

**INVER GROVE HEIGHTS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY REGULAR MEETING  
MONDAY, AUGUST 12, 2019 – 8150 BARBARA AVENUE**

**1 & 2 CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL** The Economic Development Authority (EDA) of Inver Grove Heights met on Monday, August 12, 2019, in the City Hall Council Chambers. President Piekarski-Krech called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. Present were Economic Development Authority Members Bartholomew, Dietrich, Perry, and Tourville; Executive Director Rand, City Attorney Kuntz, City Administrator Lynch, and Secretary Fox.

**3. CONSENT AGENDA**

**A & B. Minutes and Claims**

**Motion by Tourville, second by Dietrich, to approve the minutes from the May 13, 2019 Regular Economic Development Authority Meeting and disbursements from May 14, 2019 to August 12, 2019.**

**Ayes: 5**

**Nays: 0      Motion carried**

**4. REGULAR AGENDA**

**A. Preliminary Work Plan Update Discussion**

Executive Director Rand advised that in determining what economic development projects her team should focus on, she reviewed past work plans and received input from individual EDA members, the City's economic development partners, and the City Administrator. With additional input from the EDA she will bring back a work plan hopefully before the end of the year regarding opportunities to work toward. It is her understanding that the EDA would like her to continue to advance the Inver Pointe Business Park, Argenta Hills/McGough high-density housing project, and filling the vacant retail buildings in the Argenta Hills development area. She noted a resurgence of commercial activity in Arbor Pointe and stated that she is open to a future conversation regarding the retail mix in the City and marketing towards certain types of businesses and services that IGH is lacking. Staff is currently working on workforce housing projects at the South Grove site and the 6300 block of Concord Boulevard. Her understanding is that the EDA would also like her to market the City-owned properties at 70<sup>th</sup>/Babcock and 60<sup>th</sup>/Babcock. The interim president of Inver Hills Community College has agreed to accompany Director Rand on business retention visits to the City's ten largest employers. With business growth being so connected to the issue of workforce development, their joint visits should be helpful as the community college offers new programs, scholarships, continuing education, etc. The need for a variety of housing is also important as employers are having difficulty finding housing for employees they are recruiting. For the upcoming year she is hearing that the EDA would like her to continue business retention visits, step up the marketing of available properties in an organized way, and to try to recruit a large office or corporate headquarters for properties along the City's major transportation corridors. She feels it is important to not only continue the redevelopment opportunities along Concord Boulevard, but also to show some progress in the next year. In addition to a Dakota County CDA housing opportunity, she would like to see a market rate high-end apartment development. With the help of the right developer, and at least one marina owner, hopefully they can orientate the community more towards the riverfront. This amenity is currently being underutilized and she would like potential visitors to have a more direct access to the waterfront. If they had a mixed-use multi-tenant development along Concord it is possible that the developer would pick up some of the costs of additional public assets in exchange for some support. The goal is for a facelift on the waterfront and a sense of placemaking. Ms. Rand asked for input on the EDA's workplan.

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Boardmember Bartholomew encouraged staff to continue to consider a mix of retail and housing for the Concord area and asked why the proforma for McGough at the Argenta Hills area was lagging.

Ms. Rand replied she is hearing from her contact at McGough that they are still interested, but just have a lot on their plate right now. She will continue trying to work with McGough and let them know it is a priority project. They are aware they are going to have to start getting very serious about their proforma if they want spring construction.

President Piekarski Krech looked forward to seeing some redevelopment progress along Concord as it had been in the works for quite some time.

### **B. Update on Progress Plus Development Foundation**

Jennifer Gale, Progress Plus, summarized last quarter's activities. She highlighted a few items, including continued communications with United Properties and the abutting neighborhood in hopes of moving the proposed development forward, reaching out to Fine and Associates regarding the importance of having a development plan, arranging a meeting between Director Rand and the Minnesota Vikings, partnering with the Dakota Scott Workforce Center to plan the business and education partnership tour, met with the CDA to discuss potential projects, worked with Cerron Properties to assist in their marketing efforts for Salem Square, met with the Town Lake Retail Center tenants to assist them in filling the two vacancies, working with A Perfect Ash throughout the approval process and to help promote their business, and met with Protech about doing more business in IGH.

Ms. Gale advised that Progress Plus is still working on a 'Starting A Business' packet and will submit the completed document to Director Rand for her review. They are also working on a marketing campaign that highlights the positive aspects of development. Each month they will bring attention to a businessperson in the community, discuss why they moved into the community, show before and after photos, and remind people that development is beneficial for taxes, city services, other local businesses, and the school district. Ms. Gale discussed the various retention visits made over the summer.

President Piekarski Krech asked what the general feeling was on the retention visits.

Ms. Gale replied that she rarely hears complaints. The biggest challenge seems to be lack of workforce; therefore, Progress Plus is trying to strengthen their relationship with DCTC and Inver Hills to know what is being offered and make them aware of the community needs. Some companies have challenges navigating the start-up and permitting process, but once they are up and running things typically go well. They have received positive feedback regarding building inspectors.

President Piekarski Krech asked if business expansion was sometimes dependent on finding qualified employees.

Ms. Gale replied in the affirmative, stating much of the shortage is in unskilled jobs. They are partnering with the school district to relay to children, starting at the junior high level, the type of opportunities that will be available when they graduate. They are also encouraging employers not to require a four-year degree if one is not necessary.

### **C. Executive Director's Report**

Executive Director Rand updated the EDA on a few specific projects that she and her team have been working on, including new housing subdivisions such as Amberwood and Windsor Ridge, with construction possibly starting this fall or next spring. 'Pinkville' has also resurfaced and staff has started conversations

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with a developer interested in an estate lot housing development which would require the acquisition of additional property. Director Rand noted that there has been some interest by AmericInn to purchase a small portion of the City property along Highway 52 for their park-and-ride business, but they were not able to commit to any hotel expansion at this time or a reasonable acquisition cost. This is prime real estate with great visibility, and she envisions something large and grand along that transportation corridor such as a high visibility office with distribution center or corporate headquarters.

President Piekarski Krech asked Director Rand if she was working with the State to acquire the parcels in that area that are owned by MNDOT.

Executive Director Rand replied that she will look into that, but for now the City made the decision to pass on the sale of property for the park-and-ride as this is a high-profile property with great opportunities in terms of developing a tax base.

Boardmember Tourville advised that MNDOT is in the process of reevaluating all excess property they own that is five acres or larger to determine whether they should sell it or retain it.

President Piekarski Krech encouraged Director Rand to keep the conversation going with MNDOT and stated perhaps our representatives should get involved as well.

Executive Director Rand asked boardmembers to encourage local businesses to contact her if they are considering expansion and would like input on potential sites. She is currently working with her team to find additional space for a local meat market and car dealership.

**5. NEXT MEETING:** November 12, 2019.

**6. ADJOURNMENT:** Motion by Perry, second by Dietrich, to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned by unanimous vote at 6:09 p.m.