

**Meeting Minutes for City of Richmond Economic Development Authority
Tuesday, September 19, 2023 6:30 pm**

Item #1: Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance

EDA President Tim Paczkowski called the meeting of the Richmond EDA to order at 6:30 p.m. EDA Commissioners present: Tim Paczkowski, Kate Lemke, Terry Meemken, Dale Maus and Pat Evens. Absent was: Commissioner. Also present were: Stacy Kalthoff, City Clerk, Traci Ryan of Ryan Development Consulting, Neil Fortier – Stearns County HRA Executive Director, Tyna Meemken and Ellyn Schuller representing Civic & Commerce and Jerry Wenner.

Item #2: Approval of Agenda/Additions

Motion to approve agenda, was made by _____, second by Maus 5-0-0.

Item #3: Approval of Meeting Minutes June 20, 2023

Motion to approve the minutes of the August 15th meeting, was made by Maus, second by Evens 5-0-0.

Item #4: Financial Report – thru September 2023

T	OPERATING BALANCE AVAILABLE	\$ not available
	REVOLVING LOAN FUND AVAILABLE	\$ 43,414
	CHECKING BALANCE	\$ (4,950)
	MONEY MARKET BALANCE	\$ not available
	BLUE BIKE BALANCE	\$ 3,281

Motion to approve the financial report of the August 15th meeting, was made by Maus, second by Evens 5-0-0.

Item #7: Commercial Enhancement Application Review (this item was moved up in the agenda to accommodate the business owner)

- a. **Jerry Wenner** – Wenner appeared to ask the EDA for reconsideration of his commercial enhancement application to fund back entrance stairway/deck improvements indicating that he had received funding in the past and the improvements proposed were in fact visible as the back entrance was the main entrance for residential tenants and a storage business. There was further discussion regarding what the policies were with past awards and what they are now and that the program was not designed for back entrance or residential benefit. To change the previous action of the EDA Commissioner Lemke would have to rescind her motion to deny and Commissioner Meemken would have to agree to rescind his second. This was not done and the previous action stood.

Item #5: Civic & Commerce Discussion – C&C Board Member Tyna Meemken and Executive Director Ellen Schuller joined the EDA for a discussion on updating each other on what the respective organizations are doing to further one of the EDA work plan goals of improving communication among various civic groups. Meemken indicated that C&C had

reorganized and now has a five member board and the executive director that works limited hours. They have approximately 40 business members and individuals are welcome to be members. They have quarterly social events where all are welcome and the board meets with just the board monthly. They put out a monthly newsletter and have an annual scholarship program and will be hosting a workshop featuring Ben Winchester from the U of M on “Living in the Middle of Everywhere”. The EDA believes that they are more focused on the promotion of Richmond to attract businesses and residents and address physical improvements where the C&C is to promote its members and activities that generate business/activity. Areas where the two organizations can support each other were to share monthly minutes/newsletter with each other, share social media posts continue to support and participate in the annual state of the community event. Ryan indicated that the EDA will be talking more about sponsoring a social media training/drone footage and asked if C&C believed there was a need – they did and asked the EDA to let them know more if the ideas are pursued.

Item #6: HRA Discussion – Neil Fortier, Stearns County HRA Executive Director, joined the EDA to talk about what the HRA does and how they can be of assistance to the City/EDA. The County HRA serves to promote workforce housing throughout all of Stearns County except for the St. Cloud Metropolitan area. They own/manage 78 rental housing units and manage 208 Section 8 Housing vouchers. They can help to identify resources and fill gaps in funding for affordable workforce housing projects. The County Board is expected to approve the creation of a Housing Trust Fund soon which the county will initially capitalize with \$500,000 and the HRA will levy \$200,000 for annually which will help to fill the gap in funding for approved projects. The HRA also has revolving loan fund of approximately \$770,000 to assist manufacturing businesses that create jobs and has an interest rate of 0-3%. Fortier indicated that the recent multifamily project in Cold Spring did not have any Section 8 certificates.

Item #8: Social History, Plan & Media Report

The social media report was in the meeting packet. Views were consistent. 40% of the views were local which doesn't promote tourism or development but does bode well for local engagement. Top posts were flash back to River Lake Days, the page name change, Renegade Truck Equipment expansion and City support, and opening of the pickle ball courts. There was discussion about having some drone video shot to promote what the community has to offer. Ryan indicated she spoke with Pine Peak Media about this and that if the EDA could put a list of what they want to see and accomplish, that he could help to develop a proposal. A number of ideas were discussed, EDA members are to come up with a list before next meeting and Ryan would follow up.

Item #9 – EDA Contributions – Comp Plan vs. Barriers: With both of these items coming up at recent EDA meetings, Ryan suggested that there be thoughtful discussion among EDA commissioners with a recommendation to the Council on how these items should be funded. Commissioner Paczkowski did not recall the council directly reducing the EDA budget to fund the comp plan. Ryan suggested that funding a portion of the comp plan would be more in line with what an EDA does than barriers would be. Upon further discussion, the EDA concurred and Commissioner Paczkowski suggested that the EDA decide upon a percentage of the comp plan that they would consider funding. The general consensus was that the EDA let the council know that they would fund up to 20% of the comp plan and no barriers.

Item #10 - Ryan Development Consulting Items

- A. Commercial Enhancement Policies – considering the length of the meeting, this was deferred to the next EDA meeting – to once again review the policies and procedure for the program so that it be applied consistently and fairly.
- B. Multifamily Housing – Ryan reported that Mike Bobick of GC Real Estate is investigating a number of sites – focusing on redevelopment sites
- C. Printing Updates – the new inquiry flyer has been printed and is at the Cold Spring Record. Ryan asked if the EDA still wanted to print the targeted marketing piece at this late date – the consensus of the EDA was that if it can be mailed by October 1 that it should be done.
- D. Marketing efforts – instead of avoiding any marketing efforts that didn't benefit all three business 'zones', a plan should be developed for each.
- E. Photo contest rules – Ryan presented draft photo contest rules with the purpose of generating social media content, local engagement, promote the “best of Richmond” and build on the “so much more” brand. It was suggested that the quality requirements be removed as that can be part of judging, the start date would be October 5th to December 31st, winners to be announced at the State of the Community banquet, the date of the picture can be any time past or present and promotes the various seasons. No calendar would be pursued at this time but photos may be used for future brochure.
- F. Gilk Request for assistance on downtown building. Ryan shared the preliminary plans for Gilk's proposed building and indicated that no action this evening was requested because of the late addition to the agenda. Ryan shared her recommendations which included concerns about drainage, roof lines and storefront design. It was the general consensus of the EDA that these items should be addressed and they were sure that Gilk's could do better on the storefront – understanding that whatever they build will have a lasting impact on downtown and future reinvestment. It was suggested that the EDA President - Tim, City Engineer - Dave Blommel, Mike Wallen – Building Inspector and Traci meet in person with the Gilk's to further discuss.

The motion was made by Maus, second by Lemke, to approve moving forward with the contest with the changes noted above. Motion carried 5-0.

Item #11: Other Matters – Commissioner Paczkowski suggested that the EDA look at finding an early Weeres Pontoon and using it as a sign to promote the birthplace of the pontoon – sharing other community gimmicks like Dassel world's largest ball of twine, the walleye in Garrison and Baudette, etc. The general consensus was that this should be pursued.

Item #12: Next Meeting Date: October 17, 2023 at 6:30 p.m.

Adjournment 9:08 p.m.