

**City of West St. Paul
Economic Development Authority Work Session Minutes
November 23, 2020**

1. Call to Order

President Napier called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Present: President Dave Napier
Commissioners Wendy Berry, Lisa Eng-Sarne,
John Justen, Bob Pace and Dick Vitelli

Absent: Commissioner Anthony Fernandez (excused absence)

Also Present: City Manager Ryan Schroeder
City Attorney Kori Land
Police Chief Brian Sturgeon
Community Development & Executive Director Jim Hartshorn
Finance Director Char Stark
City Clerk/EDA Secretary Shirley Buecksler

3. Agenda Items

A. Strategic Initiatives: Commercial and Housing Development Discussion

Executive Director Hartshorn said at the last Open Council Work Session, Staff was directed to draft a plan to address economic development, commercial and Housing, for review.

Enclosed in the Commission's packet is the (draft) Strategic Initiatives for Commercial and Housing Development 2021:

Strategic Initiative for Commercial Development:

- 1) Identify and support high value commercial growth opportunities
- 2) Organize and Implement a Business Recognition Program – COVID permitting
- 3) Conduct business retention & expansion visits – COVID permitting
- 4) Continue to fund the “Open to Business” program – small business counseling
- 5) Explore ways to better utilize Dakota County Regional Chamber of Commerce
- 6) Explore new gateway signage for the southwest corner Robert Street and Mendota Road
- 7) Continue the Commercial Exterior Grant program
- 8) Continue the Commercial Redevelopment program
- 9) Continue to advance a business friendly, supportive approach toward development

- 10) Secure information on local and regional real estate market trends, and partner with Minnesota Commercial Association of Realtors (MNCAR), Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), Minnesota Marketing Partnership, Dakota County Community Development Agency (CDA), Economic Development Association of MN (EDAM), Dakota County Regional Chamber of Commerce

Continued Commercial Projects into 2021:

- 1) Hy-Vee Store/Restaurant/C-Store
- 2) AutoZone Store
- 3) Cub Foods Out Lots – Chase Bank, StarBucks, Others
- 4) Former Bakers Square Site – Crew Car Wash
- 5) Canine Coach Expansion
- 6) Wakota Life Center Expansion
- 7) Tii Cup Restaurant
- 8) Burger King Site?
- 9) Gents Bakery & Café
- 10) St. Croix Lutheran School Expansion
- 11) Heritage Middle School Expansion
- 12) Update EDA Website Material

Possible Commercial Projects/Programs:

- 1) Doddway Shopping Center Mixed-Use
- 2) Evolve Workplace Expansion
- 3) More Space - Climate Controlled Storage Facility
- 4) Vacant Perkins Site
- 5) Vacant Bakers Square Site
- 6) Vacant Pawn America Site
- 7) Arby's Restaurant Remodel
- 8) Bobby & Steve's Auto/Convenience Store Expansion
- 9) Fireside Bar & Restaurant Expansion
- 10) Cardinal Corner Interior/Exterior
- 11) Industrial Business Expansions
- 12) Village Lawn Service Company – Looking for new Location

Strategic Initiative for Residential Development:

- 1) Identify and support high value residential growth opportunities
- 2) Follow Housing Plan approved in 2020
- 3) Support the development of a variety of housing types
- 4) Maintain Rental License Program
- 5) Maintain Residential Code Inspections – COVID permitting
- 6) Continue utilizing CDBG funds for housing improvement
- 7) Continue the Housing Replacement Program
- 8) Continue the Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program – single family housing
- 9) Continue the Housing Improvement Area (HIA) Program – multi-family buildings

Continued Residential Projects into 2021:

- 1) Dominion – 393 Units - Affordable and Senior
- 2) Town Center I – 200 Units – Market Rate
- 3) Westlyn (Trilogy) – 153 Units – Market Rate
- 4) CDA Gateway Place – 54 Units – Affordable
- 5) Suite Living – 32 Units – Senior Memory Care/Assisted Living
- 6) Dakota County River to River Trail/Tunnel

