

Economic Development Corporation
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, August 20, 2020

Attending: Chris Rittmueller, Brandon Muller, Tamara Tsulaia, Beth Reindel, Mike Fassezke, Vickie Schmitzer, Michael Southgate, and Todd Jennings

Absent: Abby Curtis, John Benson, Joe Cramer, Mike Grossi, Tim Hildner, Jeff Monchilov and Jamie Furbush

Also attending were Mayor Mary Ann Ackerman, Bridget Smith, Ashley McKnight and Sheila Stamiris.

Due to Executive Orders related to COVID 19, the meeting was held in the Nickless Pavilion in Heritage Park. There was no public input.

The minutes of the July 16, 2020, meeting were approved as amended. Corrections to the minutes note that member John Benson was reported twice as attending and absent; he was in attendance. And, member Michael Southgate, who was absent, was not listed. Fassezke moved; Jennings seconded.

Members Tsulaia, Muller, Southgate and Hildner were reappointed for 3-year terms. The Annual Report was presented to the City Council at the August 11 Council meeting.

Business Park Signage Options. Stamiris shared examples of “land development” signage provided by Councilman Paul LaBrenz and MEDC. The location of the sign is problematic as readability at high speeds and the distance from M83 is far. City regulations do not allow a development sign on property not owned by the City. The board suggests a “partnership” sign to include the City site, Uptown and property south of O’Reilly’s under new ownership. Suggestions for the sign include adding a QR code to allow a link to the City’s webpage. Stamiris will review and prepare some layouts.

There was further discussion about the City’s webpage and the “quick facts” sheet. Information about the Business Park is located on Saginaw Future’s informational pages.

Housing Development. The Spirit of Frankenmuth program was generally discussed. Funds remain in reserve at the Frankenmuth Chamber Foundation. A copy of the “Frankenmuth Focus” was shared. Articles about amendments to existing residential zoning code to allow more flexibility in site plan by owners, about the use of land trusts and information about utilities servicing the Baker property were received. Under separate emails, the community reports for Bridgeport and the EMCOG Housing study were sent and received.

Regarding the Baker property, access to the site via Schleier was discussed along with how to fund the construction of both Schleier and Haas (located behind the Mall.) Earlier agreements with property owners would close access to side streets from any new construction. Previously, the City would use special assessments to fund street construction.

Stamiris will discuss options for a presentation with the director of “Housing Next” located out of Grand Rapids. She qualified that the discussion is not about a “study” but a learning opportunity for how the Grand Rapids region is developing workforce housing and what lessons they’ve learned. The Planning Commission will be invited to participate.

The notion of developers and/or builders was mentioned with the goal to provide “choices” for potential homeowners. Previously, it was mentioned that outside builders would “build” in Frankenmuth if they could do 10 houses at a time. A question was asked about land values and what is the cost difference between Frankenmuth and Freeland? Outside developer needs ground and the opportunity to place a sales office on site and other onsite needs.

Surveys are a good tool; Shaheen Development did a survey regarding apartment/housing development. One suggestion is not to ask “what someone would pay,” but in “what range of monthly payment” would be a buyer be interested.

There was no other discussion. The meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Sheila Stamiris.