

City of Merrill
Meeting of Redevelopment Authority (RDA)

Wednesday, May 3, 2023 at 8:00 a.m.
City Hall Common Council Chambers

RDA Present: Steve Hass, Clyde Nelson, Mark Bares, Steve Sabatke, and Rebecca Rutkowski

RDA Excused: Tony Kusserow and Jim Koppelman

Others: Alderpersons Mark Weix and LaDonna Fermanich, City Clerk Lori Anderson-Malm, Finance Director Kathy Unertl, City Attorney Tom Hayden, City Public Works Director/City Engineer Rod Akey, City Building Inspector/Zoning Administrator Darin Pagel, Police Chief Corey Bennett, Bill Bialecki from Lincoln County Economic Development Corp. (LCEDC), and video operator from Merrill Productions

Call to Order: Chair Hass called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

Consider approval of RDA meeting minutes from March 1, 2023:

Motion (Bares/Nelson) to approve the meeting minutes from March 1. Carried.

RDA Commissioners also reviewed the March 26, 2023 Joint Common Council/RDA meeting minutes regarding Brooke's School of Dance, LLC redevelopment project.

Public Comments: None.

Status update on residential developments:

Unertl highlight status of residential developments. Three new single-family homes are under construction on Johnson St. JJ Premier is planning construction of three new single-family homes on Parkview Dr.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Akey advised that Ryan Ott potentially could build six additional new homes on Johnson St. in 2023. Ott would like to discuss future development land options at the next RDA Commission meeting.

Continued review of procedure and marketing for \$10,000 new housing incentive program:

The program is for new single-family or duplex residential development on privately-owned lots. All areas within the City of Merrill are eligible. The incentive is up to 5% of preliminary assessment valuation (maximum of \$10,000). The Merrill Common Council authorized the program on July 13, 2021.

Continued review of procedure and marketing for \$10,000 new housing incentive program (Continued):

Unertl reported that a house assessed at \$200,000 would pay \$5,877 in property tax annually. So, the payback if new home is within a TID is less than two years. If outside TID boundary, the payback is about three years. Chair Hass reported that the incentive program application form is being provided with City Building Permit information.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Akey emphasized that builders have commented upon the profit difference between building homes in Wausau-area vs. Merrill. LCEDC Executive Director Bialecki reported that housing is challenge throughout the entire region. Other communities are looking at Merrill's residential development successes.

New Home – 1804 E. 12th St.:

The completed residential incentive program application form from Lea Beckman was included in the agenda packet. The property is within ½ mile of TID No. 10 boundary. Building Permit application construction estimate was for \$140,000. This is fifth new home on privately-owned property eligible for the residential incentive program since July 2021.

Next RDA Meeting: Wednesday, June 7th at 8:00 a.m.

Closed Session:

Chair Hass read: The RDA may convene in closed session per Wis. Stats. Sec. 19.85(1)(e) – deliberating or negotiating the purchasing of public properties, the investing of public funds, or conducting other specified public business, whenever competitive or bargaining reasons require a closed session to consider: Negotiation of potential sale terms for City-owned vacant land to facilitate new commercial development (TID No. 4 at southeast corner of Pine Ridge Plaza).

Motion (Nelson/Rutkowski) to move to Closed Session. Carried 5-0 on roll call vote at 8:22 a.m.

Information was presented by LCEDC Executive Director Bill Bialecki on the offer to purchase the land and proposed construction of new commercial building. RDA Commissioners proposed a potential sale price, as well as discussed potentially listing the site with a commercial real estate broker.

There will be further discussion of options at the next RDA Commission meeting.

Adjournment: (Bares/Hass) to adjourn at 8:40 a.m. Carried.

Minutes prepared by RDA Secretary Kathy Unertl