

CITY OF ANOKA
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
JULY 13, 2023

Call to Order: Acting Chairperson Beaudoin called the EDC meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. at Anoka City Hall, 2015 First Avenue North in the City of Anoka.

Roll Call: EDC Members present were: Brian Beaudoin, Mathew Finn, Jeff Lee, Curt Rekstad, Dave Sanasac and Julie Smith. EDC members absent were: Ephantus Mwangi, and Mike Allen. Staff present: Community Development Director Doug Borglund

Resignation of EDC Member/Current Chair and Appoint of New EDC Chair: Mr. Borglund noted that the previous Chair resigned and moved to the Planning Commission, therefore a new Chair would be needed.

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER FINN, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER REKSTAD, TO NOMINATE BRIAN BEAUDOIN AS CHAIRPERSON OF THE EDC. MOTION CARRIED.

Approval of Minutes: MOTION BY COMMISSIONER SMITH, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER FINN, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE JUNE 8, 2023 EDC MEETING, AS PRESENTED. MOTION CARRIED.

Mr. Borglund noted that he will bring back the May minutes for approval at the next meeting.

Appointment of Vice Chair: MOTION BY COMMISSIONER LEE, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER REKSTAD, TO NOMINATE JULIE SMITH AS VICE CHAIRPERSON OF THE EDC. MOTION CARRIED.

OLD BUSINESS:

Social District Planning: Mr. Borglund provided a brief background on the social district concept and approved legislation the City received. He stated that staff have been meeting with the businesses with the target to open the social district in September. He stated that they have a draft ordinance for the Council to review and are also working on other aspects such as logo, signage, cup vendors, etc. He stated that an update will be provided to the Council on July 24th. He stated that the cup sales will have a surcharge and the surcharge will cover costs of the City such as maintenance and other elements of the infrastructure for the social district.

Commissioner Finn recommended that the City work with the Chamber to determine if there is a local business that could do the logo and/or printing.

Mr. Borglund noted that they are exploring all options for the cups at this time, looking for the fastest way to get the cups for September. He noted that they will reevaluate elements as they go. He reviewed the next steps which include a third meeting with the businesses, a first and second reading of the ordinance, and issuing of appropriate licenses.

Commissioner Finn asked if there would be an efficient manner to dispose of liquids, as it becomes difficult to empty the trash if there is a lot of liquid inside.

Mr. Borglund noted that those details will be worked out as they go.

Chairperson Beaudoin commented that it seems that this is a pilot in September and they would then review the results to make tweaks.

Commissioner Smith asked if the social district would be open during Halloween.

Mr. Borglund replied that this would only be September, as Halloween is already large with a lot of people, and they do not want to add to that. He noted that they are starting smaller to ensure they can do this well.

Business Survey Planning Update and Discussion: Mr. Borglund noted that he had not had time to work on this item and would plan to bring it back to the next meeting.

Chairperson Beaudoin commented that he will make a presentation to the Chamber of Commerce in August.

NEW BUSINESS:

Consider a Resolution Supporting Channel Dredging of the Rum River: Mr. Borglund commented that a lot of silt has been brought into the Rum River channel from the weather activities of the spring. He noted that years ago the City worked with the DNR to dredge the channel. He stated that with the silt that came down the river, it has impacted navigation and access not only the area where dredging occurred but also near the Mississippi.

Commissioner Lee commented that it is virtually impossible to come up the river to City Hall because of the silt that has accumulated. He commented that some of the leased spaces have boats that are pretty much unusable because of the navigation problems. He stated that they need to dredge the channel and have a plan to maintain the channel in the future as well. He commented that Anoka has tremendously benefited from river activity on the Rum that occurred after the dredging in 2008. He noted the increased activity in Champlin with that riverfront redevelopment and stated that if this is not addressed, Anoka will be left behind.

Mr. Borglund read aloud the draft resolution for the group to consider.

Commissioner Lee asked if something should be included about the establishment of a fund that would support ongoing maintenance once the channel is dredged.

Commissioner Smith asked how the last dredging was funded.

Mr. Borglund noted that estimates for the dredging are north of \$1,000,000 and therefore they will need to find that money.

Commissioner Lee noted that the river is the identity of the town and therefore this is a crucial piece.

Commissioner Finn commented that he would support the dredging and they could discuss the funding and ongoing maintenance separately.

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER FINN, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER BEAUDOIN, TO APPROVE EDC RESOLUTION 2023-01 SUPPORTING CHANNEL DREDGING OF THE RUM RIVER. MOTION CARRIED.

Mr. Borglund noted that this will go on to the City Council, which is also discussing this topic. He noted that the funding discussion will be at the City Council level.

Commissioner Lee stated that he will present this to the City Council and encouraged other members to attend the meeting as well. He acknowledged that this will not happen this year but hopefully if they act quickly, they could get the dredging completed next year.

Amtrak Stop Effort at the NorthStar Station: Mr. Borglund commented that he has been making a significant push on this effort over the past year to add Anoka as an Amtrak stop. He noted that they have finally received a response from Amtrak and they will be making a site visit this fall.

Commissioner Sanasac commented that recent legislation was passed to add Foley as an Amtrak stop and asked if that would have an impact.

Mr. Borglund commented that thus far, Amtrak likes the location and he will keep the group updated as he finds out more details.

Chairperson Beaudoin asked if there has been any conversations with public safety as crime activity sometimes comes with an Amtrak stop.

Commissioner Finn asked if Anoka would have sufficient infrastructure in place if there were to be a breakdown and people need hotel accommodations.

Mr. Borglund replied that it would be a whistlestop, where people park their vehicle in the ramp, the conductor scans their ticket and they board the train. He explained that people would not be staying overnight or having an overlay, they would just be boarding the train at this location.

Commissioner Lee commented on research that he did related to hotel development. He noted that he was told a hotel would not consider Anoka without having a feasibility study completed. He stated that he was told the cost of the study would be about \$10,000 and asked if the EDC would support a resolution recommending that a feasibility study be completed. He stated that perhaps they could add this to the next meeting for additional consideration.

Commissioner Finn commented that he would support consideration of a draft resolution at the next meeting.

Mr. Borglund confirmed that he could draft a resolution for consideration.

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER FINN, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER LEE, TO DIRECT STAFF TO BRING BACK A DRAFT RESOLUTION TO CONSIDER RELATED TO A HOTEL FEASIBILITY STUDY. MOTION CARRIED.

COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORTS:

Marketing and Communications Updates:

- Discover Anoka: No update.
- Chamber of Commerce: Chairperson Beaudoin commented that the majority of the meeting was discussion of the golf tournament.
- ABLA: No July meeting.

Subcommittee Updates: None.

MISCELLANEOUS:

Discuss August Meeting Agenda: Mr. Borglund reviewed the items discussed today that will return to the next agenda.

Staff Update: Mr. Borglund provided a brief update on development activity and inquiries and general City updates.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned upon a motion by Commissioner Finn, a second by Commissioner Rekstad, and a unanimous vote of those present at 9:05 a.m.

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