

**OSSEO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
September 9, 2019**

1. ROLL CALL

President Poppe called the regular meeting of the Osseo Economic Development Authority to order at 6:00 p.m., Monday, September 9, 2019.

Members present: Teresa Aho, Deanna Burke, Harold E. Johnson, Sherry Murdock, Duane Poppe, Mark Schulz, and Larry Stelmach.

Members absent: None.

Staff present: Executive Director Riley Grams, City Planner Nancy Abts, and City Attorney Mary Tietjen.

Others present.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Stelmach, seconded by Johnson, to approve the Agenda as presented. The motion carried 7-0.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – AUGUST 12, 2019

A motion was made by Johnson, seconded by Schulz, to approve the minutes of August 12, 2019, as presented. The motion carried 7-0.

4. MATTERS FROM THE FLOOR – None.

5. PUBLIC HEARINGS – None.

6. ACCOUNTS PAYABLE

Executive Director Riley Grams presented the EDA Accounts Payable listing.

A motion was made by Murdock, seconded by Burke, to approve the Accounts Payable. The motion carried 7-0.

7. OLD BUSINESS

A. DISCUSS BUSINESS COMMUNICATION PROGRAM

City Planner Nancy Abts stated the subcommittee discussed creating a quarterly electronic newsletter for businesses. The newsletter can provide “city news” for businesses alongside contact information for key City staff and profiles of Osseo businesses. A suggested first topic for a fall newsletter is business safety and Police Department services, in light of recent thefts from businesses. EDA members are encouraged to suggest other ideas for the business newsletter. Members may also want to help create content for the newsletter.

Abts reported subcommittee members propose collecting contact emails for local businesses to be used for distributing the newsletter. While soliciting contact information, businesses could also be approached about their general availability to attend networking events or business forums. Staff will develop a sign-up contact form for business information.

Abts explained the subcommittee also continued to support purchasing a short, easy-to-remember website domain that could be used to promote economic development. Possible URLs include InvestInOsseo.com and OsseoMN.biz. EDA members are encouraged to suggest ideas for domains. (Whether or not a domain is available, or affordable, can be researched online using tools like <https://domains.google/>.) Finally, the subcommittee suggested the EDA discuss whether to place paid advertisements in Yellow Tree Theater's programs.

Schulz commented another matter the subcommittee was working on was to gather business owners' names and contact information.

Aho stated the businesses she has talked to have been excited about the work the EDA was doing and wanted to learn more about what the City was working on through a quarterly newsletter. Grams commented some of the topics that could be addressed with local business owners would be snow removal on Central Avenue, along with business safety and security.

Poppe anticipated local business owners would assist with writing articles for the newsletter if asked to contribute. Grams indicated another idea would be to highlight local businesses each quarter in the newsletter. In addition, the gateway sign could be discussed.

Johnson suggested a workshop be held between the EDA and local business owners with the Police Chief as the guest speaker.

Schulz indicated it may be difficult for sole proprietors to attend this type of event. He questioned what direction staff was seeking from the EDA. Abts requested feedback from the EDA regarding the URL. She commented further on the importance of staff and the subcommittee working to create an updated list of local business owners.

Poppe recommended this site have information regarding the City's population, a community profile that highlights development, a message from the Police Chief, and recent economic development efforts as described. He suggested the text be short and that the site be more visual in nature.

Schulz commented he liked the OsseoMN.biz URL. He recommended the landing page for this site be populated after further discussions were held with local business owners.

Poppe asked if Osseobiz.com was available. Abts reported this URL was available.

The consensus of the EDA was to support a shortened URL (Osseobiz.com) to promote economic development.

Johnson and Poppe supported the EDA advertising in the Yellow Tree programs with a half page ad after the new website was up and running.

A motion was made by Johnson, seconded by Stelmach, to direct staff to have a half page EDA ad in the Yellow Tree programs in an amount not to exceed \$1,000. The motion carried 7-0.

