

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

Monday, November 16, 2015

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1 John Lyche convened the meeting at 4:02 p.m. A quorum was not present, so Item 4 was
2 addressed first.

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4 **Item 4 – Update from La Crosse Area Development Corporation (LADCO)**

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6 Jim Hill shared the following as part of his update:

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- 8 • The Industry Appreciation Breakfast was held this past summer.
- 9 • An economic forum was held in October, and a spring economic forum will be held in
10 spring 2016 at the Omni Center.
- 11 • LADCO has played a role in the formation of the Upper Mississippi River Manufacturing
12 Alliance. This is an effort by manufacturers in western Wisconsin, southeastern
13 Minnesota and northeastern Iowa to coalesce and focus solely on workforce development
14 issues. Jim noted that manufacturing accounts for nearly 20 percent of the labor force in
15 this part of the world. Jim also noted that manufacturing accounts for 16 to 17 percent of
16 the workforce in the State of Wisconsin.
- 17 • LADCO’s annual meeting is scheduled for December 8. The keynote speaker will be
18 Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker.
- 19 • The La Crosse Area Economic Profile has been updated.
- 20 • Jim referred to the La Crosse Chamber of Commerce Business Expo, at which LADCO
21 shared information and images of important development initiatives in La Crosse County.
22 One of the highlighted initiatives was the Great River Landing Project.

23

24 John Lyche suggested that LADCO and its partners identify the characteristics that will allow
25 this area, which he described as an “employee desert,” to attract highly skilled workers.

26

27 Jim noted the Human Resources Director at Kaplan told him that finding desirable housing has
28 been an obstacle for potential employees.

29

30 The meeting of the Community Development Authority of the City of Onalaska was called to
31 order at 4:25 p.m. on Monday, November 16, 2015. It was noted that the meeting had been
32 announced and a notice posted at City Hall.

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34 **Item 1 – Call to Order and Roll Call**

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36 Roll call was taken with the following members present: Mike Gargaro, John Lyche, Ron
37 Johnson, Ann Brandau, Ald. Barry Blomquist

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39 Also Present: Mayor Joe Chilsen, Ald. Harvey Bertrand, Land Use and Development Director
40 Brea Grace, LADCO Executive Director Jim Hill, LADCO Representative Mike Herro

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42 Excused Absences: Ald. Jim Olson, Mark Hansen

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44 **Item 2 – Approval of minutes from the previous meeting**

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46 Motion by John, second by Ald. Blomquist, to approve the minutes from the previous meeting as
47 printed and on file in the City Clerk’s Office.

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49 On voice vote, motion carried.

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

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53 Mike called three times for anyone wishing to provide public input and closed that portion of the
54 meeting.

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

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58 **Item 5 – Update on 2016 CDA budget**

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60 Brea noted that CDA members had received a copy of the 2016 CDA budget in their packets.
61 This budget was approved, as presented, by the Common Council. It includes the subscriptions
62 and dues for LADCO and 7 Rivers Alliance, which total \$7,680.

63

64 Ald. Bertrand inquired about the City of Onalaska not being a LADCO member in the past.

65

66 Ann cited a “philosophical difference” for the city not being a LADCO member in the past.

67

68 Ald. Bertrand said he believes the membership is a good investment for the city.

69

70 Ald. Blomquist said he wants to see a return on this investment.

71

72 **Item 6 – Review revisions and discussion on 2015 Comprehensive Plan: Chapter 7 –**
73 **Economic Development**

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75 Brea noted the public hearing for the 2015 Comprehensive Plan is scheduled for the Tuesday,
76 December 15 Plan Commission meeting and said this is the final opportunity for revisions. Brea
77 referred to Section 7.2 – specifically, “Designated Economic Development Sites” – and noted
78 that “A” through “J” had been added per the discussion at the October 26 CDA meeting. Brea
79 referred to a map showing the economic development sites that will be added to the
80 Comprehensive Plan. Brea referred to the “Strengths and Weaknesses” section in the chapter
81 and noted the following updates:

82

83 **Strengths**

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- 85 • Excellent infrastructure – including roads, utilities including a high-quality water system,
86 strong regional electrical grid, area CNG fueling station, and broadband/technology.

87

88 **Weaknesses**

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- 90 • Workforce age – An increasing age will lead to individuals dropping out of the workforce
91 into retirement. Entry-level and skilled workers are difficult to find for employers.
- 92 • Lack of affordable, private utilities (phone, internet, etc.).
- 93 • Lack of consistent 4G network.

