

**Community Development Authority
of the City of Onalaska**

Monday, January 12, 2015

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1 The meeting of the Community Development Authority of the City of Onalaska was called to
2 order at 4:12 p.m. on Monday, January 12, 2015. It was noted that the meeting had been
3 announced and a notice posted at City Hall.

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5 Roll call was taken with the following members present: John Lyche, Mike Gargaro

6
7 Also Present: Land Use and Development Director Brea Grace, Ald. Harvey Bertrand, Mayor
8 Joe Chilsen

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10 Excused Absences: Ald. Jim Olson, Ald. Jim Bialecki, Barry Blomquist, Ann Brandau, Mark
11 Hansen

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13 **Item 2 – Approval of minutes from the previous meeting:**

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15 The minutes from the December 11, 2014 meeting could not be approved as there was no
16 quorum present.

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18 **Item 3 – Public Input (limited to 3 minutes/individual)**

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20 Mike called for anyone wishing to provide public input and closed that portion of the meeting.

21
22 **Consideration and possible action on the following items:**

23
24 **Item 4 – Update on the Badger-Coulee Transmission Line**

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26 Brea reported that the Public Service Commission had held its technical hearings from January 6
27 through January 9. Brea also reported that a majority of the testimony was in opposition to the
28 southern route, adding that with the exception of Town of Holland residents few interveners had
29 spoken in opposition to the northern route. Brea said both she and City Engineer Jarrod Holter
30 had submitted direct testimony on behalf of the City of Onalaska prior to Thanksgiving. This
31 testimony was countered by the American Transmission Company. Brea said she had provided
32 testimony regarding airport overlay zoning because ATC stated it does not intend to comply with
33 airport overlay zoning because statutorily it does not have to do so. Brea said Public Service
34 Commission staff told ATC it still must meet land use plans. Brea said she provided testimony
35 stating that even though Federal Aviation Administration requirements for the current airspace
36 are being met, the local zoning airport overlay height limitations protect future airspace. Brea
37 said La Crosse Regional Airport Manager Clinton Torp and City of La Crosse Mayor Tim Kabat
38 wrote letters that she had submitted to the PSC. Brea said Clinton stated that they would pursue
39 legal action if ATC chooses not to comply with the height limitations. Brea said that 15 minutes
40 prior to the start of the technical hearings on January 6 ATC submitted several rebuttal
41 testimonies, one of which was in response to the airport overlay zoning. ATC stated it would

Reviewed 1/15/15

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42 work with the municipality if the southern route is ultimately chosen. Brea said the tone of the
43 other testimonies was very similar, but also noted that testimonies were identifying specific line
44 locations and scenarios if the northern route is chosen. Brea said both she and Amanda
45 Halderson-Jackson, an attorney for O’Flaherty, Heim, Egan & Birnbaum, came away with the
46 impression the northern route is being seen as the more viable solution. Brea noted there has
47 been a petition circulated to reopen the CapX2020 project and move some of the poles so that the
48 Badger-Coulee Line may be run on the same support poles through Holmen. Brea said PSC staff
49 testified on January 9 that double circuiting would be satisfactory for a limited length. Brea
50 noted a significant amount of time was also devoted to focusing on the environmental impacts.

51

52 John asked Brea to define double circuiting.

53

54 Brea explained double circuiting involves threading two high-voltage transmission lines on one
55 set of poles. Brea said one proposal was to run the CapX2020 project to the Briggs Road
56 substation on the west side of United States Highway 53, while the Badger-Coulee Line would
57 run on the east side of USH 53 on another set of poles. Brea said the Wisconsin Department of
58 Transportation objected to this proposal because it would prevent future highway expansion.

59

60 John asked Brea what the disadvantage of double circuiting would be.

61

62 Brea said there had been discussions regarding the practice of double circuiting. Brea also noted
63 that Town of Holland’s attorney made it clear that the town would only support double circuiting
64 for one mile.

65

66 Brea said, “If the line is going in, our gut feeling is that it might be going north.” Brea also said
67 SOUL/CETF and others, testified they do not believe the Badger-Coulee Line is needed because
68 peak demand for current electrical loads has been decreasing, and also because prices for
69 alternative energy such as solar energy are decreasing.

70

71 Brea said briefs following the technical hearing are due January 30, and the responses to those
72 briefs from the interveners are due February 13. Brea also noted the target date for a final
73 decision is April.

74

75 Ald. Bertrand if cost would be the primary reason that the southern route is chosen.

76

77 Brea agreed but also noted that there is no transmission line running through the City of La
78 Crosse and the City of Onalaska, while there are such lines running through several other
79 municipalities.

80

81 John said there is an argument in favor of a transmission line; specifically, industrial
82 development.

83

84 Brea noted that the legal fees for the city's defense against the Badger-Coulee Line are coming
85 from the CDA's 2014 budget. Brea reported that the city's legal fees for November and
86 December 2014 total approximately \$7,500. Brea noted that the Common Council had set a
87 budget for the project and said the expenses are staying within budget. Brea also noted that
88 January and subsequent expenses in 2015 would be charged to the Special Projects Fund.

89

90 **Item 5 – Consideration of funding contribution to La Crosse County Micro Lending Fund**

91

92 Brea said La Crosse County is requesting \$26,500 to establish a fund and set up a revolving loan
93 fund to benefit businesses within the contributing municipalities. Brea said she will discuss this
94 further when the CDA has a quorum. Brea added it is her understanding that the \$26,500 would
95 be a one-time contribution.

96

97 **Item 6 – Update and discussion on the “Building the Great River Landing” Project**

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99 Brea noted the final report will be presented to the Great River Landing/Waterfront Committee
100 on Thursday afternoon. Brea referred to a handout distributed to those present and pointed out a
101 diagram that includes aspects of Phase One, which includes a trailhead, public lawn space and a
102 handicap-accessible path to Irvin Street. Brea said she cannot provide the CDA with an exact
103 cost of Phase One until she communicates with Short Elliott Hendrickson, and this information
104 will be shared with the Committee on Thursday.

105

106 Ald. Bertrand inquired about funding Phase One of the project, which has been estimated at
107 approximately \$2 million.

108

109 Mike suggested holding events and said the project could create opportunities for entrepreneurs.
110 This might lead to the construction of lodging facilities, which in turn would create room tax.

111

112 John predicted there will be a “public-private” partnership for the project that will include
113 fundraising and gifts.

114

115 Mayor Chilsen noted there is approximately \$1.3 million in a fund for Phase One.

116

117 Ald. Bertrand asked if it would be fair to say the project will not create a tax burden.

118

119 Mayor Chilsen said he had spoken with a citizen, whom he told there have been no funds
120 encumbered by City of Onalaska taxpayers, and there are no such plans for this to happen at the
121 present time. Mayor Chilsen reiterated the city has \$1.3 million in a fund and said the project
122 could be a “pay as you go” project. Mayor Chilsen referred to the estimated cost of the complete
123 project (\$15.3 million) and said, “We build what we can afford and we move on that way.”

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125 **Item 7 – Review and consideration of 2015 meeting schedule**

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127 Ald. Bertrand noted there is no quorum present and asked how the meeting schedule can be
128 structured to ensure that a quorum can be present.

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130 Mike noted this is the first meeting at which there has not been a quorum and praised Brea for
131 her efforts in establishing a meeting schedule.

132

133 **Item 8 – Closed Session:**

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135 The CDA did not convene in Closed Session as there was no quorum.

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137 **Adjournment**

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139 Mike adjourned the meeting at 4:40 p.m.

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141

142 Recorded by:

143

144 Kirk Bey