

The special meeting of the Rockford HRA was called to order by Chair Beyer.

Roll Call

Present was: Beyer, Graner, Hafften, Martinson and Wenz. Also in attendance was: Joanne Foust Municipal Development Group, Mark Davis Cable Video Production and Carswell Executive Director.

Approve Minutes

MOTION was made by Martinson, seconded by Wenz to approve the minutes of the June 28, 2011 meeting.

Motion Carried-Voting In Favor: Beyer, Graner, Hafften, Martinson and Wenz.

Discuss Market Video

Joanne Foust presented a proposed outline for a marketing video to the HRA. Foust suggested a video that is only 3 minutes in length and covers the following topics using elected officials, local residents, school and business people to get the message out. The outline included:

- Business recruitment
- Quality of Life
- Stakeholders – Resident's
- Business owners
- City representatives
- School superintendents
- Community organizations
- Potential speakers

Beyer asked Mark Davis the Cable Commission Video Production employee for his input. Davis responded that the video can be whatever you want it to be. What is the end use, are you going to send it out or put it on the website and who is your audience? Davis suggested a video that has links that you can click on with different topics such as: housing, business, school, parks, etc.

What is our main goal to get started with and who is your audience? Why should you move here or bring your business to Rockford? Mayor suggested we put together a narrative and let him tell his story, same with the business owner, school child, school, parks people. The discussion lead to five different videos. The first one created will include an Introduction and business recruitment information. Joanne Foust will start contacting potential business people to participate in the video. Some of those mentioned included: Steve Huston, Lanny Hanson, Ben Sachs and Perry Buffie.

Grocer

Update – Li Wang owner of China Buffet is planning on opening a grocery store at the mall in the next few months. The grocery store will be located in the old restaurant which has direct access from the parking lot.

Staff has been working with her to help her find equipment from a grocer in Litchfield that recently closed. She wants to rent the city loader to get the equipment into her truck. Staff is requesting the HRA pay the fee which is estimated to be \$600 as a business subsidy since this business is not eligible for any TIF and is willing to take the financial risk to establish a grocery store for the residents. Ms. Wang has not requested any financial assistance from the city such as our no interest loan. Carswell noted that the HRA has assisted other businesses as they are an essential component of a thriving livable city. In the past the city provided assistance for the following: Diversifoam by upsizing a water main under Highway 55 for their sprinkler system, we waived fees for licenses for organizations, provided up to \$2,500 in at least 3 matching grants to local businesses and we paid the building permit fees for the River Works building renovation to name a few.

The mayor suggested that Li Wang work with Nortog's meats, which Carswell said she had considered but decided it was not a good fit.

Motion was made by Graner, seconded by Martinson to approve the HRA subsidize the cost of renting the city loader and operator to move the equipment from Litchfield to the new grocer in the mall.

MOTION CARRIED-VOTING –BEYER, GRANER, HAFFTEN, MARTINSON AND WENZ

FOOD COOP

Another option for a grocer is a food coop. Staff has been researching this option and plans to hold a meeting in the fall to find out if there is interest from the community. Staff has received information from the non profit Food Co-op Initiative in Dennison, MN that may be used for the first informational community meeting.

Update on Blighted Property

One of the top goals included acquiring blighted property. Staff contacted Doug Frank owner of property at 6127 Mechanic Street. Mr. Frank is willing to sell his property for \$42,000. Staff provided two options for financing the purchase: use HRA funds or apply for DNR matching grant. DNR matching grant would require the property remain open green space for either park, parking lot but no structures could ever be constructed on the site if we went that route. Staff recommended the site may work for the relocation of Freedom Park.

The HRA is not ready to apply for a DNR grant and give up hopes of ever developing this flood plain property.

MOTION was made by Martinson, seconded by Wenz to offer \$25,000 to Mr. Frank for the blighted property at 6127 Mechanic Street using HRA funds.

MOTION CARRIED-VOTING IN FAVOR: BEYER, GRANER, HAFFTEN, MARTINSON AND WENZ.

Staff has been in contact with the Lund's Real Estate Contact who owns property at 8090 Co Rd 50 and they may demolish the old bakery as it is a blighted structure. Staff noted that the

HRA would then be requested to adopt a resolution of intent to create a Redevelopment district on the site so that if a development occurs in three years the costs of the demolition could be part of the redevelopment TIF.

Downtown sites – HRA is not interest in acquiring the Barber Shop or Patnode's sites. Atlas X-ray on 6120 Main Street is not moving but is going to fix up the building and though we offered an application the owner is not interested in a no interest loan.

Senior housing study was updated and submitted to HRA. Martinson did not agree with the river sites for senior housing he feels these should be commercial. It was discussed that the sites listed in the study are only recommendations and the developer will make their own decision on what site they feel best meets the needs of a senior housing location.

HRA authorized staff to send out the senior housing study to developers.

Staff will also send out a letter to The Meadows residents to get their feedback of being listed as a potential site for senior housing.

Beyer adjourned the meeting at 7:05 p.m.