

**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
OAKDALE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
August 3, 2022**

CALL TO ORDER

A regular meeting of the Economic Development Commission (EDC) of the City of Oakdale was held on August 3, 2022 at Oakdale City Hall, Oakdale, Minnesota. The meeting was called to order by Chair Burns at 5:15 PM and began with the pledge of allegiance.

CALL OF ROLL

On a call of roll, the following were present:

Chairperson: Bill Burns

Commissioners: Dave Halper
Jeff Bates
Erin Voca
Frank Orsello
Stacie Penn

Also Present: Andrew Gitzlaff, Community Development Director
Susan Olson, City Council Liaison
Jamie Scheffer, Sr. Community Development Specialist

Absent: Bob Boulianne
Gary Severson
Bob Stiglich
Holly Koep, Ex Officio Member

Quorum Present: YES NO

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Corrections to the minutes were requested and made that involved the misspelling of Commissioner Severson's and Commissioner Bates's last names.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER BATES, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER SEVERSON, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS CORRECTED OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF MAY 4, 2022.

**6 AYES.
0 NAYES.**

MOTION CARRIED

OLD BUSINESS

BUSINESS RETENTION, EXPANSION AND ATTRACTION PARTNERSHIP UPDATE

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Community Development Director Andrew Gitzlaff provided the following update:

The program contract was approved by the Oakdale City Council to partner with the Oakdale Area Chamber of Commerce and the St. Paul Area Chamber of Commerce to complete the work. A training session was held with those planning to attend the visits.

The goals of the program are 1) to express appreciation and build relationships with businesses, 2) support local businesses by connecting them with resources, 3) understand the real estate investment plans of local businesses, and businesses goals for growth moving forward, 4) and understand how city policies impact business success.

The participation pool consists of elected officials, city staff, community leader from Chamber or EDC, and Chamber staff member to take notes.

Businesses being visited include categories: businesses impacted by Covid-19 the most, women-owned businesses, BIPOC businesses, legacy employers, top employment sectors, and geographically diverse spread of businesses overall.

Questions asked will include business details outlined on a state-wide form from Grow MN. Question examples include investment or expansion plans, workforce issues, transportation and transit issues, and community connectedness.

Visits may include tours, group photos (to be shared on social media), and a resource packet. The packet will include city contacts, Chamber information, Open to Business information, MN-DEED and SBA programs, and Biz Recycling. The packet will be developed in paper and electronic form. Staff plans to use the packets available for other uses moving forward including new businesses. Staff is working with Oakdale Administration on a gift- Oakdale tree on a base with a slogan.

Follow up will include a thank you email, data gathering, and a report with recommendations for the City to pursue, and follow up items that will be owned by City staff. The program will be reviewed by Council and staff to think about any changes moving forward, as there are plans to do this yearly.

Chair Burns asked if the EDC commissioners could be given a summary of the report at a future meeting as well and Gitzlaff confirmed that will happen, along with updates along the way on progress and businesses visited up to that point. Burns also suggested that if an EDC commissioner was at any of the recent meetings, they could share their take on how the meetings went and what their takeaways were.

Bates stated that he enjoyed the training, likes the follow up plans for the program, likes how the structure of the questions being asked by different individuals is planned, and thinks the schedule is aggressive but hopes we can make it work.

NEW BUSINESS

OAKDALE & WASHINGTON COUNTY COMMUNITY PROFILES

Community Development Director Gitzlaff introduced new staff member Senior Community Development Specialist Jamie Scheffer and described her related work experience and that her duties will include economic development and housing. Gitzlaff noted that Scheffer will be the staff liaison for the EDC moving forward and Gitzlaff will stay involved.

Scheffer presented community profiles for the City of Oakdale and Washington County. The City of Oakdale profile included community metrics and was provided by the Washington County Community Development Agency (CDA) website. The Washington County profile included community and economic metrics involving comparisons with the state average and was provided from the Minnesota State Department of Employment and Economic Development (MN-DEED). Profiles were included in EDC Agenda Packets and Scheffer gave a high level overview of the data in a presentation. Scheffer stated that the data can be used in the future for economic development related marketing and that staff have discussed collecting peer community comparisons to further analyze the data.

