

**OSSEO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
September 13, 2021**

1. ROLL CALL

President Poppe called the regular meeting of the Osseo Economic Development Authority to order at 6:00 p.m., Monday, September 13, 2021.

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

Members absent: None.

Staff present: Executive Director Riley Grams and City Attorney Mary Tietjen.

Others present: Kathy Stelmach and Kerstin Schulz.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – AUGUST 9, 2021

A motion was made by Johnson, seconded by Vickerman, to approve the minutes of August 9, 2021, 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 Johnson, seconded by Stelmach, to approve the Accounts Payable. The motion carried 7-0.

7. OLD BUSINESS – None.

8. NEW BUSINESS

A. DISCUSS SMALL BUSINESS SATURDAY EVENT

Grams stated as part of the American Rescue Plan (ARP) funding, the City Council has set aside an undetermined amount to fund an Economic Development Authority sponsored Small Business Saturday event to be held in Osseo on Saturday, November 27. The overall budget for the event is fluid and is based on what the final plan will be from the EDA members. It was

noted staff recently sent an email to the EDA members to seek recommendations or ideas for a Small Business Saturday event.

Grams explained one idea staff received came from EDA Commissioner Harold Johnson. He suggested that the EDA send out coupons to each residential property in the City that would only be redeemable on November 27 and only for a business that is in Osseo. Residents would go to an Osseo business to redeem the coupon for their goods or services and the businesses would then turn the coupons into the City to be reimbursed. The amount of the coupon would need to be determined and possibly based on the total number of residential properties in the City. A few issues with this plan are that we likely would not be able to reach each individual residential property, especially those in larger multi-family unit buildings, unless we know the number of units (and unit numbers) to direct mail them or ask apartment managers to distribute among their units.

Grams commented another issue is that perhaps not every business would be willing to participate. We would likely need to ask businesses if they would like to participate, knowing they would be giving out goods and services with the idea of being reimbursed by the City. This would have to be accomplished well in advance of the event date, and we would then have to list the participating businesses. The participating businesses would be required to be open to foot traffic on that date. Another idea is to create a passport type document that requires those who wish to attend to visit each participating business to secure a stamp (provided by the EDA). Those who secure stamps for each participating business would be entered into a drawing for prizes purchased by the EDA from those local businesses. We could hold several drawings so more winners would be selected. Prizes could include goods or services from Osseo businesses that have been pre-purchased or pre-paid for by the EDA. Winners would then redeem the prizes at those businesses.

Other general ideas for Small Business Saturday included the following:

- Crosswalk helpers to assist people crossing Central Avenue
- Closing a segment of Central Avenue for fire pits and chairs
- Live music
- Food trucks
- Discount or free advertising on the Gateway Sign for participating businesses
- Social media posts promoting Small Business Saturday
- Face painters
- Hot chocolate or coffee
- Kids area at City Hall

Grams stated with the date quickly approaching, the EDA should strongly consider these ideas and settle on a final plan at Monday night's meeting. This would allow staff the time necessary to start developing the event to ensure it is successful.

Johnson expanded on his ideas noting he spoke with Minute Man Press regarding the printing of \$25 certificates or coupons. He suggested these certificates be sent to all housing units in Osseo. He supported these coupons being allowed to be redeemed throughout the month of November and not just on November 27. He indicated this would create a flow of traffic downtown throughout the entire month. He noted he spoke with the bank, and they were not willing to assist with covering the \$25 coupons. He stated another option would be for each small business in the community to hold onto the coupons that are received to receive a

reimbursement from the City in December. He proposed sending out the coupons with the October utility bills.

Aho stated this could pose a problem for her small business depending on the number of coupons she redeems. She suggested the value of the coupon be reduced to \$5 or \$10. She explained the City would have to be in communication with all of the businesses in order to see which would want to be involved in this program.

Stelmach thanked Commissioner Johnson for his idea. He agreed it may be difficult to coordinate this type of program in several weeks with over 200+ businesses within the community.

Kathy Stelmach, 417 4th Avenue NE, stated the coupon idea is great, but noted the whole thing about Small Business Saturday was to create urgency. She discussed how important Black Friday, Small Business Saturday, and Cyber Monday were for shoppers. She feared that if shoppers were given an entire month, they would miss out on Small Business Saturday as it was intended to be. She commented her business would be able to front the money but noted there are other businesses that may struggle with this. She supported the City sending a mailer to residents, or placing an ad in Shop Maple Grove.