Possible Residential Projects in 2021:

- 1) Crawford Drive – 16 Town Homes – Market Rate
- 2) M&I Development Co (Golf Course East Side) – 68 Town Homes – Market Rate
- 3) Dakota County Wetland Mitigation Area
- 4) Doddway Area – Mixed-Use Project(s)
- 5) Net Ministries Expansion
- 6) Single Family Home Construction

Hartshorn said he has always had a very grass roots approach. He works with realtors, developers, and bankers, and they meet quarterly to talk about what is available. It's a good partnership, and they appreciate that he takes this approach. He sends available sites directly to developers.

Commissioner Vitelli asked if any developers are interested in Crawford Drive? Hartshorn said five maps were sent to developers and he has heard back from two of them. This is pending.

Commissioner Vitelli asked about Crew Carwash? Hartshorn said they have a purchase agreement for the Baker's Square property. There are issues with their Site Plan. They seem motivated. Commissioner Vitelli asked if the zoning is okay for it? Hartshorn said it would be a Conditional Use Permit.

Commissioner Justen asked if there is possibility for a drive thru window? Hartshorn said he gave them information but that's it.

Commissioner Berry asked if we have plans to build a relationship with the River Heights Chamber? Hartshorn said West St. Paul is represented by two chambers, but we are members of only one of them. Commissioner Berry said it might be worth exploring. Hartshorn said he will look into membership with the River Heights Chamber.

Commissioner Justen said the \$1,300.00 cost to join the Chamber isn't a lot of money and could be worth it.

Commissioner Eng-Sarne said, at a future meeting, we could look at everything we are a member of. Hartshorn will send a list to the EDA but commented that #10 includes most of those.

Commissioner Berry asked about Net Ministries' expansion and if they are building rentals? Hartshorn said it's dormitories.

Hartshorn said he sees these 12 areas as a draft and is looking for Commission input.

President Napier asked how items 1 through 12 came about and the research of developable sites? Hartshorn said we came up with this map because that's where we thought the opportunities were. We look at 1 through 12 as combining smaller lots.

Hartshorn said these are all areas where we have talked to the owners. Most were on some type of plan in the past. Some are aging buildings. We saw these as possibilities.

President Napier said the consultant for this study also looked at Signal Hills. That study is where this started. Many have progressed over the years. Having the foresight and planning is important and this is a testament to that.

Hartshorn said looking at market values (for example, the Smith-Dodd area), we then looked at the Roers project and what the market value could be. Ehlers said retail is \$150K/unit. Workforce housing is \$130K/unit.

Commissioner Eng-Sarne commented: 1) Items 8, 11 and 12 don't require displacement of businesses or homes; and 2) affordable housing – she appreciates that we have naturally-occurring affordable housing.

Commissioner Justen commented: 1) Items 2, 3 and 4 – would encourage to maintain as commercial corridor, rather than apartments or at least invite some commercial retail in all of it. A lot of opportunity there. Would like to maintain the small business character and feel in that area; and 2) Camelot Cleaners – glad to see it considered mixed use. Or another secondary business area.

Commissioner Berry asked if we see mixed use changing? Hartshorn said he is hearing from developers that commercial is tough and expensive. Mixed use is still going in in other cities (Lakeville, for example). Pretty confident that developers will consider mixed use.

President Napier said if St. Paul comes through and improves Robert Street, it will improve ours ten-fold. He recommended that Commissioners look through this.

Commissioner Vitelli asked about the trail through the golf course? City Manager Schroeder said we have applied for DEED grants but haven't fared well. We have been talking to the County now with different funding scenarios that should be figured out in 2021. Part of the funding from the County is there and the City has similar funds we are working on.

4. Adjourn

Motion was made by Commissioner Justen and seconded by Commissioner Berry to adjourn the meeting at 6:02 p.m.

All members present voted aye. Motion carried.

David J. Napier
President
City of West St. Paul