Fire Auxiliary fund raiser All You Can Eat Waffle Breakfast is Saturday, January 25th at Fire Station #1 from 8:00 to 11:00 am. There will also be a bake sale, craft/vendor fair, blood drive. A helicopter will also be there.
- The City has been talking about creating events to get residents more involved, maybe something around Halloween – trunk or treat, Easter – egg hunt. One event is Game Day which is held monthly at the Senior Center. The next scheduled Game Day is Saturday, February 8th from noon to 6:00 pm. Coffee, water and possibly popcorn will be provided along with access to the vending machines in City Hall. Participants under 15 yrs. need to have adult supervision.
- East Bethel is now posting commission and city council meetings on You Tube to meet ADA requirements.

10.0 – Adjournment

Commissioner Schulzetenberg moved and Commissioner Bezanson seconded to adjourn at 7:57 pm. Motion carried unanimously.

Submitted by:

Gail Gessner

Recording Secretary