



Watertown Economic Development Authority

Ken Grotbo
Cory Mitteness
Roxanne Wilmes
Mike Walters
Fred McGuire

3/30/2023 - Minutes

1. Roll Call

EDA Chair Ken Grotbo called the Watertown Economic Development Authority meeting to order at 8:30 am on March 30, 2023 in the Council Chambers of City Hall.

EDA Members Present: Ken Grotbo, Cory Mitteness, Roxanne Wilmes, Fred McGuire, and Mike Walters.

EDA Members Absent: None

Staff Present: City Administrator, Jake Foster and Maggie Reisdorf, Administrative Services Director.

Other Present: Chuck Swanson, Carver County CDA.

2. Adopt Agenda

MITTENESS MOVED, WILMES SECONDED A MOTION TO ADOPT THE AGENDA AS PRESENTED.
MOTION PASSED 5-0.

3. New Business

3.A. 3A - February 9, 2023 - Minutes

McGUIRE MOVED, WILMES SECONDED A MOTION TO ADOPT THE FEBRUARY 9, 2023 EDA MINUTES AS PRESENTED. MOTION PASSED 5-0.

3.B. 3B - BFI Reimbursement Request

Foster introduced this item to the EDA. He explained that in the spring of 2021, Tricia Rupp, the owner of Haven & Home Décor, applied for the Building Façade Improvement (BFI) grant and Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) Loan. He informed that the applications were submitted during a staffing transition period and that the applications were never fully processed and did not move forward. Foster stated that Rupp

is in the process of moving Haven & Home Décor to a new location and is therefore not longer interested in moving forward with the RLF loan at this time.

Foster explained however that Rupp is still seeking support through the BFI grant program that supports building façade improvements to enhance the aesthetics and curb appeal of businesses within the community. Foster provided eligible project examples including signage, windows, siding improvements, doors, etc. He further explained that eligible project improvements could qualify for grants funds on a 2:1 match.

Foster informed that Rupp has submitted copies of receipts for some of the work done related to façade improvements at their current building location. Foster explained that the total eligible work that was completed was in the amount of \$3,202.25 and therefore explained with the 2:1 match, that the project could be reimbursed up to \$1,601.13.

Foster explained that along with the grant reimbursement, Rupp requested a reimbursement of the \$200 RFL loan grant application fee that was never processed and never moved forward.

Foster recommended to the EDA a total reimbursement to Rupp of \$1,801.13.

WILMES MOVED TO APPROVE RESOLUTION #2023-01EDA APPROVING THE BFI GRANT FUND DISBURSEMENT AND APPLICATION FEE REIMBURSEMENT. WALTERS SECONDED. MOTION PASSED 5-0.

3.C. 3C - 2023 Developers Day Discussion

Foster introduced this item to the EDA. He explained that on an annual basis, the City generally hosts a "Developer's Day" event which invites both residential and commercial developers to the City of Watertown to have a Q&A session about developing within the City of Watertown.

Foster informed that the City has been receiving some interest recently for development opportunities within the industrial park, as well as residential development projects.

Foster asked the EDA to discuss ideas and goals for the 2023 Developer's Day event. He provided one idea of pivoting the event's focus to Watertown as a destination for tourists in 2023. He stated that the day could showcase the City's retail, restaurants, and other recreation opportunities.

Walers explained that the City of Watertown does have an awesome park and recreation system that needs to be promoted more.

Wilmes asked what happened to a past initiative called "Carver County Tourism".

Swanson informed that Carver County determined that the website that was created for the Carver County Tourism initiative was not effective and therefore it is being rebranded into another initiative called "Choose Carver County". He explained that a new and better website is being created and that it will promote ongoing information related to tourism, events, marketing, etc. for the communities within Carver County. He expected the website to be complete in August 2023.

Grotbo stated that he felt that websites are very improvement nowadays and that it would be very beneficial to use the website when it becomes available.

Wilmes recommended bringing internal boards and commissions, the chamber of commerce, the County Commissioners, and other groups together to discuss additional promotional ideas for the County.

Grotbo agreed that these groups could come together to discuss and develop a regional marketing strategy.

Foster thanked the EDA for their input and good discussion on how to move forward with the 2023 Developer's Day event.

4. Updates

Swanson asked the EDA about their Small Cities Grant program; specifically, their Rehabilitation Loan Program that allows residential property owners to take out loans to make property improvements.

He informed that in the past, the City dedicated \$50,000 to the program and that since then, 5 loans had been issued and remain active in repayment.

Swanson stated that the program remains active, but that there has been little to no marketing on the program for quite some time. He informed that \$18,000 remains in the program fund and asked how the EDA wanted to move forward with the use of those funds. He recommended that the program could be closed for any future applications and the funds could be distributed back to the EDA for a different program. Another recommendation that Swanson had was to change the parameters of the program to assist homeowners in a different way; like bathroom remodels or ramp construction.

The EDA discussed ending any further loans through the current program, having the funds given back to the EDA, and discuss a new program in the future. The EDA also discussed having the Carver County CDA remain the administrator of the program until the loans were paid back in full.

WALTERS MOVED TO APPROVE ENDING THE LOAN PROGRAM, ACCEPTING THE REMAINING \$18,000 BACK TO THE EDA, AND HAVING THE CARVER COUNTY CDA CONTINUE TO ADMINISTER THE PROGRAM UNTIL ALL LOAN FUNDS ARE PAID BACK IN FULL PER THE CONTRACT. MITTENESS SECONDED. MOTION PASSED 5-0.

5. Adjourn

MITTENESS MOVED, McGUIRE SECONDED A MOTION TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 9:33 AM. MOTION PASSED 5-0.

309 Lewis Avenue South; P.O. Box 279, Watertown, MN 55388