



NORTH BRANCH —Minnesota—

Sara Paul
Chair

Dennis Johnson
Vice Chair

Jessica Thelander
Commissioner

Kevin Schieber
Mayor

Peter Schaps
Councilmember

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
REGULAR AGENDA
TUESDAY, MAY 21, 2024 @ 11:30 AM
CITY HALL, 6408 ELM STREET, NORTH
BRANCH, MN 55056**

MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NORTH BRANCH IN THE COUNTY OF CHISAGO AND IN THE STATE OF MINNESOTA

REGULAR MEETING

Tuesday, May 21, 2024

1. CALL TO ORDER
2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
3. ROLL CALL
4. AGENDA APPROVAL
 - a. Approve Agenda

ACTION

Motion by Thelander to approve the agenda. Seconded by Johnson. All voted AYE. Motion carried.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT
6. CONSENT AGENDA
 - a. Approve May 21, 2024 EDA Minutes
7. PRESENTATION
8. REPORTS
 - a. North Branch Area Schools Update

ACTION

**VERBAL
UPDATE**

Paul noted that over \$169,000 of scholarships were distributed to students from funds donations from the community this past month. She also noted that the community education foundation received a \$100,000 grant for staffing.

b. Chisago County HRA-EDA Update

VERBAL
UPDATE

None

c. North Branch Area Chamber of Commerce Update

including a golf tournament scheduled in August and that the Fall Harvest Festival will be held in September.

She noted that membership is still down, currently at 110 but they are continuing to work ways to attract members. She noted that they are focusing on continuing to hold the networking luncheons.

d. EDA Executive Director Update

VERBAL
UPDATE

Ziemer noted that the legislature did not pass a bonding bill. He noted that he would consult with the city's lobbyist on strategies moving forward. He hoped that the city could be part of the legislative tour in the upcoming year.

Schaps inquired what the \$30,000 investment into the city lobbyist provided to the city, noting there is a state senator and a state representative that speak on behalf of the city, which does not cost the city anything. Ziemer noted that the city's state senator did not support the city's project. He added that there are other key members of the legislature that the lobbyist can advocate on behalf of the city. He noted that they have focused on the project being a regional issue.

Paul inquired if the retainer was only for the overpass. Ziemer noted that it has focused on the overpass and would need to review the language.

Ziemer noted that Meadows Ridge development had been submitted and that the Fox Run and Schoolside Village 4th developments were in construction phase. He noted that the Sunrise Bluff 3 and Chain Lake Shores developments were in the planning phase. He noted that the Meadows North Townhomes 2nd development was approved, and Boka Haven was moving along.

Schaps inquired if the Chain Lake Shores development was planned for private wells and septic. Ziemer noted it would be located on municipal services.

Ziemer noted that the Interstate Business Park had Project Loon was looking at 100 plus acres with 20–30 acres initially and were looking at a \$365 million dollar project. He noted that the project is currently on hold. He noted Project Saturn conducted a site visit and met with all local partners and that they were looking at a \$250 million investment. He noted that DEED contacted the City about Project BB looking at 50–60 acres and a \$100 million dollar investment. He noted that the response back from Greater MSP on the city's site and presentation has been very positive. Thelander inquired if all projects were source through DEED. Ziemer noted they were.

Ziemer noted that he had been working with Nancy Hoffman and been in contact with 4 other businesses with potential interest in the Industrial Park.

Ziemer noted that of the three large projects, all of them could be configured to fit within the industrial park.

Ziemer added that the Les Schwab Tire Center is moving forward. He noted Sunrise Flour, a small industrial building, Northern Natural Gas are all in the planning process. He added he is continuing to work on the vacant lots in North Branch Marketplace.

Ziemer noted that the owner of the Boka Haven site has been working with the developer on a potential project adjacent to the site. Ziemer expressed that as part of the overall development of the 38 acre parcel there may be

a benefit for the city to be involved with the construction of the roads and utilities to leverage additional development.

