

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

Thursday, February 19, 2015

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1 The meeting of the Community Development Authority of the City of Onalaska was called to
2 order at 7:00 a.m. on Thursday, February 19, 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: Ald. Jim Olson, Barry Blomquist, John
6 Lyche, Mike Gargaro. Ann Brandau arrived with the meeting already in progress.

7

8 Also Present: Land Use and Development Director Brea Grace, Mayor Joe Chilsen, Ald. Harvey
9 Bertrand, LADCO representatives Mike Herro, Jim Hill and Heather Johnson

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11 Excused Absences: Ald. Jim Bialecki, Mark Hansen

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

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15 Motion by John, second by Barry, to approve the minutes from the December 11, 2014 meeting
16 as printed and on file in the City Clerk’s Office.

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18 On voice vote, motion carried.

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20 Motion by Mike, second by John, to approve the minutes from the January 12, 2015 meeting as
21 printed and on file in the City Clerk’s Office.

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23 On voice vote, motion carried.

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

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27 Mike called three times for anyone wishing to provide public input and closed that portion of the
28 meeting. Mike then asked that Item 5 be addressed first.

29

30 **Consideration and possible action on the following items:**

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32 **Item 5 – Update from LADCO (approximately 15 minutes)**

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34 Mike Herro thanked the CDA for allowing LADCO to provide periodic reports and said LADCO
35 is happy that the City of Onalaska is once again a member. Mike said LADCO hopes to do more
36 in the City of Onalaska, adding he believes this morning’s report will indicate this.

37

38 Jim also thanked the CDA for allowing LADCO to make its presentation this morning and
39 highlighted the following from the packet given to those in attendance:

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**Community Development Authority
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Thursday, February 19, 2015

2

- 42 • LADCO’s Business Retention and Expansion program has been expanded to the City of
43 Onalaska. Jim noted that LADCO had recently visited with two “very promising
44 industries” in the city. On Monday, LADCO, Mayor Chilsen and Planner/Zoning
45 Inspector Katie Meyer met with Charles Weber of Kaber Technologies, a firm that Jim
46 said “has strong growth plans.” Jim mentioned Erick Anderholm of Sergeant
47 Laboratories, who started his software development firm 15 years ago in the City of La
48 Crosse and has migrated to the City of Onalaska. Jim said Erick is preparing to take a
49 product to market and estimates that he might need to hire 40 to 50 new employees. Jim
50 said this is both a real estate growth need and a case of a firm providing good jobs with
51 good wages. Jim said LADCO and community leaders call on companies such as these
52 to see how they may be of assistance.
- 53 • LADCO’s next economic forum will be held Wednesday, April 15 at the Omni Center.
54 Jim said the topic will be a major legislative initiative being put forward by the League of
55 Municipalities. The presentation is called “Partnership for Prosperity,” and will address
56 the League of Municipalities’ initiative that seeks to replace the shared revenue program
57 with the Regional Economic Development Incentive (REDI). REDI is a new shared tax
58 formula that rewards regions – including all of the towns, counties, cities and villages
59 within a region – for overall job and sales growth. Jim said one of REDI’s philosophies
60 is enabling communities to work closer together.
- 61 • LADCO’s monthly newsletter highlights properties. Jim said any properties brought to
62 LADCO’s attention appear on LADCO’s website and appear in the newsletter. These
63 properties also are elevated to LocateInWisconsin.com.

64
65 In response to a question by Mike Gargaro, Jim said the LADCO’s newsletter is published
66 monthly.

67
68 Heather noted that the monthly newsletters may be downloaded off LADCO’s website.

69
70 Mike Herro noted that LADCO’s offices are currently temporarily located at the incubator center
71 on the City of La Crosse’s north side.

72
73 John asked how many businesses are currently housed at the incubator center and the average
74 duration of stay.

75
76 Jim said there are currently 17 businesses housed there, noting that seven or eight are
77 commercial kitchen tenants. Jim said the average duration of stay has been longer than desired
78 and that the desired goal is two years. Jim noted that the incubator center has a new conference
79 center and offices that may be utilized temporarily.

80
81
82

83 **Item 4 – Report from Land Use & Development Director**

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85 a. Building Permit & Development Update – 2014 – (approximately 5 minutes)

86

87 Brea noted that the document distributed to those in attendance is the end of the year report for
88 2014. Brea also noted that the number of permits has been above the five-year average, and
89 there also has been a significant increase in the amount of investment on building permit
90 applications. Brea said there has been a significant amount of investment in commercial real
91 estate, noting that there has been more new commercial construction. There were 13 new
92 commercial structures in 2014. By comparison, the number of new commercial structures in the
93 recent past has been between five and eight. Brea said there were 12 new commercial structures
94 in 2006, and 27 in 2007. Brea said there will be several more new commercial structures in the
95 city in 2015, noting there have been “a lot of inquiries.” Brea referred to two pages in the
96 handout that lists new commercial projects and their valuations.