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95 **Item 7 – Update and discussion on the Building the Great River Landing Project**

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97 Brea noted the Common Council had approved the contract with Short Elliott Hendrickson to
98 finalize the Phase I design. The Great River Landing Committee held a kickoff meeting on
99 October 28, and the next step is to finalize the architecture of the building. Brea said an
100 architectural open house is scheduled from 1 p.m. to 7 p.m. on November 18 at City Hall.
101 Representatives from the Tourism Commission and the Tourism Collaboration group will attend
102 the open house at 1 p.m. Parks and Recreation Department representatives will discuss building
103 maintenance at 2 p.m. Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources representatives will attend
104 the meeting at 4 p.m., and bicycle and snowmobile advocates will arrive at 4:30 p.m. The Great
105 River Landing Committee is scheduled to meet at 5:15 p.m. Short Elliott Hendrickson
106 representatives will share the feedback obtained from each group and recommend what direction
107 to go. Brea noted that the SEH team has created some renderings utilizing the historic railroad
108 theme and said the intent is to choose a direction for the architecture. Brea said work on the site
109 will continue in December and January.

110

111 John inquired about the size of the building.

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113 Brea estimated the size to be approximately 1,000 square feet.

114

115 John referred to a discussion at the October 26 CDA meeting of potentially expanding the
116 trailhead facility to 5,000 square feet so it can accommodate the Tourism Center.

117

118 Brea said she believes the meeting concluded with the decision to keep the facility around 1,000
119 square feet.

120

121 Ald. Blomquist noted that City Engineer Jarrod Holter said the facility will not be constructed in
122 2016 if the size is altered. Ald. Blomquist also said there would have to be a contractual
123 agreement with the new regional tourism entity if a 5,000 square-foot facility is constructed.

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125 Ann asked if the primary function of the new building will be to service the bicycle trail.

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Brea said yes.

Ann, a Kendall, Wisconsin native, said the train depot along the trail serves as a trailhead. Trail passes are sold from the ticket booth; there is a storage area for rental bicycles and bicycle repair; and there also is a railroad museum. Ann suggested that perhaps a similar approach could be taken with the City of Onalaska's trailhead.

John asked Mayor Chilsen if the new regional tourism group could be coaxed into an agreement to occupy a new tourism center.

Mayor Chilsen said that technically this entity will not exist until January 1. Mayor Chilsen said that the chances of the regional tourism entity locating in the City of Onalaska are "very, very, very high." However, Mayor Chilsen also said the city does not want to lose the \$346,000 Wisconsin DNR grant it was awarded, which he said will happen if the city does not act quickly and proceed with the construction.

Ann said the trailhead facility does not have to include a regional tourism center, noting that other desirable options are available in that area. Ann suggested that the Festival Foods building could easily be converted into a tourism center. Ann also said Brea had suggested designing a structure that would obscure the substation located along State Trunk Highway 35. Ann said the trailhead facility, as designed, will only require one employee.

Mayor Chilsen noted that the Parks and Recreation Department budget includes funding for an employee who will maintain the facility.

Brea said Jarrod told her the best bid prices will occur after January 1, noting Jarrod hopes to obtain Common Council authorization to bid the project in February. Requests for bids would occur in February and March, and the bid would be awarded in April. Construction would commence after that. Brea said the design and construction documents must be completed by early February. The architectural package will be addressed first, going before the Great River Landing Committee on November 30. The Common Council will vote on proceeding with the trailhead at its December 8 meeting. The Great River Landing Committee will discuss the site work in December and January, and then the site work will be taken as a package to the Common Council for review and authorization at its January 12 meeting. Brea said the final budget dollars will be approved with the 2016 Capital Improvements Budget at the December 1 Board of Public Works meeting, then the December 8 Common Council meeting.

Ann inquired about other options now that the splash pad has been removed from the Great River Landing Project.

Brea said SEH was directed to present some ideas to the city.

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168
169 John inquired about the \$346,000 Wisconsin DNR grant.

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171 Brea said the trailhead facility and the parking lot is a commitment the city has to the Wisconsin
172 DNR. Brea noted the grant is earmarked for the rest of the project (e.g., connecting trails,
173 handicap accessibility, educational components).

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175 **Item 8 – Closed Session:**

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

- 181
- 182 • Discussion related to development and refinement of negotiating and development
183 strategies as well as review of development proposals for TIF 4 District.

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

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189 Motion by John, second by Ron, to convene in Closed Session.

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191 On roll call vote: Ald. Barry Blomquist – aye, John Lyche – aye, Ron Johnson – aye, Ann
192 Brandau – aye, Mike Gargaro – aye. In Closed Session at 5:00 p.m.

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194 Motion by Mike Gargaro, second by Ald. Barry Blomquist, to adjourn from Closed Session.

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196 On roll call vote: Ald. Barry Blomquist – aye, John Lyche – aye, Ron Johnson – aye, Ann
197 Brandau – aye, Mike Gargaro – aye. In Closed Session at 5:12 p.m.

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200 Recorded By:

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202 Kirk Bey