

**CITY OF CLARA CITY
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (EDA)
REGULAR MEETING**

**March 13, 2017
City Hall**

This Regular Meeting of the Economic Development Authority of Clara City was called to order by President Chad Forkrud, as Chair, on Monday, March 13, 2017, at 12:00 Noon in the Council Chambers of City Hall in Clara City, MN.

Members present: Chad Forkrud, Chip Goeman, Robert Schwitters, Gary Nelson, Jim Thein, Rhonda Pieper, and Windy Block

Members absent: None

Staff present: Gene Wenstrom

Also present: Josie Oliver (Clara City Herald), Tom Cherveney (West Central Tribune), Trish Krueger (Trish's Catering), Lane Schwitters (MACCRAY School Board Chair), Brian Koslofsky (Superintendent of MACCRAY Schools), and Jeff Lopez (Chippewa County Commissioner)

The Chair declared a Quorum of the members to be present.

Upon solicitation by the Chair for any desired changes to the Agenda and recognizing one such request, *it was moved by Thein and seconded by Schwitters that the draft Agenda be approved with the addition of Agenda Item No. 7 (D) Application for a Solar Project. The motion passed 7-0.*

At Agenda Item No. 3, there was one set of meeting minutes to be considered. Following an opportunity for review and questions, *it was moved by Nelson and seconded by Thein to approve the Minutes of the Regular EDA Meeting of February 13, 2017, as presented. The motion carried 7-0.*

Under Agenda Section No. 4 "Communications/Notices," there were no items of business to be considered.

At Agenda Section No. 5 "Reports from Officers and Committees," staff reported that the EDA account was still without a positive balance of funds at this time, having already invested its existing assets back into the community. Staff also reported that there were no loan servicing requests to be heard at this time. Following questions, *it was moved by Schwitters and seconded by Goeman to acknowledge and accept the Financial and Loan Servicing Reports as presented by staff. The motion passed 7-0.*

At No. 6 "Reports from Staff and Administrative Officers," the EDA Report for March 2017, as authored by Gene Wenstrom, Economic Development Director, was presented and highlighted by Wenstrom for the benefit of the Commissioners. Subjects of the report included: 1) Newski's Auto Service – The owner is hoping to be able to reopen his business in its current location, but is still waiting on insurance and damage information; 2) Sugar and Spice – The owner is looking closer at the possibilities of auctioning off the remaining equipment; 3) Kay's Naturals – The owners are in Los Angeles for a major food show and are still being harassed by four predatory lawsuits; and 4) Almich's Market – Sales are still going well, but the owner would like to increase them even more. This was reporting only and no specific action was requested nor taken on any of the issues that were discussed.

Under Agenda Item No. 7 (A), consideration was given to opening a dialogue with Lane Schwitters, School Board Chair, and Brian Koslofsky, Superintendent for the MACCRAY District No. 2180, regarding the recently defeated school district referendum. Of particular interest to this EDA, it was noted that there had been a fair amount of business promotion in the communities of Maynard and Raymond which attempted to tie the outcome of this election to their respective community's survival. The Chair explained that, in anticipation of the Clara City EDA possibly sponsoring a joint meeting of the EDA's from Maynard, Raymond, and Clara City, this EDA was asking the following questions:

- 1.) What has the MACCRAY leadership team heard or learned from the business leaders in Raymond and Maynard that ultimately led their respective City Councils to pass motions in opposition to the passage of the recent referendum?
- 2.) Now that there have been two consecutive referendum defeats regarding the general future and specific building configuration of the MACCRAY schools, what does the District #2180 leadership believe lies ahead as being their next best steps?
- 3.) Are there any particular strategies or roles that the Clara City EDA could or should consider partaking in that might ultimately be of benefit to ISD #2180 in helping it to resolve what appears to be at this point is a difficult stalemate?
- 4.) Would or could a joint meeting of the Economic Development Authorities from each of the three cities be beneficial to the future interests and plans, if any, of the MACCRAY School District, or might it prove to be more harmful?

There was a far-ranging discussion which was centered on the questions above and many differing viewpoints were shared by the group participants. Ultimately, the consensus appeared to be that the EDA's future sponsoring of a sharing session with the EDA's of all three involved communities was worthy of giving it a good try inasmuch as all agreed that something needed to be done in order to solve the prevailing stalemate. Following the completion of the dialogue, **Chairman Forkrud declared, without objection, that this item should be placed on the April 10, 2017 EDA Agenda for further consideration.**

At Agenda Item No. 7 (B), consideration was given to reviewing the City's application for and engagement in the Age-friendly Community Building Project as being sponsored by the Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging. The Board reviewed a letter of solicitation from the Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging that outlined the grant opportunity. Following a further review of the grant process, **Chair Forkrud declared, without objection, that it was the consensus of the EDA Board that staff should make a bon fide effort at putting together a final application for the Board's consideration of submittal at the EDA's April 10, 2017, regular meeting.**

Under Agenda Item No. 7 (C), consideration was next given to selling, at a yet-to-be determined price, Lot 1, Block 1, South Hawk Creek Business Park to Trish & Steve Kruger, 326 NE Third Ave., for their proposed construction of a suitable building in which to relocate their commercial preparation and catering kitchen that will service Trish's Catering. Staff provided a Memorandum, dated March 10, 2017, which included an analysis of the City/EDA's acquisition and improvement costs to date and information about the preliminary plat of the property. Trish Kruger, who was in attendance, shared with the Commissioners that she was in the process of completing a deal for some other property in the downtown business district and opined that it appeared to be a better match to her business needs. As such, she thanked the Board for their consideration and stated that she would be pursuing the other property. Following additional discussion, **Chair Forkrud declared, without objection, that it was still important for the Board to establish a policy for the pricing of their property in South Hawk Creek Business Park and, as such, directed that the topic be placed on the agenda for the next EDA meeting.**

At Agenda Item No. 7 (D), consideration was given to receiving information from staff regarding a community solar garden that is being proposed to be erected on about eight (8) acres of bare farm land that is owned by Michael Stamer and is sited at 12001-50 St. SE, Clara City, MN. A drawing of the proposed site and facility was shared with all and staff reviewed the Planning Commission's process that will be followed over the coming month in evaluating this project under a Conditional Use Permit (CUP). This was informational only and consequently no official action was taken or needed.

The Chair then reminded the members that the next regularly scheduled meeting of the EDA will be held on Monday, April 10, 2017, 12:00 Noon, at City Hall.

Upon recognizing the completion of the EDA's intended business, **it was moved by Goeman and seconded by Thein to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed 7-0 and Chair Forkrud declared the meeting adjourned as of 1:18 P.M.**

APPROVED: _____
Date

ATTEST: _____
Winthro C. Block, Secretary/City Administrator