

City of Merrill
Meeting of Redevelopment Authority (RDA)

Wednesday, April 13, 2022 at 8:00 a.m.
City Hall Common Council Chambers

RDA Present: Clyde Nelson, Derek Woellner, Tony Kusserow, Sheila Polak, Steve Sabatke, and Val Mindak

RDA Absent: Lori Anderson-Malm

Others: Alderpersons Rick Blake and Steve Hass, Finance Director Kathy Unertl, City Administrator Dave Johnson, City Attorney Tom Hayden, Public Works Director/City Engineer Rod Akey, Bill Bialecki from Lincoln County Economic Development Corp. (LCEDC), Renea Frederick from Prairie River Properties, LLC, Austin Jones from Jones & Jones, and video operator from Merrill Productions,

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

Consider approval of RDA meeting minutes from March 2nd:

Motion (Kusserow/Sabatke) to approve the meeting minutes from March 2nd. Carried.

Public Comments: None.

Consider resolution authorizing development agreement with MEND Merrill, LLC for the former grocery store and adjacent N. Pine Ridge Ave. property to facilitate Tractor Supply Company (TID No. 4):

Johnson and Unertl advised that the new property owner (MEND Merrill, LLC – Bonham Construction & Maintenance Services, Inc.) will be replacing/repairing the roof of the vacant former grocery store building. So, the \$75,000 previously authorized would be provided to this LLC after completion. There will be rehabilitation within the building and construction of a new greenhouse facility. Tractor Supply Company will be leasing the property.

Sabatke questioned the potential development project costs since no site plans or building layouts were provided related to the new greenhouse. Other RDA Commissioners suggested that assumptions need to be included.

Unertl and City Attorney Tom Hayden recommended including fiscal assumptions in the development agreement which still needs to be drafted. Unertl will also follow-up with Community Development Department as to whether any Building Permit has been issued with potential site and layout plans.

Another RDA meeting will be held at 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, April 19th to review the draft development agreement and site and layout plans. This additional RDA meeting would facilitate consideration of the Resolution at the April 19th Common Council meeting.

Update on former Anson-Gilkey site (TID No. 9) – Flood Plain:

Further engineering review of options is underway related to the National Flood Hazard Layer FIRMette map for the property. Sabatke asked about planting trees along the railroad tracks. Akey suggested waiting on making any changes to the property at this time.

Update on two new houses – 1406 and 1408 Highland Dr. (TID No. 11):

Unertl reported that TID residential incentive program forms were provided by Timber Ridge Builders, LLC (Athens) for two new homes on Highland Dr. The lots were previously owned by Lokemoen Development. When completed and preliminary reviewed by the City Assessor, each would be eligible for up to the \$10,000 housing incentive.

Next RDA meetings: Tuesday, April 19th at 5:30 p.m. and regular meeting on Wednesday, May 4 at 8 a.m.

Closed Session:

Nelson read the following: 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:

- a) Consideration of potential TID No. 7 development concept and negotiation of potential development incentives
- b) Consideration of potential purchase of development sites

Motion (Kusserow/Sabatke) to move to Closed Session. Carried on roll call vote at 8:32 a.m.

There was discussion on potential development concept and potential development incentives, including potential utility and street infrastructure extensions through a property in TID No. 7. Further information on next development steps and potential costs will be provided at the next RDA meeting.

City Administrator Dave Johnson provided information on pricing for potential property purchase in TID No. 8. Information on pricing on an additional potential property purchase is still pending.

No action taken on the Closed Session items.

The RDA reconvened in Open Session at 9:12 a.m.

Update on Lincoln County Housing Summit (3/16th) and discussion of affordable housing:

Johnson highlighted the March 16th meeting, which had about 27 participants including representatives of Lincoln County, City of Merrill, City of Tomahawk, and various organizations (including HAVEN, Inc. and Merrill Area Housing Authority). Both housing and childcare were identified as major community needs. Sabatke noted need for potential American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) grant funding and cooperative efforts between government units and community organizations.

Bialecki and Hass joined the RDA meeting at about 8:22 a.m. due to another City meeting. Bialecki reported that there would be follow-up Lincoln County meetings. There was a legislative proposal to require 10% of ARPA funds to be allocated to affordable housing.

Adjournment: (Woellner/Sabatke) to adjourn at 9:30 a.m. Carried.

Minutes prepared by RDA Secretary Kathy Unertl