OSSEO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
October 10, 2023

1.   ROLL CALL

Vice President Schulz called the regular meeting of the Osseo Economic Development Authority to order at 6:03 p.m., Tuesday, October 10, 2023.

Members present: Teresa Aho, Deanna Burke, Ashlee Mueller, and Mark Schulz.

Members absent: Mark Cook, Kenny Nelson, and Duane Poppe.

Staff present: Executive Director Riley Grams, Community Management Coordinator Jessica Rieland and City Attorney Joseph Sathe.

Others present.

2.   APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Mueller, seconded by Aho, to approve the Agenda as presented. The motion carried 4-0.

3.   APPROVAL OF MINUTES – AUGUST 14, 2023

A motion was made by Mueller, seconded by Aho, to approve the minutes of August 14, 2023, as presented. The motion carried 4-0.

4.   MATTERS FROM THE FLOOR – None

5.   PUBLIC HEARINGS – None

6.   ACCOUNTS PAYABLE

Grams presented the EDA Accounts Payable listing.

A motion was made by Mueller, seconded by Aho, to approve the Accounts Payable. The motion carried 4-0.

7.   OLD BUSINESS – None

8.   NEW BUSINESS

        A.   REVIEW EDA BUSINESS SURVEY RESULTS

Rieland stated the survey was mailed to approximately 200 businesses and was advertised in the city newsletter and on Facebook. To date, we have received 14 responses, which makes the response rate 7%. Which is significantly lower than the 20% response rate of the last survey. Staff commented further on the results from the business survey and asked for comments or questions from the EDA.

Mueller questioned if the survey delivery needs to change, or if there were businesses that just did not want to participate in the survey. Grams reported the survey was mailed to business owners and a link was provided to allow respondents to complete the survey online.

Aho noted the last time the EDA completed a business survey was in January of 2020, right before COVID.

Mueller stated she wanted to know more about why there was such a big gap and which businesses were not responding.

Schulz commented he did not respond to the survey because there was nothing the EDA could do for him. He anticipated this may be the way other business owners felt in Osseo. He discussed how he worked to prop up his own business in the community. He commented on the grant the City received from the County and stated he was uncertain of how many businesses took advantage of the video spots. He anticipated there were some visibility and technological issues that the EDA could work to address with local businesses. He stated he was more than happy to accept inquiries regarding the CCX Media options that were available to local business owners.

Aho asked if the EDA had grants available for signs. Rieland commented the Council could waive the fee for usage of the gateway sign. She indicated sign permits were required for any signs associated with a business. Grams reported EDA funds could be used to assist businesses with signage or the EDA could use the gateway sign to assist with advertising local businesses.

Schulz suggested the City work with businesses on how to create Google awareness. He commented on how he works to be an ambassador for the City and to promote other local businesses.

Aho agreed it was important to advocate for other local businesses.

Mueller supported the EDA hosting a business breakfast or luncheon in order to draw the business community together. She recommended this be done on a quarterly basis going forward. She asked what the next steps would be for pursuing businesses lunches or a breakfast event. Grams explained he could work with Jessica on this and would report back to the EDA at a future meeting.

Schulz summarized the four main topics the EDA had discussed which included working with businesses on Google awareness, to look into offering a way to gather information to improve communication with business owners, investigate signage options for local business owners, and potentially hosting quarterly business luncheons.

B.   DISCUSS 2024 EDA BUDGET

Grams explained each year, the EDA sets their own fiscal budget for the following year. The budget is usually approved during the last meeting of the year in December. Included in the packet was a proposed EDA budget for next year. Grams stated that the revenue side of the budget is mostly comprised of interest off of EDA held investments. On the expenditure side, we have expenses related to operating EDA meetings (Board compensation, supplies, legal services, minutes, etc.) as well as the I-94 West Chamber of Commerce membership, expenses related to any Board member training/travel, TIF management costs for Ehlers, and the transfer of funds to the City general fund for Staff time reimbursement. As a reminder, the change from 12 meetings per year to 6 meetings per year will substantially save on expenses. The EDA should discuss any potential changes to the 2024 budget and direct Staff accordingly. Staff will make any EDA recommended changes and update the budget worksheet as directed. The updated EDA budget will come back to the EDA for final approval at the December 11 EDA meeting. Staff further reviewed the 2024 budget and asked for feedback from the EDA.

Schulz recommended the EDA look at how to acquire properties that were distressed in order to spur or encourage redevelopment.

Mueller asked what the EDA has done to bring in additional revenues. Grams stated there were few options to bring in revenues except through the EDA Levy. He reported it was his understanding the EDA received seed money from the City initially.

Mueller questioned if the EDA members could attend the 94 West Chamber of Commerce events. Grams reported this was the case and noted the EDA members should be receiving the Chambers emails.

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

Aho reported Small Business Saturday would be held on Saturday, November 25 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

10.   ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Mueller, seconded by Aho, to adjourn at 6:52 p.m. The motion carried 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Heidi Guenther
Minute Maker Secretarial