

**REGULAR MEETING
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
CITY OF OAKDALE
MARCH 2, 2022**

CALL TO ORDER

A regular meeting of the Economic Development Commission (EDC) of the City of Oakdale was held on Wednesday, March 2, 2022 at the Oakdale City Hall, Oakdale, Minnesota. Chair Burns called the meeting to order at 5:15p.m.

CALL OF ROLL

On a call of roll, the following were present.

Chair: Bill Burns

Commissioners: Erin Voca
Bob Boullianne
Gary Severson
Frank Orsello
Jeff Bates
Holly Koep

Also Present: Andrew Gitzlaff, Community Development Director
Colleen Swedberg, City Council Liaison
Ryan Coddington, Minnesota Department of Transportation

Absent: Lynn Stafford
Stacie Penn
Bob Stiglich
Dave Halper

Quorum Present: YES NO

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER SEVERSON, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER VOCA, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF FEBRUARY 2, 2022.

Ayes 7 Abstain 0
Nays 0 Motion Carried

OLD BUSINESS

None

BUSINESS RETENTION, EXPANSION AND ATTRACTION PROGRAM (BRE&A)

Community Development Director Andrew Gitzlaff provided an update of the revised BRE&A program.

The adopted Oakdale Comprehensive Plan identifies the need to provide business and labor with the support necessary to be successful and ensure continued employment opportunity for all residents as goals within the Economic Development Chapter. Specific polices are identified to achieve this goal including:

- Support the success of business and labor by connecting them to resources at the MN Department and Economic Development (DEED) and other State, County, and Federal agencies
- Administer a program to attract new businesses to Oakdale.
- Administer a program to retain and assist in the expansion of existing Oakdale businesses.
- In partnership with public and private stakeholders, support those wishing to start a new business in Oakdale.

Staff is recommending the City establish a BRE&A Program to achieve this goal. The proposed scope of work would include the following activities:

- Participation in no fewer than 24 business visits (2 per month) for the first year.
- Develop a series of questions to ask each business and prepare a packet of resources at the City, MN DEED, other State, County or Federal resources.
- Recruitment of a BRE&A visit participant pool that includes key staff, elected officials and business representation.
- Identify businesses to be contacted for interviews.
- Provide administrative support in scheduling visits.
- Ensure invitations to visits are extended to the required staff, elected officials, and business representatives.
- Transcribe notes from each visit and conduct any follow-ups as necessary.
- Coordinated reporting of regional business and real estate activity.
- Year-end report, detailing BRE&A findings and recommendations.

CITY COUNCIL DIRECTION

The City Council reviewed the BRE&A program scope of work at their February 22, 2022 council workshop. The Council was supportive of forming a partnership with the Oakdale Area Chamber of Commerce (OACC) and the St. Paul Area Chamber of Commerce (SPACC) to complete the scope of work. Council directed staff to reduce the total visits the first year from 24 to 18 to focus more time on ensuring that proper follow ups are done. Council also suggested that welcoming packets be created for new businesses that locate in Oakdale and that training be provided in advance to members of the participant pool as part of the scope of work.

Mr. Gitzlaff discussed the participant pool and training before visits and asked for EDC input regarding categories for businesses to target in 2022. Examples below:

- Legacy Business (largest employers)
- Most prevalent industries (Professional, scientific and technical services, retail trade and finance and insurance)
- Industries with the most employees (retail trade, accommodations and food service and health care and social services)
- Women or minority owned businesses
- Industries hit hardest by COVID-19 pandemic
- Others

Chair Burns suggested visiting businesses who were greatly affected by Covid and offer additional help.

Commissioner Voca believes it important to connect with women owned and minority owned businesses.

In response to Chair Burns' question if the city has a list of new businesses and owners, Mr. Gitzlaff replied that women and minority owned businesses is mostly knowledge of the community. OACC and SPACC might have additional resources.

Commissioner Orsello commented that the business next door to his is owned by a minority woman and was recently interviewed by KMSP TV for a story about minority owned businesses.

