

City of Merrill
Meeting of Redevelopment Authority (RDA)

Wednesday, March 1, 2023 at 8:00 a.m.
City Hall Common Council Chambers

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

RDA Excused: Tony Kusserow

Others: Alderperson 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, Bill Bialecki from Lincoln County Economic Development Corp., Brooke & Jordon Burton, and video operator from Merrill Productions

Call to Order: Chair Hass called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. and advised that the Closed Session would be held first.

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: Consideration of potential TID No. 8 development concept and negotiation of potential development incentives.

Motion (Koppelman/Sabatke) to move to Closed Session. Carried 6-0 on roll call vote at 8:03 a.m.

There was information provided and discussion of potential redevelopment of existing vacant West Side building. Also discussed was the overall potential impact that a relocated commercial business could have on the area.

Typical previous City of Merrill TID cash development incentives have been around 10% of the rehabilitation project expense. RDA Commissioners requested additional cost estimates.

The RDA reconvened in open session at 8:30 a.m.

Consider approval of RDA meeting minutes from February 1st, 2023:

Motion (Bares/Rutkowski) to approve the meeting minutes from February 1st. Carried.

Public Comments: None.

Status update on residential developments:

Unertl highlight status of residential developments. Five new single-family homes are under construction. The first Webster Street apartment building received State Occupancy Permit on Tuesday, 2/28th and is marketing for tenants.

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).

Bares requested additional information on what other communities are doing, including whether City of Marshfield still has a residential development incentive program. Koppelman and Bares suggested that potential sunset date for Merrill program be considered.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Akey emphasized that builders have commented upon the profit difference between building homes in Wausau-area vs. Merrill,

New Home – 302 Willow Bend Court:

The completed residential incentive program application form from Lucas & Elizabeth Thiel was included in the agenda packet. The property is within ½ mile of TID No. 8 boundary. Building Permit application construction estimate was for \$250,000. This is fourth new home on privately-owned property eligible for the residential incentive program.

Discuss needs and potential cost to facilitate redevelopment to facilitate redevelopment of 401 S. Kyes Street property (former Anson-Gilkey) – TID No. 9 including: Wetland delineation and Market analysis.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Akey reported that cost of wetland delineation would be about \$3,000 and the proposed housing market analysis about \$5,500. Hass advised that the potential developer is still reviewing options. Just like floodplain delineation, having the wetland delineation would assist to facilitate redevelopment of the former Anson-Gilkey property.

Motion (Sabatke/Bares) to authorize the wetland delineation. Carried. The market analysis will proceed if there is firmer potential developer interest.

Next RDA Meeting: Wednesday, April 5th at 8:00 a.m.

Adjournment: (Bares/Hass) to adjourn at 8:55 a.m. Carried.

Minutes prepared by RDA Secretary Kathy Unertl