97

98 **Item 6 – Update on the “Building the Great River Landing” Project (approximately 5**
99 **minutes)**

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101 Brea noted that those in attendance had received a copy of the 30-percent design report. Brea
102 also noted that the Common Council had adopted the final report at its February 10 meeting.
103 The Common Council also directed staff to put together a funding plan that will explore
104 possibilities for grant sources, private donations and existing city funding sources. Brea said the
105 emphasis has been on developing the block west and south of Main Street, and north of Irvin
106 Street. Brea noted the project ranges from approximately \$1.5 million to approximately \$3 to
107 \$3.5 million. Brea said the base project, at a minimum, will involve the construction of a
108 trailhead and a parking lot. Brea said the next step will be to create bid specifications and
109 construction documents. Brea said she would like to discuss the funding package with the CDA
110 when the group has more time to do so.

111

112 In response to a question by Mike Gargaro, Brea said the earliest construction could begin would
113 be late autumn as the project first must be designed and bid out. Brea added it might be more
114 advantageous to wait until spring 2016.

115

116 A question was asked as to whether there is a component to revamp the commercial buildings in
117 this area.

118

119 Brea said the project had been scoped out as a Waterfront Committee project that only looked at
120 the city-owned pieces. Brea said the project started as looking at the area west of the railroad
121 tracks, but eventually expanded to the block on the east side of the railroad tracks. Brea said this
122 project does not include the Braund Lumber site or any areas across the street (State Trunk
123 Highway 35).

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

Thursday, February 19, 2015

4

124
125 Mayor Chilsen said it is his vision that work begin on the west side of STH 35, but he added that
126 the east side of STH 35 must be a significant piece of the overall project.

127
128 Mayor Chilsen cautioned that while the American Transmission Company and Xcel Energy have
129 filed a brief with the Public Service Commission stating their preference to run the Badger-
130 Coulee Line along a northern route, this decision is not yet final.

131
132 John asked what role Mayo had played in the decision to ask that the line run to the north.

133
134 Mayor Chilsen said he believes Mayo's second letter had had a significant impact. Mayor
135 Chilsen also complimented the City of Onalaska's citizens for their efforts in asking that the line
136 run north, noting that more than 10 percent of the city's citizens had signed letters.

137
138 Brea noted that there are property owners and developers who will not do anything until the
139 PSC's decision has been rendered this spring. Brea said the PSC recently had issued a decision
140 matrix and that the city must help complete this matrix. Brea said there are approximately 25
141 issues listed on the decision matrix and each intervener must identify its position on each and
142 include citations in the transcript as to where the supporting facts are. Brea said the decision
143 matrix must be completed by February 27 and estimated that the PSC will review this over the
144 next two months.

145
146 **Item 7 – Review and discussion of 2015 Comprehensive Plan Update, Chapter 7 –**
147 **Economic Development (approximately 5 minutes)**

148
149 Brea noted that the city is updating its Comprehensive Plan. This is a 10-year update, and the
150 Comprehensive Plan has a 20-year horizon. Brea said the Long Range Planning Committee, the
151 steering committee for the project, had reviewed the Economic Development chapter and is
152 seeking the CDA's feedback. Brea asked the CDA to review this chapter and solicit feedback
153 prior to the March 16 meeting. Brea said it will be important to examine the TIF District
154 because it continues to lose value.

155
156 **Item 8 – Review and consideration of 2015 meeting schedule**

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158 Brea said she would like to reassess CDA members' schedules.

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160 Mike Gargaro suggested returning to meeting at 7 a.m. on Tuesdays.

161
162 Brea said she would adjust the schedule and bring back a revised one.

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**Community Development Authority
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Thursday, February 19, 2015

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165 **Item 9 – Closed Session:**

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167 To consider a motion to convene in Closed Session under Section 19.85(1)(e) of the Wisconsin
168 Statutes for the purpose of deliberating or negotiating the purchasing of public properties, the
169 investing of public funds or conducting other specified public business, whenever competitive or
170 bargaining reasons require a closed session:

171

- 172 • Discussion related to development and refinement of negotiating and development
173 strategies as well as review of development proposals for TIF 4 District.

174

175 If any action is required in Open Session, as the result of the Closed Session, the CDA Board
176 will reconvene in Open Session to take the necessary action and/or continue on with the printed
177 agenda.

178

179 Motion by Barry, second by Ann, to convene in Closed Session.

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181 On roll call vote: Ald. Jim Olson – aye, Barry Blomquist – aye, Ann Brandau – aye, John Lyche
182 – aye, Mike Gargaro – aye. In Closed Session at 7:35 a.m.

183

184 Motion by Ann, second by Barry, to adjourn at 8:17 a.m.

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186 On roll call vote: Ald. Jim Olson – aye, Barry Blomquist – aye, Ann Brandau – aye, John Lyche
187 – aye, Mike Gargaro – aye.

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189

190 Recorded by:

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192 Kirk Bey

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