8. NEW BUSINESS

A. DISCUSS PROPERTY ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMS

Abts stated property enhancement programs for residential properties tend to have the following focuses:

- Owner-occupied housing
- Focus on special populations
 - o Low Income (typically determined on a proportion of Area Median Income (AMI), which varies based on household size. 50-80-120% of AMI are typical program thresholds for homeowners).
 - o Disabled
 - o Senior Citizens
 - o Veterans
- Energy Efficiency

Abts explained many programs are offered in partnership with or via referrals to Minnesota Housing Finance Agency, the Center for Energy and the Environment (CEE), counties, and other nonprofits. The Minnesota Homeownership Center has a comprehensive and up-to-date listing of programs available on its website.

Abts commented Brooklyn Park is one community that offers a number of distinct financial programs for housing improvements. In previous years, the city also offered a Front-Yard Fix-up Grant program for low income homeowners and hosted an annual event for residential real estate agents to promote the community to new homebuyers. Many suburban communities in Hennepin County also work with Homes Within Reach to provide entry-level home ownership options through their Community Land Trust model. When Homes Within Reach initially acquires a property, they typically rehab it before offering it for resale.

Abts reported other less direct strategies communities use to promote housing investment include participating in Remodeling Fairs and housing tours, distributing planbooks with standard concepts for remodeling typical aging housing types, including Cape Cods & Ramblers and Split Level or Split Entry Homes, as well as a recent guide to Accessory Dwelling Units. Some communities offer annual contests for the “most improved” houses or front yards. Communities typically fund these programs through Community Development Block Grant funds, an EDA or HRA levy, proceeds from revolving loan funds, and TIF disbursements.

Abts indicated property enhancement programs for commercial properties tend to have the following focuses:

- Energy efficiency
- Façade improvements (e.g., Hopkins and Robbinsdale) and less-intensive storefront placemaking initiatives

Abts stated in addition to energy efficiency rebates offered by utilities or higher levels of government, cities and counties have recently begun offering Property Assessed Clean Energy

(PACE) as a financing strategy for clean energy investments. Locally, several cities offer PACE through a Joint Powers Agreement with the St. Paul Port Authority known as MinnPACE.

Johnson supported the EDA looking into a property enhancement program.

Stelmach stated everyone wanted to help as many people as possible, but the reality of a budget eventually plays a part.

Poppe questioned what the EDA wanted to see and how would this be funded. Abts explained this would be a great starting point for a property enhancement program.

Stelmach commented he could support staff seeing what type of dollars were available.

Schulz supported the EDA focusing more on commercial property enhancements at this time. He stated an HRA would have to be established if the City was more interested in focusing its efforts on housing improvements.

Murdock believed Realife Cooperative would be a great property for the EDA to focus on.

Johnson stated he wanted to learn more about what grant opportunities were available to the City. He commented on the façade program the City previously had in place.

Poppe noted the City had an improvement program in place for homeowners in the past. Abts reported this was the case and noted this program was run by the County.

Burke anticipated there were many homeowners in Osseo that owned older homes that were in need of enhancement and updates.

Schulz stated he did not see a real need for an enhancement program for commercial businesses. He believed the exterior of the local businesses in the community were quite nice.

Consensus of the EDA was to support staff further investigating a property enhancement program. The EDA supported code enforcement and senior deferred programs be looked at further for residential enhancements.

Johnson suggested the EDA look into an energy efficiency program for commercial businesses.

Poppe anticipated there were already enough programs in place to assist local business owners in becoming more energy efficient.

9. REPORTS OR COMMENTS: Executive Director, President, Members

Abts reported a Tree Care Open House would be held on Monday, September 23, from 4-6 p.m., at the Fire Department Meeting Room.

Stelmach stated he appreciated the great community participation at Lions Roar.

Johnson noted Union Speed & Style held a business opening over the weekend.

10. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Schulz, seconded by Stelmach, to adjourn at 6:57 p.m. The motion carried 7-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Heidi Guenther
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.