

EDA Minutes
February 10, 2021
2pm
City Hall

Administrator Grafstrom called the meeting to order at 2 pm. Members present: Mayor Carlson, Councilor Zeltinger, Loren Nelson, Becky Turnquist, Tony Cuda.

Also Present: Administrator Angela Grafstrom, Terry Lind of the Braham Event Center

New Business

Hotel Feasibility Study

Grafstrom presented cost and examples of a doing a hotel feasibility study in Braham. The event center board and Grafstrom had a phone conference with hotel developer Eric Tweten who had suggested a 40-unit, 2 story hotel may work in Braham. He told Grafstrom and the Event Center committee the best way to attract a developer is to first do a feasibility study. The prices for the various kinds of studies ranged from \$2000 on up to \$7500. The committee discussed and decided this is not what they want, and they do not believe Braham could support a hotel. Grafstrom stated the study would address that as well as identify any shortcomings the city might have if they would not be a feasible location at this time. Grafstrom felt with the trend of businesses moving out of the Twin Cities, this would be the time to explore this option. She believes a hotel in town, would have traffic with the Event Center, Pie Day, etc. and reminded the board that it does not have to be events just in Braham, but the surrounding areas. People travel for many different reasons. The cost of building the hotel and staffing would fall on the developer. Grafstrom stated many people have talked to her about getting a hotel in town. The feasibility study is the first step. The committee felt it would be better for the city to explore senior housing. The Event Center would like to see a Senior Living Community go in on their property instead, so no action taken at this time. Grafstrom reported this is one of many development projects she has been working on for the city. She reported the city was just awarded a Charging Station she applied for with East Central Energy and tomorrow she will be pitching for a TAP Grant. The committee asked Grafstrom to see if either company that conducts the study, would come, and discuss it in person with the committee, the Chamber, and Event Center board, but the committee did not feel we should invest in the study.

COVID-19 Loan Money

Grafstrom reported the city has received about \$15,000 back already in loan repayments. Council had approved, when they allocated the money for the EDA that the EDA could reallocate the money when it came back in as they felt necessary. Grafstrom suggested using the money for loans to businesses for beautification projects and allowing businesses to borrow in increments as low as \$500. Turnquist suggested not relending the money and holding on to it in case they want to pay for a feasibility study of some kind or some other things. Mayor Carlson also stated it would be nice to use some of the money for beautification. Ultimately the committee decided by consensus to relend \$5000 and hold onto the

balance for now. Someone asked if the city had any DEED money to lend. Grafstrom reported the last \$20,000 was earmarked for Tusen Tack just before she started and was distributed to them within the first few months she was here, so that money is gone.

Back lots in Industrial Park

Currently the city still has these lots priced at \$200,000 each. The planning commission and Grafstrom feel we should reduce the price as we only have 1 small lot left to sell. These are shovel ready but need infrastructure which the council is already looking into. Some of the committee felt the city should not invest in the infrastructure in the industrial park at this time but investigate purchasing and developing the Lipinski Property. Grafstrom stated she is concerned about the soils on the Lipinski property, plus she has spoken to the County Conservation Officer who stated the property is home to 3 noxious weeds, one of which has not really spread in Isanti County, so they are working to get these eradicated. Zeltinger will talk to Lipinski, get pricing, and discuss the soil concerns.

Lipinski and Svenby property

The Lipinski property was discussed with the industrial park and Zeltinger reported there is already a purchase agreement on the Svenby Property. It would have been a good

Old Business

As it is already 4 pm, the committee has again tabled the Food Truck Ordinance. Loren Davis was not in attendance and the Visioning Committee is something he was working on, so the committee tabled that as well.

Meeting Adjourned at 4:10 pm

Prepared by Angela M. Grafstrom