Ziemer noted that City Staff participated in a tour of the City with the Chisago County Board on May 10, adding the commissioners were in awe of the amount of development taking place in the city.

Ziemer provided an update on the housing study and noted that a draft report is in process and that Bolton Menk would be conducting a presentation upon completion.

Ziemer noted that Rethos would be facilitating community conversations about the Central Business District. He added that Rethos would compile the info and would present the results to the City Council. Schaps inquired if a venue had been selected. Ziemer noted that he was working on it.

9. OLD BUSINESS

a. Kickoff Discussion Regarding the Upcoming 2025 EDA Budget

INFO

Ziemer expressed that he was looking for what the commission was looking for. He noted that he was targeting a date of August 20th to approve the preliminary levy to go to the council levy on September 10. He noted that they are currently levying the maximum amount allowed. He noted that the EDA had discussed a storefront program and that additional funding could be used for acquiring properties, assistance programs or other similar types of project.

He noted EDA at a high level should look at Business Retention and Attraction, Marketing and Image; Development/Redevelopment and Transportation. He felt that the goals should be identified, and then budgeted accordingly.

Paul identified goals of focusing on a high quality of life and community growth. She felt that working towards bringing in commercial and industrial growth to provide for a work-live community and reduce the tax burden on residents.

Thelander identified goals of filling up the business park to bring jobs and focusing on the downtown business area. She felt that meeting with existing businesses and targeting retention.

Schaps inquired how the city has been doing in meeting the goals of the existing plan. He felt that there had not been a lot that has taken place in the Interstate Business Park. He noted that broadband and housing had been addressed.

Ziemer noted items completed by the EDA include Ehlers completing financial analysis, MSP had completed a 30 minute drivetime analysis. He noted that there is analysis that TIF would be used for assistance in the park. He added that there has been discussion from the EDA to develop a master plan for the park and a master plan for the downtown. He added that retention visits had been completed. He noted that the commission talked about creating a plan and developing action steps.

Paul noted that in the school surveys completed that there continues to be a strong voice for a community center. Ziemer noted that the City Council authorized a facility assessment study to look at all city facilities and to include a high level analysis, including a community center. He noted that the report would be going to the City Council in July.

LaGrange felt that a simplistic strategic plan identifying what needs to be done, whos going to do it and what is the status. He felt that there needed to be a mechanism to track it. Ziemer noted he is working towards the development of a strategic plan.

Saunders felt that having multilevel economic growth is what is important to the EDA. He felt the target audience was mid-large-sized businesses. He felt that aggressively pursuing businesses and proposals is what it takes to accomplish this.

Ziemer noted that he could email out the existing strategic plan. Thelander noted that there is a comp plan, strategic plan and vision and inquired if they could be combined into one document.

b. Discuss Proposed Amendments to the EDA Bylaws

INFO

Ziemer provided an overview of proposed amendments to the bylaws. Schaps noted the agenda language is very similar to the city council agenda language.

The commission accepted section 1. The commission discussed including an assistant treasurer liaison. Ziemer noted that the EDA financials are reviewed under the city's financial audit and noted that the EDA is advisory to the City Council. He noted that the budget is always presented to the EDA and the Council approves it.

Thelander suggested establishing a subcommittee to work on the bylaws and bringing them back to the commission for review. The commission agreed to have Paul, LaGrange, Schaps and Ziemer work on this.

Thelander noted she would not be able to attend the June or July meetings due to scheduling conflicts. Paul noted she would not be available for the June meeting.

10. NEW BUSINESS

11. NEXT MEETING - JUNE 18, 2024 @ 11:30 AM

12. CLOSED SESSION

- a. Closed Session to Consider Sale of Real Property owned by the Economic Development Authority

VERBAL
UPDATE

13. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn to go into a closed session to consider the sale of Real Property owned by the Economic Development Authority by Thelander. Seconded by LaGrange. All voted AYE.