Aho questioned if the EDA should consider sponsoring a free gift for each purchase made on Small Business Saturday noting this would then allow each business to provide a free gift to patrons that make a purchase.

Kerstin Schulz, 316 4th Street NE, commented she supported this idea.

Poppe stated a Christmas ornament could be created as the free gift. Grams explained another idea would be a reusable shopping bag.

Vickerman explained with a limited number of dollars being spent on this event, she supported the funding not being spent on paper products and mailings. She supported the extra incentive going into a free gift.

Stelmach agreed this may be a better way to ensure all businesses had an opportunity to participate without placing undue stress on them. He commented he also supported a passport type shopping event with a grand prize winner. He suggested the City promote this event in a manner that encourages residents to choose Osseo.

Ms. Stelmach recommended food trucks be brought in for Small Business Saturday to draw more people to the community.

Grams reported staff has a growing list of food truck vendors and staff could contact them to see who may be interested in attending this event.

Ms. Stelmach suggested the City also consider providing music for the event.

Stelmach commented the Lions also have a liquor license that could be tapped into for the event.

Vickerman stated she would like to keep the event accessible and did not support the City closing off the streets.

Aho believed it would be fun to close down one block as well in order to provide face painting, firepits, carolers, music, activities for children at the Community Center, etc. She supported the idea of the City bringing in food trucks.

Ms. Schulz stated the more activities that are planned the more people will be drawn to the event.

Ms. Stelmach recommended that the event be advertised for several weeks to allow people to plan for Small Business Saturday.

Grams asked if the EDA supported the passport idea.

Aho stated she liked this idea.

Grams indicated staff would have to reach out to all businesses to see who wanted to participate and would then provide these businesses with a stamp.

Burke recommended a map be created for the businesses that are participating in the passport.

Ms. Stelmach suggested a certificate or coupon be included in the Grand Prize noting this would be easier for the City to manage. It was suggested a list of the participating businesses be listed on the back of the coupon.

Further discussion ensued regarding how the Grand Prizes would be created and how the shopping passports would work.

Aho suggested each business participating in Small Business Saturday donate towards the Grand Prizes with a value of at least \$20. She recommended each business that donates to the basket be allowed to have an ad on the Gateway Sign. The EDA supported this recommendation.

Grams indicated he could reach out to the businesses in Osseo via email in order to create a list of businesses that wanted to participate.

Ms. Schulz noted Small Business Saturday was one of her busiest days of the year and she appreciated how people in the community supported her business.

Ms. Stelmach commented on the benefit of advertising to businesses and the general public early regarding this event.

The EDA supported closing Central Ave from 2nd Street to 3rd Street for the Small Business Saturday event with food trucks, chairs, heaters, and fire pits in this area.

Ms. Schulz questioned how the City would advertise this event. Grams stated Small Business Saturday would be advertised on the gateway sign, social media, CCX advertisement with passports, and map available at local businesses that are participating. Staff would reach out to local businesses via email to see what businesses were interested in participating.

Johnson reported the purpose of the ARP funds was to get money into the community. He feared that the proposed plans would not get enough money into the community. Grams commented further on how ARP funds could be used within the community. He noted he could speak with Minnesota Cities to ensure the City was proposing to use the funds in a proper manner.

Stelmach anticipated these funds could be used to bring bands or stand-up heaters for the event.

Murdock suggested free babysitting be provided at the Community Center for parents.

Stelmach recommended the City work with local youth groups to assist with providing babysitting.

Vickerman suggested yard games be placed on the block that is closed to keep parents and children engaged.

Ms. Schulz recommended a local girl scout troop be asked to provide gift wrapping for tips.

Johnson suggested the Parnassus and Osseo NHS members be contacted to volunteer at this event.

Grams commented he would work with staff members to flesh out the ideas and make calls on insurance issues, plus he would get back to several members to keep this event moving forward.

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

Stelmach thanked all the members of the community that participated in Lions Roar.

10. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Vickerman, seconded by Aho, to adjourn at 6:58 p.m. The motion carried 7-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Heidi Guenther
Minute Maker Secretarial