



MINUTES OF THE REGULAR EDA MEETING

EDA Members Present: Russ Smith, Steve Micke, Lara Wilkinson, Mike Schultz, Ross Peterson.

EDA Members/ Others Absent: Shelly Peterson, Dave Bjerkness (EDA Commissioners); Kelly Zink (Cloquet Area Chamber of Commerce).

Staff / Ex-Officio Present: Brian Fritsinger, Holly Butcher (City); Connie Christenson (Carlton County EDA)

CALL TO ORDER

President Ross Peterson called the meeting to order at 8:06 a.m.

ANNOUNCEMENTS, ADJUSTMENTS, CORRESPONDENCE AND OTHER

None.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

President Ross Peterson asked for any corrections or additions to the September 7, 2016 Meeting Minutes? Hearing none he asked for a motion.

Motion: **Commissioner Smith moved, and Commissioner Schultz seconded, that the EDA approve the Meeting Minutes from September 7, 2016. (Motion passed 5-0.)**

APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 2016 EDA FINANCIALS

Ms. Butcher reviewed the September 2016 cash balances and loans for the EDA. She noted the Cloquet Home Center Loan remains delinquent and past due, however the building has had several recent showings and the company making an offer contacted the City. She noted that available loan funds and EDA operating dollars total \$1,388,019.38 and current City programmed loans total \$824,784.83 with monthly repayments of \$7,725.71 coming back to the City. President Ross Peterson asked for any questions on the financials, hearing none he asked for a motion to approve the September 2016 Cloquet EDA financials.

Motion: **Commissioner Micke moved, and Commissioner Schultz seconded, that the EDA September 2016 financials be approved. (Motion passed 5-0).**



BRIEF REGIONAL ECONOMIC UPDATES

a. Carlton County Economic Development

Connie Christenson provided an update on the Blandin Broadband Community project and “Strut Your Stuff Tour” planned in Moose Lake October 13th. She discussed leads interested in Cloquet properties.

b. City of Cloquet

Holly Butcher noted that the NE MN Region is holding Manufacturing Week the last week of October and the Council would be asked to approve a Proclamation at their meeting next week. The Duluth DEED office is working with regional manufacturers and schools on potential school and community wide tours. Ms. Butcher noted video work by CAT-7 on the Cloquet Business Park and would be working with area partners to be included in that video as well. Ms. Butcher mentioned providing informational packets to business leads and showing the Cloquet Business Park’s Home Center building to an interested business with the realtor.

ACTION ITEMS / PRESENTATION / DISCUSSION

CONSULTANT AWARD RECOMMENDATION: CLOQUET BUSINESS & COMMUNITY MARKETING STRATEGY

Ms. Butcher reported that the Review Team met to interview four firms on Tuesday October 11th, however there was no recommendation from the Review Team only the narrowing of the list to two candidates being that their proposals were so drastically different. President Ross Peterson mentioned that one approach, Ady Advantage, was economic development marketing based and rooted in data analysis while the other, North Star Ideas, was community branding focused rooted in establishing community identity. Staff members Brian Fritsinger and Connie Christenson shared their impressions of the Tuesday interview session. The Review Team found value in both proposals but wanted to bring this back to the EDA to make the decision and confirm what the intent of the study was from the Commissioner’s perspective. One concern Ms. Butcher mentioned was if North Star Ideas was chosen to complete the exercise, there is an implementation expectation with signage, flags, etc. and the effort requires community wide collaboration and energy around the initiative. Commissioner Wilkinson noted that the Ady proposal seemed to lack the wholistic aspect of the community branding message especially in light of new investments into roads, parks, and schools that would engage the larger community, yet at this juncture the Ady proposal would help the EDA focus their efforts in marketing the community for economic development. Commissioner Schultz noted that the decision seems to ask which comes first, the cart or the horse and how is Cloquet to brand if we don’t know what we should be marketing? He recommended the economic development approach of hiring Ady. Hearing no further discussion President Ross Peterson asked for a motion.



Motion: Commissioner Schultz moved, and Commissioner Micke seconded, that the EDA recommend to the Council that Ady Advantage be hired to conduct the Cloquet Business and Community Marketing Study. (Motion passed 5-0).

