

CITY OF ANOKA  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES  
FEBRUARY 11, 2021

Call to Order: Chairperson Finn called the EDC meeting to order at 7:00 a.m. at Anoka City Hall, 2015 First Avenue North in the City of Anoka.

Roll Call: EDC Members present were: Allen Acklund, Brendon Eason, Mathew Finn, Quinn Garrick, Jeff Lee, Curt Rekstad, Joe Riley, and Julie Smith. EDC members absent were: None. Staff present: Community Development Director Doug Borglund

Approval of Minutes: MOTION BY COMMISSIONER LEE, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER SMITH TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 14, 2021 EDC MEETING, AS PRESENTED. MOTION CARRIED.

OLD BUSINESS:

Business Survey Follow Up: Mr. Borglund gave an overview of follow up items.

NEW BUSINESS:

Sign Ordinance Amendments Affecting Highway 10 Business: Mr. Borglund provided an update on the Highway 10 planning process in preparation for the project. He explained that the Fairoak and Thurston intersections for Highway 10 will be elevated with the project and therefore the bridge deck and existing business signs would be the same height. He stated that corridor businesses participated in two meetings with the Planning Commission to discuss signage and appropriate signage height. He identified the highway corridor districts that would be impacted by the changes and reviewed the existing regulations and reviewed photographs of existing signs for reference of sign size and height. He recognized that there is not much consistency within the corridor currently because of how regulations have changed over time. He reviewed the proposed amendments to the sign regulations along the corridor. He noted that all the highway businesses would also be eligible to participate in the MnDOT signage program. He stated that the proposed amendment will go before the City Council at its next meeting and therefore he wanted to bring this forward to the EDC before that review.

Commissioner Eason commented that there is no uniformity along the corridor and perhaps these changes would help to create more uniformity in that area.

Mr. Borglund commented that these businesses will want to increase their sign heights which will require the signs to be reengineered and/or replaced. He commented that with the changes, the corridor will become more uniform as the new signs are constructed and placed. He stated that the businesses along the corridor participated in a worksession and public hearing of the Planning Commission and were supportive of the proposed changes.

Commissioner Smith commented that the changes sound great and asked if the sign replacement would be at expense of the business and whether there would be programs available to assist with that cost.

Mr. Borglund replied that some of the signs are involved in the monetary negotiations with the real estate transactions. He stated that if the sign is not being taken, the business is not required to change its sign, it could remain as an existing nonconforming sign. He stated that if a business wanted to install a new sign, they would need to meet the new requirements. He noted that unless the sign is involved in the negotiations for the parcels that need to be acquired along the corridor, there is not direct funding available for the signs.

Mr. Borglund confirmed the consensus of the Commission in support of the proposed amendments.

Downtown Outdoor Seating Update: Mr. Borglund reviewed background information on the outdoor seating that was allowed in the downtown area and how that evolved to help those businesses during COVID and its changing regulations. He stated that he will be meeting with those businesses to check in and see how the winter firepits have been and discuss what could be done to prepare for spring. He noted that staff has also begun thinking about long-term visioning for the Jackson Street area and displayed concepts from other areas.

Chairperson Finn stated that it would be nice to have a small bus or trolley that could routinely travel from the train or other parking areas to bring people into the downtown area.

Mr. Borglund commented that anything could be possible in the long-term but recognized that it would have to start somewhere.

Commissioner Eason stated that it would be nice to have the infrastructure in place so that area could transform itself, with Jackson being a one-way during certain hours to allow for deliveries but then closing it to traffic at a set time to allow for that pedestrian atmosphere.

Mr. Borglund commented that the businesses do want to keep the option for this additional outdoor seating and even in the winter months, people are visiting those areas and using them. He stated that as they move along, staff will work with some urban planners to develop some sketches of what this area could become.

Commissioner Smith commented that she is very excited with these ideas further making Anoka a destination.

Mr. Borglund commented that the situations these past years with the expanded outdoor seating provided a unique opportunity for the City and the businesses to sample this idea. He stated that the next step will be for staff to meet with the businesses to discuss the immediate plans for spring and staff will continue to work towards a longer-term vision.

## COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORTS:

### Marketing and Communications Updates:

- Discover Anoka: No update.
- Chamber of Commerce: No update.
- ABLA: Mr. Borglund stated that he provided a development update to ABLA at its February meeting.

Subcommittee Updates: No update.

## MISCELLANEOUS:

Discuss March Meeting Agenda: Chairperson Finn commented that perhaps March would be a good time for staff to provide an update on development and other activities around Anoka.

Commissioner Eason stated that he reached out to the School District to obtain details on the apparel contract and advised that he learned it is a government contract. He stated that any government entity would have access to that negotiated pricing. He stated that the Athletic Director at Anoka High School entered into an agreement that had exclusivity and in return were given \$15,000 in free branding. He commented that it appears the merchandise received in the free branding seemed to go to administrators and not students but noted that the school did receive a new mascot as part of that package.

Chairperson Finn thanked Commissioner Eason for the update and suggested that any further action on that item be brought forward as Anoka citizens and not as members of the Commission.

Mr. Borglund agreed that is not a matter the City or Commission should be involved with. He agreed that if someone wanted to pursue that as a private citizen that would be their choice.

Mr. Borglund stated that he will be providing a development update to the City Council at an upcoming meeting and could easily make that same presentation to the Commission at its March meeting.

Staff Update: Mr. Borglund reported that David Weekly Homes held a ribbon cutting the previous day. He commented that it is a great project, and the business is looking to build more homes in Anoka. He thanked Commissioners Smith and Lee for attending the ribbon cutting.

Commissioner Eason asked if any of the units have been sold.

Mr. Borglund reported that the models are open, and the other units are under construction but was unsure if units had been sold.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned upon a motion by Commissioner Eason, a second by Commissioner Smith, and a unanimous vote of those present at 8:17 a.m.

Amanda Staple, *TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.*