The commissioners engaged in a discussion with staff about the information provided. Commissioner Orsello commented that the median age of 39 seemed young and he and Chair Burns discussed potential rising median age due to the number of assisted living homes in Oakdale. Orsello asked where the data came from for Washington County and Scheffer responded that the State of MN has a team of labor/data analysts that put together data, covering different regions of the state. Commissioner Penn asked how current the data is and Scheffer responded that the data is most likely from the 2020 census. Commissioner Voca asked where they pulled the labor force data from and Scheffer said she would inquire and report back at the next meeting. Burns asked where they pull the data for number of businesses in the City and Scheffer responded that the State has that data and Voca added that the data is collected from businesses registering for a Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN). Burns asked about the 524 people working from home number and wondered how they obtained that number and how that will be updated. Scheffer said she will look into that with County staff as well. Commissioner Halper commented that the data is like gold for gathering differentiators for the City of Oakdale and including in a brochure or other place in our website that shows the advantages when compared to a peer city or simply our own data. Halper asked if that is part of the Community Development Department's job eventually to show advantages or get the word out. Gitzlaff replied yes- we are starting with a baseline trying to gather free data available to us, along with qualitative data obtained during upcoming business visits, to eventually provide to the EDC and Council to help make more informed decisions when it comes to economic development. Commissioner Bates commented that he was surprised that the median income in Washington County is higher than the state average, however Washington County also contains communities like Woodbury. Bates also commented that it would be interesting to see median income compared to other communities like Woodbury, Stillwater, North St. Paul and Maplewood especially. Commissioner Voca inquired about safety data available because that is an attractor for businesses. Scheffer indicated that there are websites with that data available. Burns suggested Oakdale PD or Washington County as potential data sources. Gitzlaff mentioned that the police chief recently prepared a summary of some of those main statistics for council a while back and that we can send that to the commissioners.

SIZEUP SMALL BUSINESS TOOL DEMONSTRATION

Scheffer moved on to give a demonstration of a business tool that is available for use on the Washington County CDA's website called SizeUp Small Business. The tool can be utilized to measure business performance against competitors in the industry; to find customers, suppliers and competitors; to optimize marketing and advertising; and to analyze demographics. Scheffer showed an example of a restaurant in Oakdale and went through the tool as a demonstration. Commissioners asked several clarifying questions about the uses of the tool as the demonstration went on. Commissioner Penn suggested letting businesses know about this tool on the upcoming BRE&A visits.

COUNCIL LIAISON UPDATE

Councilmember Olson reported on the following in response to questions:

- Working hard on the City budget right now. September is when the initial levy is due and then it is finalized by December.
- Kevin Zabel has put in for Mayor. She and Colleen have put themselves in for re-election for City Council.
- The City has a cool new software that will show the entire city budget on the website. It will be completely transparent and interactive.
- We are not in a deficit for budget.
- Property tax questions- defer to Washington County. The City has to do a levy for city services such as fire/police. There is a 0.5% sales tax proposed for upgrading public works and police.

COMMISSIONER UPDATES

Commissioner Bates attended a groundbreaking at 4Front, who are building a new industrial/warehouse building for lease. Chair Burns said the recent Chamber meeting was held and they had a good speaker. Commissioner Penn reported that Carol Matthews is having their annual picnic on Friday night. Commissioner Orsello asked if staff could arrange for the EDC Commissioners to tour facilities that are proposed to have facilities funded through the sales tax that will be on the ballot. Gitzlaff said he will have to check as staff is only allowed to present facts and not sway opinion.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT UPDATES

Community Development Director Andy Gitzlaff provided an update on current projects. Willowbrooke Continental Townhome area is close to having first residents move in and the pool is being filled. There are also a few single-family homes that have temporary certificates of occupancies issued. Gitzlaff is checking if there will be any public event due to none being held during Covid. We have a developer with a concept plan (Roers Companies) for the SE quadrant for an apartment and townhome complex which will come to Planning Commission in September. Single Family has been harder to sell due to rising interest rates.

Ideal Avenue is still closed along with 40th Street. It probably won't be until later this year that they open. Ideal is a County road so that is under their jurisdiction. Developers typically

build roads within the development and local government typically builds roads outside/adjacent. The County already had Ideal on their radar to reconstruct.

There is a residential proposal for Oakdale Marketplace Development. The area is guided mixed use in the comp plan and is half built out. The market is changing for multi-family residential to being close to amenities, in this case LA Fitness, Target, Pins, etc. This is different than what Oakdale has done in the past so they went to Council workshop for feedback and will come to Planning Commission in September. A lot of indications show that if residential goes into the development area, it will spur more commercial development which brings in more tax base for the community.

Norhart apartment building at Helmo Station has their approvals and they are working on final plat and development agreement. Hopefully they will be out there breaking ground soon. This area is up and coming for development.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Burns called on the attendees in the audience to see if they had any comments. It was asked if there are any updates on the Cedric's Landing proposal. Gitzlaff said that a concept plan had been brought to Council but there were a lot of barriers to development. The City is looking at getting public access to open space at the defunct par 3 golf course as part of any proposal but there is no formal proposal before us. Golf View Park is just to the west of that property. Gitzlaff said the Planning Commission would be the first commission to review any applications that come forward for that site, with a public hearing involved. An audience member stated that they were a lead representative to get a park in their neighborhood and that the park is very much loved and used quite a bit. They stated that they are not opposed to development but would be if it came to removing their park. Commissioner Bates echoed that he has seen the park heavily used as well. The audience member identified herself as Kristin Hauch who lives next to the park. She noted one of their only complaints is that the old golf course is not maintained and weeds are growing up and it's an eye sore.

ADJOURNMENT

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER HALPER, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER SEVERSON TO ADJOURN THE REGULAR MEETING OF AUGUST 3, 2022 AT 6:29 PM.

6 AYES.

0 NAYES.

MOTION CARRIED.

Respectfully submitted,
Jamie Scheffer
Senior Community Development Specialist