Commissioner Koep asked what the timeline is for this program to begin to which Mr. Gitzlaff replied May 2022 would be a good starting place. Commissioner Koep stated that her place of business has worked with the City of Maplewood's program and it is very nice to be heard and feels it definitely a benefit to business owners.

Chair Burns stated in the past the OACC has been notified when a new business opens so they can hold a Grand Opening/Ribbon Cutting and would appreciate if staff could continue to do so. Mr. Gitzlaff noted that staff is not always aware of new business unless they pull a building permit or require a business license but will work internally to improve the process.

Commissioner Koep suggested a sign-up link on the city website for new businesses. Mr. Gitzlaff responded that the city website is migrating to a new platform and this would be something the new Communications Manager could help with.

In response to Commissioner Boullianne's question if any funds are designated for assistance to businesses in need, Mr. Gitzlaff replied there have been loans given out in the past but currently businesses would be referred to county, state or DEED resources for help.

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Potential Field Visits and Promotional Events 2022

Mr. Gitzaff provided optional dates for touring the 4Front Business Campus. Invitation will be extended to EDC and Oakdale City Council. It was decided that a late afternoon time would work best.

Mr. Gitzaff noted Willowbrooke is planning to have a model home open for the Parade of Homes and will inquire with Lennar if they intend to have a Grand Opening/Ground Breaking this year.

NEW BUSINESS

MnDOT Presentation of East Metro Interchange Study and Highway 120 Study.

Ryan Coddington, Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) gave a slide show presentation. Questions followed.

In response to Chair Burns' question regarding the 9" concrete overlay and how it will affect the bridge over I-94, Mr. Coddington replied it is an additional layer of concrete on top of existing road. They will bring the pavement down under the bridge to keep the clearance under bridge the same.

Chair Burns asked if Tanners Lake being affected by Watershed pipe under I-94, Mr. Coddington responded it is an opportunity for the Watershed to upsize pipe under I-94 as part of a future project.

In response to Chair Burns' questions if traffic will switch from one side to the other during the lane shutdown and if cities have been notified of additional traffic and detours, Mr. Coddington stated that traffic will mostly stay in one lane but will need to switch sides at some point. Regarding detours, traffic models do not show Highway 36 as the best detour option so traffic will be kept on I-94.

In response to Commissioner Orsello's question asking how effective a noise wall is, Mr. Coddington replied they are very effective directly behind the wall but the further away the less effective it is.

Chair Burns asked if a noise wall was considered on I-694 in the residential area starting at 15th Street and going north? Mr. Coddington stated there are two programs. If road project is a new project the noise wall is evaluated. Existing roads are added to a list for re-evaluation but due to funding only one project is done per year. I-694 is on the list and would only receive priority status if it receives new capacity to road such as a third lane.

In response to Commissioner Orsello's question if Century will be widened, Mr. Coddington replied the issue is in the next phase of study but current survey data is not leaning towards expansion or more lanes but to focus more on bike/pedestrian accommodations. Mr. Orsello asked why you wouldn't widen when doing other work, Mr. Coddington stated accessibility can be achieved by access management and intersection alternatives such as roundabouts, longer turn lanes, reassigning lanes and center turn lanes. Data did not support road being used as throughway from I-694 to I-94.

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Chair Burns mentioned it will be nice to see a plan that allows for bike and pedestrians on the road without disrupting businesses in the area.

Mr. Coddington stated a coalition was formed with local officials. Washington County Commissioner Karwoski and Senator Wiger are leading the coalition with focus on it being a “smart corridor” using new technology to support existing businesses and encouraging new growth.

Commissioner Bates noted that multiple cities and counties are invested in this road and asked how it will work with so many involved, Mr. Coddington explained there are challenges but once project is designed, the state could hand project back to Washington or Ramsey Counties. State projects are prioritized but a jurisdictional transfer will allow for a higher level of attention.

In response to Chair Burns’ question when to expect this project to start, Mr. Coddington replied it depends on funding and legislative priorities but believes it will be in the next six years. Chair Burns asked who to speak to for expediting this project and Mr. Coddington suggested starting with City Council and go up from there.

Commissioner Orsello commented that once 3M resumes full staff in the office, Century Avenue will be disastrous and will only get worse.

