

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Thursday, July 3, 2008

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, President Menk called the meeting of the Brainerd Economic Development Authority to order at 8:00 A.M.

Present were Commissioners Menk, Nesheim, and Trimble.

Also present were City Administrator Vogt, City Engineer Hulsether, Finance Director Goble, Council Members Cumberland and Nelson Fisher, and Ms. Sheila Haverkamp of BLADC.

Noted absent were Commissioners Bonde, Pearson, Johnson and O'Day.

EDA President Menk stated that because there is not a quorum, today's meeting will be informational only. He stated that the May 29, 2008 minutes were incorrect in showing Commissioner Nesheim both "present" and "absent," and asked that this be corrected.

#2 Approval/Amendment of Agenda – Held Over.

#3 Approval of Minutes – May 29, 2008 – Held Over.

#4 Approval of Financial Reports – Held Over.

#5 Brainerd/Baxter Small Cities Development Program Application – BLADC Presentation – Informational.

The Chair recognized Sheila Haverkamp of BLADC who summarized the Small Cities Development Program (SCDP) which impacts slum and blighted areas. She stated that currently she is meeting with different groups to find out what "pressing" needs there are in the community in order to develop a project plan to bring forth to the EDA and Council for approval. She stated that one of the ideas is creating loans for the Downtown business owners in order to create a "cash flow" account during the reconstruction program while their business revenue is down.

Commissioner Trimble asked why the loan would need to be paid back if it was done through a grant program.

Ms. Haverkamp stated that it is a grant program, but the City decides whether it should be given out or if it should be paid back in order to continue to benefit the City and that each loan is different depending on the circumstances. She stated that other ideas have included acquiring funds to help cover the connection to City utilities for the Downtown reconstruction or for demolition of buildings that will not be redeveloped.

Commissioner Nesheim stated that she feels focusing on the Downtown area is important because of the expenses they will incur during reconstruction while losing business at the same time; however, if some of the funds could also go towards neighborhoods that need help as well, that would be good.

President Menk stated that code changes or required updates for many of the buildings Downtown will also be a major expense and should be considered for grants or loans, even before small “cash flow” loans. He stated that the repayment rate of the small loans mentioned may be low because of the possibilities of business closings. He stated that he liked the idea of helping other neighborhoods and also suggested creating employee parking for Downtown business employees.

Discussion was held regarding acquisition of the Burlington lot and demolition of the old freight depot building located there.

Ms. Haverkamp stated that the SCDP application to DEED is due early September and will be brought before the Council in August. She stated that if anyone had ideas to please contact her.

President Menk asked if the tough economic times many communities are experiencing will have an impact on the application process.

Ms. Haverkamp stated that she believes it may have an impact and should be considered when deciding which projects to include in the application.

#6 2020 Plan Update – BLADC Presentation.

The Chair recognized Ms. Sheila Haverkamp of BLADC, who summarized the efforts of the 2020 program, including the efforts of “Positively Minnesota” and stated that she is feeling very enthusiastic about the program. She discussed BLADC’s focus on “sectors” of the program which include Manufacturing, Health Care and General efforts. She stated that a development that is being worked on at the Brainerd Airport which would involve showcasing the “Lakes Area” using televisions that would be broadcasting local news, weather and local video clips, and that there is an international business prospect looking at the Brainerd Lakes area. She stated that everything needs to be “targeted” and “Strategic” because of limited funds.

#7 Establishment of a Subcommittee Relating to Vacant Dwellings and Building.

The Chair recognized City Administrator Vogt, who stated that this discussion can wait because Commissioner Johnson, who is absent today, is interested in the subject.

#8 Staff Reports.

City Administrator Vogt stated that in Phase IV of the Industrial Park, curb and gutter should be seen next week with blacktop to start by the end of the month and final approval in mid-August. He stated that the “Isebrand” Industrial Park is nearly complete and that when the park is complete Mildred Thiesse will be contacted regarding a property donation. He discussed assessments for the extension of sewer and water on Hwy 210. He stated that plans and specifications are being developed for a more specific cost estimate for the Downtown Reconstruction project, and that the Parks and Recreation Department has been working on making the City look nice for the 4th of July celebration.

President Menk stated that the planters had been filled with flowers and plants at some Downtown locations by Downtown Coordinator Emily Roragen and other volunteers.

Commissioner Nesheim asked if there are any grants available for the 210 extension of sewer and water.

Ms. Haverkamp stated that in order for a grant to cover something like that, there needs to be other reasons noted besides reducing taxpayers' costs.

Commissioner Nesheim asked if the expansion of infrastructure could be considered as development towards the airport.

Ms. Haverkamp stated that she would definitely look into it.

#9 Commissioners' Comments/Questions.

None.

#10 Adjourn.

The Chair stated that no "adjournment" is necessary as the meeting was informal.

Tom Johnson, Secretary