

# Economic Development Committee

## Minutes

### 4/9/01

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#### Present

G. Daley, Chair  
R. Santangelo  
S. Gionfriddo  
J. Robinson  
S. Shapiro  
Public: K. Gronbach; R. Hill

#### Absent

#### Also Present

Warner, Director PCD  
Kearney, PCD

- A Call to Order:** Daley called the meeting to order at 7:04PM.
- B Public Session:** no public comments
- C Minutes:** Gionfriddo made a motion to approve the 2/13/01 meeting minutes; Santangelo seconded the motion, the committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes.
- D Communications:** none
- E Old Business**
- 1) **North End Industrial Area**
    - a) **Remington Rand:** Warner discussed budget status and forecast for potential tenant build out of prospective tenant in a 2-month time frame. Budget may be short and a request for funds from the EDF would be only made if lead paint abatement comes in high leaving no funds for sewer connection. Daley questioned potholes and messy appearance of property. Warner stated the prospective tenant's higher-level management did not like what they say at the end of the building, but cleanup is underway. Shapiro asked for the term of the lease, Warner responded 10 years. Warner stated the VP likes the property, company sales of \$45 million; rent is ½ of current costs. Gionfriddo asked what staff wanted from EDC, Warner stated this is just a project update.
    - b) **Package Store**
  - 2) **Industrial Park Area and Vicinity:** Warner reported all projects are moving forward.
  - 3) **Brownfields-Riverfront Properties:** Warner reported development brochure is in final draft stages and will be ready for September Brownfield's conference.
  - 4) **Armory**

- 5) **Sumner Brook Realty:** Warner stated Fonda has closed on the property and is beginning demolition. Gionfriddo questioned the potential state building tax-exempt building on the property as the superior court house.
- 6) **JOBS Loan Program Guidelines**
- 7) **Old Police Station, 66 Church ST**
- 8) **REINVEST Loan**
  - a) **AI Engineering**
- 9) **646-654 Main ST:** Warner stated project is moving forward.
- 10) **Economic Development Brochure:** Kearney requested the committee transfer funds allocated to line item Environmental Study/PD to line item Printing to pay for brochure costs. The committee approved the request.
- 11) **I-3 Development Plan:** Warner reported the moratorium ends 5/15. Discussion of environmental review.
- 12) **Community Economic Development Fund**

## **F New Business**

- 1) **Lot 23 Middle ST/Timber Ridge RD:** Warner described the city owned lot and the potential to fill and enhance the wetlands. These plans would be submitted to Wetlands Commission. Warner presented the Bascom & Magnotta proposal to prepare a concept plan for development of the parcel. Gionfriddo made a motion to accept the proposal, Shapiro seconded and the committee voted unanimously to approve the motion. Daley commented on CES expansion plans, stating the proposal is a fair price.
- 2) **City Website:** Gronbach demonstrated digital mini disc proposing the city use this as a promotional business card funded by sales to advertisers web links. Gionfriddo asked whom Gronbach would sell the product to, Gronbach replied that the projected labor shortage would give companies the ability to showcase their facilities and the city to prospective employees. Additional prospective advertisers like realtors, restaurants and attracting other industries. Gionfriddo asked what the cost would be. Gronbach said his original proposal to work on the city website had lit a fire under the city to renovate the site. Daley commented that Mario Saraceno had been working on the project for a long time. Gronbach stated the disc project could have any cost depending on the depth of the project. Shapiro questioned the life of the medium. Gronbach replied 5 years and could include coupons; premiums and changes are easy to make with multiple formats. Shapiro stated there are no city funds to pay for this project. Gronbach stated the sponsors would pay for the project costs. Discussion of medium gives TV quality v/s DSL. Selling space like TV advertising or direct mail. The case to make to advertisers is what is the worth of the expense to them. Robinson questioned how successful the medium is noting Gronbach brought this from the west coast. Gronbach stated this is brand new and is as

successful as the type of production put on the disc. Daley noted Encarta offers video clips for many years. Gronbach stated this is full screen motion. Gionfriddo asked how to get the ball rolling on this proposal. Gronbach stated he and Kearney would call prospective advertisers. Gronbach stated the project would not be a money maker but be just a break even. Santangelo asked what Gronbach needs from the city. Gronbach stated he asked for a good ahead to pursue the project. Gionfriddo suggested EDC discuss the proposal in light of it not being a money loser. Daley questioned whether Larry McHugh had been contacted to work with Chamber of Commerce businesses. Gronbach stated he is working with the 4 state universities to produce disc presentations. Universities find calling people yields low results but people will play these ala AOL. Shapiro questioned direct mail productivity. Daley stated this is cheaper than producing brochures. Gronbach stated using discs as business cards allows easy of handing out and you get an email address. Daley questioned if the average layman would understand the disc and its usage. Santangelo stated this would present the city as progressive and on the edge of technology and looking to the future. Gionfriddo stated this is a tool. Daley stated that a no cost product with a website link coupled with the modular design of the new economic development brochure with links present the city as dynamic and updated. Gionfriddo stated the web page is only as good as the hits made. Daley questioned the cost. Gronbach stated it could run from \$200 to \$1.5 million. Gronbach recommends shooting new footage of the city. Gronbach stated 50 advertisers paying 1,000 each would cover the \$50,000 production costs. Gionfriddo asked how EDC could help support the project. Daley recommended the Chamber and Wesleyan participate in the project. Gionfriddo questioned whether the Chamber would want to be involved in soliciting its members, since the Chamber has other projects to finance. Robinson asked how computer literate people are relative to using this technology. Warner mentioned the mail-a-map advertising. Daley suggested Gronbach and Kearney work together to bring a proposal back to EDC. Gronbach stated the cost to advertisers be presented as a menu of options. Gionfriddo recommended Gronbach and Kearney return with a proposal. Shapiro stated the city has no funds for this project. Daley state the proposal should be of no cost to the city and be paid for by the sponsors. This should be presented to EDC along with the method advertisers would be approached. Shapiro stated he understands media, lower distribution costs and the interest in using advertising to reach computer user markets but questioned whether this would be considered any more effective than direct mail or whether direct mail is or is not still effective. Gionfriddo stated DSL would be the driver in 5 years. Hill stated DiScala would be a good advertising prospect. Shapiro noted labor shortage and demographic trough statistics stating the hotel would be a good advertising prospect. The committee referred the project back to Gronbach and Kearney for proposal.

- 3) **Realtor/Developer Reception:** Information was mailed to the committee.

## **G Status Reports**

- 1) **Economic Development Specialist's Report**
- 2) **REINVEST Loan Program, monthly summary report**

3) **JOBS Loan Program, monthly summary report:**

4) **INFORM, monthly report**

**H Other:**

**I Adjournment:** There being no further business, the committee adjourned at 8:13 PM.