

**INVER GROVE HEIGHTS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY REGULAR MEETING
MONDAY, MAY 14, 2018 – 8150 BARBARA AVENUE**

1 & 2 CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL The Economic Development Authority (EDA) of Inver Grove Heights met on Monday, May 14, 2018, in the City Hall Council Chambers. President Piekarski Krech called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Present were Economic Development Authority Members Hark, Perry, and Tourville; Executive Director Link, City Attorney Kuntz, City Administrator Lynch, Finance Director Smith, and Secretary Fox.

3. CONSENT AGENDA

A & B. Minutes and Claims

Motion by Tourville, second by Perry, to approve the minutes from the February 12, 2018 Regular Economic Development Authority Meeting, and the disbursements from February 12, 2018 to May 13, 2018.

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0 Motion carried

4. REGULAR AGENDA

A. Consider Approval of 2018 EDA Work Plan

Tom Link, Community Development Director, summarized the EDA's accomplishments in the past year and asked them to review the Draft 2018 EDA Work Plan. Staff recommends that the following activities be included in the 2018 Work Plan: 1) preparing Small Area Plans (Arbor Pointe, I-494/Argenta Trail, Concord Boulevard, and 65th/Cahill), 2) continuing to acquire properties from willing sellers in regard to Concord Redevelopment, 3) researching possible financial assistance programs, and 4) identifying funding sources for continued EDA operations and activities. Staff requests EDA direction on issues they would like to focus on the remainder of this year.

Boardmember Hark asked if staff was still working on implementing a program to assist small businesses with the payment of SAC charges.

Mr. Link replied in the affirmative, stating it would be discussed at an upcoming work session.

President Piekarski Krech asked if the Metropolitan Council had enacted a change yet

Mr. Link was not sure, stating as of a couple weeks ago they were still working towards adoption.

Boardmember Tourville asked if the four work plan items were listed in order of priority.

Mr. Link replied they were listed in order of priority as far as staff was concerned; however, it was up to the EDA whether to accept that or do something else.

Boardmember Tourville did not see an advantage to having an order of priority.

President Piekarski Krech agreed.

Boardmember Hark asked if any work had been done into looking at ways to provide funding for the EDA.

Mr. Link stated that currently the EDA is funded out of the General Fund but establishing an EDA levy was another possibility. Staff could look for grants but very few were available for on-going EDA operations.

Boardmember Hark asked how other cities with similar populations funded their EDA's.

Mr. Link stated they researched that a couple years ago and his recollection was that some used the General Fund, some used EDA levies, and others used unique sources (i.e. funding from power companies, refineries). He advised they could update that study.

Boardmember Hark stated he was glad to see 'EDA funding' on the Work Plan as this body needs to get serious about funding if they want to be more aggressive with economic development activities.

President Piekarski Krech stated the EDA has had discussions in the past about an EDA levy but questioned whether they wanted to add another tax.

Motion by Tourville, second by Perry, to approve the 2018 EDA Work Plan Without Priorities.

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0 Motion carried

B. Hear Progress Plus Update

Jennifer Gale, Progress Plus, stated she would find the Progress Plus study on funding sources for EDA's. She summarized last quarter's activities. They met with South St. Paul Futures about expanding their footprint of lending money to small businesses. They are talking about meeting with Inver Grove Heights and other surrounding communities in this regard. Progress Plus is also developing a marketing piece targeted to breweries and tap rooms for the City of South St. Paul and would be happy to do the same for Inver Grove Heights. They have completed the migration of information from Xceligent to MNCAR Exchange. They have been promoting successful businesses and the Town Hall meeting on social media and on the weekly update section. They have also been promoting the 'Open To Business' program and are looking to do a 'Lunch and Learn' at the end of the summer in which an 'Open To Business' representative would meet with the local business community to discuss the services offered.

During one of their Grow Minnesota visits an individual stated that their property taxes have increased enough now that it is affecting their decisions on how large they build their buildings. They are now second guessing whether they want to build a future expansion. Another individual indicated that they found the variance process difficult to navigate and expensive and they wished there was someone to help them through the various steps and regulations when applying for a permit. Progress Plus met with Paramount Real Estate Corporation regarding their marketing efforts and McGough regarding their proposed development. She advised they have the ability to create professional looking, inexpensive marketing pieces and the EDA was welcome to take advantage of those services. They also have the ability to list City properties on their website at no additional charge. She advised they are willing to help put together information in an easy format to assist businesses with the development process.

Boardmember Hark asked Ms. Gale if she had done that for other cities.

Ms. Gale replied in the affirmative.

Boardmember Hark asked Ms. Gale to provide EDA members with a copy of what those documents looked like.

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Mr. Link noted the two informational memos included in the packet; a list of commercial and industrial activities for the First Quarter of 2018 and the 'Open To Business' quarterly report. He noted there were several existing or potential businesses that used the program this past quarter.

President Piekarski Krech asked if there was something more they could do to spotlight local businesses as many residents were not aware of their existence.

Mr. Link agreed that they should investigate putting together a marketing piece highlighting the various businesses and restaurants in town.

Ms. Gale advised that the CVB does a great job of showcasing restaurants on their Instagram site.

President Piekarski Krech suggesting coming up with more ways to reach out, such as having a link on the City's website where people could find out about local businesses and services in the City.

Ms. Gale advised that local business information could be included in the newly redesigned CVB website. All Inver Grove Heights businesses are welcome to submit information to Progress Plus if they want to be showcased on their website and on social media.

President Piekarski Krech suggested that Boardmembers pass that information along to business owners during their visits with them.

Boardmember Hark stated a business directory on the City's website would be beneficial.

Ms. Gale noted that while possible, it was difficult to keep such a directory current.

President Piekarski Krech stated it was incumbent on everyone to keep the site up-to-date and pass along information if they were aware of a business closing, etc.

5. NEXT MEETING: August 13, 2018 at 5:00 p.m.

6. ADJOURNMENT: Motion by Tourville, second by Hark, to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned by unanimous vote at 6:28 p.m.