EDA INPUT ON DOWNTOWN CLOQUET BUSINESS DISTRICTS - CLOQUET AVENUE & THE WEST END

The EDA was asked to identify the pros and cons of the two Downtown Districts – the Historic West End Business District and the Cloquet Avenue Business District. Ms. Butcher reviewed the key findings of the property owner/business input for each district during the spring of 2016 which were:

HISTORIC WEST END BUSINESS DISTRICT

ASSETS:

- Historic buildings, strong residential population above storefronts, evolving destination district, proximity to the riverfront.

CONCERN:

- **Lacking Visibility of the business district from Highway 33. High number of storefront vacancies and building conversions into blighted uses. Not an economically vibrant district.**

OPPORTUNITY:

- Open up the visibility of this district so that it is a destination district.

CLOQUET AVENUE BUSINESS DISTRICT

ASSETS:

- Good location, easy to find, good parking.

CONCERN:

- **Good location, easy parking but Cloquet Avenue is wide and traffic travels fast therefore it is difficult for pedestrians to cross.**

OPPORTUNITY:

- To discuss design concepts to streetscape and improve the pedestrian climate cross-ability of Cloquet Avenue to connect neighbors and businesses on the south to Cloquet's businesses, parks and riverfront areas on the north side of the road.

EDA DIRECTION:

After generating the below list of assets and challenges in these Districts, the EDA concluded:

1. The immediate priority is to address the West End as there is great potential but the District is currently distressed
2. The key issue along Cloquet Avenue is the fast moving traffic inhibiting pedestrian movements, the wide street width, and the entry into the District from Hwy 33 with confusing travel lane delineation. A few years from now Cloquet Avenue is programmed for



work which is an opportunity to plan for the appropriate design prior to that project getting underway.

HISTORIC WEST END BUSINESS DISTRICT	
ASSETS	ISSUE
+	Historic, Cultural Heritage of the buildings and design of the district
+	New destination businesses locating in the district (Avenue C Restaurant) and community capacity to support them
+	Finite Manageable Area Geographically
+	Broadway streetscaping will occur in near future
CHALLENGES	ISSUE
-	High number of vacant buildings without active utilities; AND actively occupied buildings that are blighted
-	Lack of building owner interest in Commercial Rehab Grant programs (unable to match \$, declining property value concerns)
-	Insufficient Off-Street Parking for residents above businesses and customers when events occur in the District
-	Hidden Visibility into the District (blighted rear buildings, no signage, nothing aesthetically welcoming into the district)
-	Outdated Avenue C bulb lighting style (round bulbs) and lack of landscaping (e.g limited sidewalk space but concrete pots could work, art, benches etc.)
-	Low business district representation in the Chamber
-	Roadway entry into the District in terms of travel lanes, street intersections is confusing with traffic conflict points
-	The Hwy 33 intersection between the Historic West End and Cloquet Avenue does not connect nor pronounce either District (e.g. suggestion made roundabout to do so)
-	District security – dark (lighting), hidden visibility
-	Current Day Lack of purpose for Wentworth Park and use by adjacent auto business, it is gated and blighted
-	Traffic controls at Hwy 33 lack signal pre-emption for emergency vehicles
?	Historic West End – does the name need to change or be added to such as “Historic West End Riverfront District”
CLOQUET AVENUE BUSINESS DISTRICT	
ASSETS	ISSUE
+	Opportunity to plan for the appropriate design for future roadway project which is programmed for a few years from now.
CHALLENGES	ISSUE
-	Fast moving traffic and a wide street, tough for pedestrians.



-	Confusing roadway entry into the District from Hwy 33 in terms of travel lane delineation.
-	The Hwy 33 intersection between the Historic West End and Cloquet Avenue does not connect nor pronounce either District (e.g. suggestion made roundabout to do so)

DISCUSSION / CLOQUET EDA INFORMATIONAL UPDATES

Next meeting date

- November 9, 2016
- **December meeting CANCELLED**

ADJOURNED 9:45 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Holly L. Butcher, Community Development Director