

**THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE PRINCETON EDA BOARD HELD ON FEBRUARY 21, 2013,
AT 6:00 P.M., AT CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

Mary Chapman called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M. Members present were Charles Snustead, Victoria Hallin, Grady Clark, and Genny Reynolds.

Absent were Thom Walker and Cindy Riddle. (Riddle arrived at 6:09 P.M.)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE REGULAR MEETING ON JANUARY 17, 2013

SNUSTEAD MOVED, SECOND BY HALLIN, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF JANUARY 17, 2013. UPON THE VOTE, THERE WERE 5 AYES, 0 NAYS. MOTION CARRIED.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

A. Resolution #03-22 – Draft Revision

Fuhrman said the Princeton's current Business Subsidy Criteria states that "Businesses must create or retain one full time job paying at least 150% of minimum wage per \$50,000 of assistance." At the January 17, 2013 EDA Board meeting, the EDA made a motion to amend the current Business Subsidy Criteria so that it specifically called out that the job created must pay at least 150% of minimum wage either Federal or State, whichever is higher.

Resolution #03-22 adopted the City's Business Subsidy Criteria. Fuhrman has prepared a draft document with the changes requested by the EDA Board. If the EDA approves the document, Fuhrman will bring it to the City Council for their adoption.

Fuhrman gave the EDA Board copies of the current minimum wage requirements. Steve Jackson, City Finance Director has indicated there is discussion of increasing the minimum wage at both the State and Federal levels.

HALLIN MOVED, SECOND BY REYNOLDS, TO APPROVE RESOLUTION #03-22 THE BUSINESS SUBSIDY CRITERIA REVISION, AND FORWARD ON TO THE CITY COUNCIL TO BE ADOPTED. UPON THE VOTE, THERE WERE 5 AYES, 0 NAYS. MOTION CARRIED.

B. NSP Update

1) Former Acadian Homes Site

Fuhrman said that after review by Minnesota Housing staff for compliance with NSP standards, the Request for Proposals will be mailed on Friday, February 22, 2013. They are due to the City by April 11, 2013.

2) 809 9th Avenue North (Former Kenny Bergstrom property)

Fuhrman informed the EDA Board that the City now officially owns the former Bergstrom home. The next step is removal of the asbestos and vermiculite. Once that is complete, a company will be hired to demolish the home, and the City will enter into a Purchase Agreement with Habitat for Humanity. Fuhrman will ask those that submitted a bid on the cost estimate to resubmit another one since some time has passed.

3) 903 9th Avenue North (Pickering Property – property in tax forfeiture)

Fuhrman will be meeting with the Mille Lacs County Board of Commissioners on March 5th to

discuss negotiating a purchase price for the property as it is in tax forfeiture.

Reynolds commented that the roof recently collapsed on the building.

NEW BUSINESS:

A. Downtown Business Sign by Walmart

Fuhrman said at the January 17, 2013 EDA Board meeting, Mary Chapman indicated that downtown businesses would like a directional sign for the downtown by Walmart, and there appeared to be support in this regard.

Fuhrman is requesting the EDA's discussion regarding this matter. If the EDA Board is in favor of this idea and their participation in this effort, Fuhrman will pursue looking at costs, locations, etc., in cooperation with the Chamber of Commerce.

Hallin said she would like to see two signs in that area, one on 2nd Street North and the other on 5th Street North. Those entering or leaving the Walmart site would see the directional sign for downtown. Another area for a sign would be by Aero Business Park. Three signs total.

Reynolds said the exit ramp off of highways usually have a Business District sign.

Riddle arrived at 6:09 P.M.

Fuhrman said she will talk to MNDot and request it. First Street is a county road so we would have to get county approval. Fuhrman mentioned that Thom Walker had commented to her on a sign idea that would be a frame type sign and businesses could have their name inside it.

Hallin said she likes just the plain directional sign.

Chapman agrees. Businesses come and go and just having the simple sign that says Downtown Business District would be enough.

Fuhrman said if the EDA Board is supportive of the signage, she can look into the cost.

HALLIN MOVED, SECOND BY CLARK, TO HAVE STAFF LOOK INTO THE COST OF THREE SIGNS AND AVAILABLE FUNDS. UPON THE VOTE, THERE WERE 6 AYES, 0 NAYS. MOTION CARRIED.

It was decided that the sign size should be what a standard Business District signs are and they should be installed as soon as it thaws.

OLD BUSINESS: None

MISCELLANEOUS:

A. EDA Balance Sheet

Fuhrman commented that the Revolving Loan Fund balance is getting funds back so that is good.

Snustead asked what all is being done to advertise businesses to come to Princeton.

Fuhrman said she will be updating the City website on vacant buildings and vacant land. There is the "It Starts Here Challenge" they have been working on to encourage growth downtown.

Riddle asked if any of the fourteen applicants would be interested in a site at Aero Business Park.

Fuhrman said the "It Starts Here Challenge" is for downtown only. She mentioned that there was a gentleman interested in opening a gun shop with a shooting range. The building would need to be 200 feet long.

Hallin mentioned the Initiative Foundations IQ Magazine might be a good place to advertise.

Fuhrman does not believe you can advertise in it.

B. Verbal Report

1) It Starts Here Challenge Update

Fuhrman said there have been 14 applicants that have applied for the program. The Business Accelerator Group has chosen seven and credit checks will be done on those now. Three applicants are eligible to receive a loan of \$10,000.

Snustead asked if the applicants are local residents.

Fuhrman said not all are local, approximately eight may be local.

Reynolds would like to see if another program could be started to help existing businesses.

Riddle said she was helping a few people with social media on how to advertise their website.

Chapman said that the Chamber has had individuals speak at the Chamber meetings on how to use social media for their businesses. They have had great attendance and response from the meetings.

Reynolds suggested on the City website, Chamber website, and "It Starts Here" website all should have information on social media. It should also give information on business support, loan resources, and tips on running their business.

2) Grow MN Update

Fuhrman and Chapman are continuing their monthly area business visits. They are trying to make two visits a month. Carla Vita from Minnesota DEED may join them on their visits from time to time. Vita visits 25 businesses a month with her job.

Chapman said she is pleased with how the visits are going. They usually start out where the person they are visiting is hesitant, and as the questions are being asked, they relax and are more open with their answers. Each visit is followed up with a letter, and if they had wanted some information, that is sent also.

C. City Council and Planning Commission Minutes for January, 2013

The EDA Board had no comment.

Clark mentioned he had seen some activity in a few empty sites that hopefully will be occupied shortly with a business.

Hallin said on February 6th, she had gone to a meeting with the 2013 Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities Economic Development Partnership Program. They are looking to build their 2013 membership. By joining forces, rural businesses, Chambers of Commerce, EDA's, non-profits and cities can effectively advocate for policies that will create jobs and boost private investments, and build a future for Greater Minnesota's economy. The membership fees are directed to the research, development, and advocacy of economic development initiatives. There is no staff effort to be a member.

Riddle said it sounds like a lobbyist organization. She wonders what added benefit this would gain for the City.

Fuhrman took the information that Hallin had and will check into it. If it were something that would be beneficial, the fee could be added to the next year's budget, unless the EDA Board would want to join this year.

SNUSTEAD MOVED, SECOND BY HALLIN, TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. UPON THE VOTE, THERE WERE 6 AYES, 0 NAYS. MOTION CARRIED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 6:48 P.M.

ATTEST:

Mary Chapman, Vice President

Mary Lou DeWitt, Comm. Dev. Assistant