In response to Commissioner Boullianne’s questioning what PEL stands for, Mr. Coddington responded it is a new process called Planning Environmental Linkage study where the federal government is included in early stages of planning process.

In response to Mr. Gitzlaff asking for clarification on slides referencing improving motor safety conditions (vehicle safety) but not referencing pedestrian safety he asked how this issue will be addressed, Mr. Coddington responded that pedestrian/bicycle safety is a primary need of the project which will lead it to a higher criterion and is addressed with much more detail in the full report. Unfortunately, the presentation only touched on a portion of the full report.

In response to Chair Burns’ comment regarding the I-94, I-694, I-494 interchange being under construction so often in the last few years and now it will be worked on again, Mr. Coddington replied only under the bridge will it be worked on. The bridge itself is a long-term bridge and shouldn’t need major work or replacement for a few years. The loops will need to be closed periodically to work under bridge.

In response to Commissioner Bates asking how the 120/Hwy 36 interchange and the removal of stop lights from Hwy 36 work together, Mr. Coddington responded Century Avenue is the last stop light on the Hwy 36 beltway and there is a long-term vision of an interchange at that intersection. Previous study was done at the time of the Hadley Avenue interchange and a concept was developed at that time.. PEL study

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might help move this project forward. Local elected officials agree on what needs to be done and want to focus on for this project but it is a very costly project.

In response to Commissioner Boullianne asking if there are any plans for Hwy 36 further east, Mr. Coddington replied the Century Avenue stoplight is the last stoplight on the beltway and is drawing attention but will be challenging and costly to complete.

Commissioner Updates

Commissioner Penn announced the next OACC meeting at Oak Marsh.

Commissioner Boullianne is pleased with the BRE&A program and appreciates the work being done to get it started..

Chair Burns recently visited a new Oakdale business, The Burrow, that looks to be a fun spot.

Council Liaison Update

Councilmember Swedberg was in attendance for Councilmember Olson. Two items were reported.

- Welcomed new Communications Manager, Lori Pulkrabek. Lori previously served on City Council for many years.
- Mayor Reinke was featured on the Oakdale Update Cable TV show with Frank Orsello. It is available on the Oakdale Facebook page and YouTube.

Community Development Updates

Community Development Director Andy Gitzlaff gave an update on projects that will be on the next City Council agenda.

- The petition for improvements to 40th Street from Ideal to I-694. Current right-of-way will be vacated and a new 40th Street with roundabouts and trail components will be built and the developer will be covering a portion of the costs.
- Impact Apartments will be discussed at the next Planning Commission meeting. They have worked through noise and traffic issues.
- New church proposal at the southeast corner of Stillwater and Hamlet Avenue. They are currently located on the east side of St. Paul and are looking to relocate to a bigger site. Federal law states churches are allowed in all zoning district. Access will be from Hamlet Avenue with emergency access only from Stillwater Boulevard.

In response to Commissioner Orsello asking how big the church will be, Mr. Gitzlaff stated it will be a good portion of the site and will need off-site parking. They currently use a valet system for parking and are working with Canvas Health to utilize their parking lot.

- Staff is working on the EV (Electric Vehicle) Ordinance. Code has changed to allow EV charging as an accessory use in our district. Code will also reference a guidance document regarding charging station placement and number of stalls.

In response to Commissioner Boullianne's question who funds EV Stations, Mr. Gitzlaff stated most EV stations charge. There are low voltage charging stations that charge overnight and high voltage (super chargers) like Hy-Vee currently has.

- Hy-Vee will be expanding their drive-up service called Hy-Vee Aisles which allows you to order on an app and drive up to a queue when your groceries are ready.
- Planning Commission will discuss temporary outdoor patio ordinance and it will also be discussed at the next city council meeting.

NEXT COMMISSION MEETING

The next Economic Development Commission meeting is scheduled for May 4, 2022 at 5:15pm.

ADJOURNMENT

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER BATES AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER VOCA TO ADJOURN THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MEETING OF MARCH 2, 2022 AT 7:35 PM.

Ayes	7	Abstain	0
Nays	0	Motion Carried	

Respectfully submitted,
Teresa Buhl, Recording Secretary