

Chair Beyer called the March 22, 2011 HRA meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. in the council chambers of city hall.

Roll Call

Roll call was taken the following members were present: Beyer, Graner, Hafften, Martinson and Wenz. Absent: none. Also in attendance was: Economic Development Consultant Joann Foust of Municipal Group and Executive Director Carswell.

Approve Minutes/January 25, 2011

Motion was made by Graner seconded by Hafften to approve the minutes of January 25, 2011.

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

Financial report

The financial report as of March 10, 2011 was reviewed. The fund balance so far is \$95,622.38. A grant for \$2,500 was received for the Building Better Business Program. The remainder of the anticipated grand funds is for the Emergency Housing Repair program.

Motion was made by Graner, seconded by Hafften to approve the financial report.

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

Building Better Businesses B-3 Social

A social was held on Thursday, February 24, 2011 at 5 p.m. at Cowboyz on Main Street. The event promoted the Building Better Business Program including SCORE, LegalCORPS and the Design & Revive (formerly Talent Swap).

Currently there are 14 volunteers signed up to assist businesses through the Design and Revive program. ABC Lettering has requested assistance and one other business has indicated their intent to utilize the program.

The SCORE representative, Bill Richardson, has been holding monthly office hours at BANKWEST with two to four appointments per month. This free consulting session has been well utilized since its inception. The City will continue to promote this service.

Valspar Grant Application

The Initiative Foundation, with Valspar Corp. offers an annual Minnesota Beautiful Valspar Grant. The applications were due on March 7, 2011. An application was prepared and submitted for a mural on the east side of the ABC Lettering building which faces the Bridge Street bridge. The HRA was asked to review two mural options and vote on one to use, if the grant was awarded. Some of the B3 volunteers have offered to assist with the painting.

After discussing the mural it was unanimous that the B mural with the mill on the left was the HRA's choice. There was discussion about the wording and some felt that using the term "Experience" Rockford History was misleading as there is very little history to experience in the downtown. The HRA changed the mural to read *Remembering* Rockford History. The group looked at the paint selections for the mural and did not make any changes. The HRA was interested in proceeding with the mural even if we don't get the grant but wanted costs. There were also some questions as to how long the mural would last on this exterior wall. It was discussed that they seal coat these murals so the paint lasts longer.

Beyer stated that he would be willing to sign up as a volunteer for the B3 program to provide labor for projects.

Rural Feasibility Study Grant Program

AgStar Fund for Rural America is offering a grant program for a maximum of \$5000 for feasibility studies in their service area, including Wright County. The city has been approached by a developer interested in developing an assisted living project. The party has inquired about the status of a market or feasibility study for this type of housing. The last housing study completed was in 2002, or nine years ago. The 2010 Census data has been released, providing updated demographic data. The HRA was asked to provide input on applying for the Rural Feasibility Study Grant for a feasibility study for assisted living/senior housing in Rockford. The interested party will be meeting with staff on March 24, 2011. Ms. Foust presented costs for feasibility housing studies from Maxfield Research as follows:

- \$3,000 for study to include only assisted living research
- \$7,000 - \$8,500 for a study to include all senior housing research
- \$10,000 for a complete Housing study including single family

MOTION was made by Martinson, seconded by Wenz to authorize the submittal of an AG Star Fund Rural Grant application to assist with the costs of Maxfield Research preparing a complete Senior Housing study that was quoted at \$7,000 to \$8,500.

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

Development Site/Cozy Rest

Staff has remained in contact with the property owner of the Cozy Rest site. At this time the property is not formally listed. Discussions continue with a party that has expressed interest. Updates on the redevelopment of this site were provided at the meeting and staff has continued to discuss the options of redevelopment of this site with the potential developer's. Establishing a Tax Increment Finance District for this project was discussed as the developer continues to seek funding from another bank. The developer's have a two year lease currently but staff suggested that they lock into the low price on this land and provide plans and financial application for TIF that the city could review and approve. The building on this site could be demolished now with

excess TIF funds provided by the city and paid back over time as would be listed in the developer's agreement. The HRA discussed the length of time the city has to establish a Redevelopment TIF district which is 25 years but this would be reviewed during the application process and the city would only provide TIF for what was necessary and feasible.

Economic Development Report

The report included the following: Chamber development/meetings, grocery recruitment, grant opportunities, assisted living project, B3 Building Better Businesses, SCORE, and updated demographic data for the web site.

Adjourn

Motion to adjourn was made by Graner, seconded by Hafften.

Chair Beyer adjourned the meeting at 6:56 p.m.

Mike Beyer, Chair

Attest:

Nancy Carswell, Executive Director