

**Joint Common Council/Community Development Authority  
of the City of Onalaska**

Monday, January 18, 2016

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1 The joint meeting of the Common Council and the Community Development Authority of the  
2 City of Onalaska was called to order on Monday, January 18, 2016. It was noted that the  
3 meeting had been announced and a notice posted at City Hall.

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5 Roll call was take with the following members present: Mayor Joe Chilsen, Ald. Jim Binash,  
6 Ald. Jim Olson, Ald. Barry Blomquist, Ald. Harvey Bertrand, Ald. Jim Bialecki, Mike Gargaro,  
7 John Lyche, Mark Hansen, Ann Brandau

8  
9 Also Present: City Clerk Cari Burmaster, Interim Land Use and Development Director Katie  
10 Aspenson, City Engineer Jarrod Holter, Financial Services Director/Treasurer Fred Buehler, City  
11 Attorney Sean O’Flaherty

12  
13 Ald, Barry Blomquist and Mark Hansen joined the meeting in progress.

14  
15 Excused Absences: Ald. Bob Muth, Ron Johnson

16  
17 **Item 2 – Approval of minutes from the previous meetings**

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19 Motion by Ald. Bialecki, second by Ald. Binash to approve minutes from the previous Common  
20 Council Meeting. On voice vote, motion carried.

21  
22 **Item 3 – Public Input (limited to 3 minutes/individual)**

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24 Mayor Chilsen called three times for anyone wishing to provide public input and closed that  
25 portion of the meeting.

26  
27 **Consideration and possible action on the following items:**

28  
29 **Item 4 – Update on “Building the Great River Landing” Project regarding building and  
30 site design for Phase I**

31  
32 Jarrod said the goal is to have a set of plans completed by March, with construction commencing  
33 this summer. Jarrod expressed hope that bid documents will be ready for presentation at the  
34 February 9 Common Council meeting, at which time the Council would vote on authorization to  
35 bid the project. Jarrod said the goal is to bring a bid before the Council at its April 12 meeting  
36 and have signed contracts in May. Jarrod showed those in attendance renderings of the site,  
37 which included the following:

- 38  
39 • One rendering showed the intersection of 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue North and State Trunk Highway 35;  
40 the Main Street plaza extension; the trailhead building, with restrooms and showers  
41 located on the south end and mechanical rooms, office space and windows located on the

**Joint Common Council/Community Development Authority  
of the City of Onalaska**

Monday, January 18, 2016

2

- 42 north end, a porch and deck area located in the rear; wooden seating in the plaza area; a  
43 planter in the center that could be converted into a water feature or art in the future;  
44 landscape stones; and a stormwater feature (rain garden).
- 45 • Another rendering showed where the trail would split coming down from Trempealeau.  
46 Cyclists either could go up to Main Street and continue to the trailhead building or take  
47 the lower trail to gain access to the waterfront. There also will be a switchback trail that  
48 would be ADA compliant and a viewing area.
  - 49 • Another rendering showed the overlook and the rear of the trailhead building.
  - 50 • Another rendering showed the parking lot. There also are plans for a grassy area between  
51 the trailhead building and STH 35 that could be utilized for art or small functions. The  
52 rendering also showed bicycle racks and two shower rooms in the trailhead building. The  
53 showers will be controlled access.
  - 54 • Another rendering showed the overlook area and the vestibule between the two trailhead  
55 buildings. There are plans for swings and picnic tables, as well as a railing system  
56 overlooking the downslope.
  - 57 • Lighting along the trail could include down-low bollards or higher bollards. The parking  
58 lot lighting would be LED lighting. Staff is looking at lighting for the plaza.
  - 59 • There would be wooden seating in the plaza area. There also could be natural stone  
60 placed in the downslope areas as well as retaining walls.
  - 61 • Another rendering showed a possible walkway to the spillway.
  - 62 • Another rendering that showed the overlook included a paved surface with a railing.

63  
64 Ald. Binash noted there had been discussions about placing security cameras in the rear of the  
65 trailhead building and asked where the monitors would be placed.

66  
67 Jarrod said the cameras located at the Aquatic Center can be monitored remotely. Jarrod also  
68 said he envisions the equipment being placed in the mechanical room.

69  
70 Ald. Binash noted that the trailhead building will include Wi-Fi and asked if the necessary  
71 equipment would be placed in the mechanical room.

72  
73 Jarrod said yes.

74  
75 John asked if the abutment will be sufficiently anchored so a bridge possibly can be placed on  
76 top of it in the future.

77  
78 Jarrod said a modular earth wall would be utilized if a true abutment were to be constructed. The  
79 cost to extend it another 20 feet would be \$100,000, and Jarrod said a decision was made to  
80 direct financial resources to the up site. Jarrod referred to one of the renderings that includes a  
81 trail and noted there would be a 15-foot tile wall. Jarrod said Short Elliott Hendrickson had  
82 deleted the wall and backed it up. Jarrod estimated there will be a 14-foot area that will separate

**Joint Common Council/Community Development Authority  
of the City of Onalaska**

Monday, January 18, 2016

3

83 visitors from bicyclists and pedestrians and said the bridge abutment is presently not part of the  
84 plan.

85

86 Ald. Olson asked if this means there will not be a bridge.

87

88 Jarrod said no, stating that if the bridge is constructed it will happen in a future phase.

89

90 Mayor Chilsen asked Jarrod to show those in attendance a slide showing the railroad tracks.

91

92 Jarrod pointed out the railroad crossing at Irvin Street.

93

94 Fred inquired about the snowmobile trail.

95

96 Jarrod said the snowmobile trail would split off and continue along the 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue right-of-way.

97 Jarrod said the goal is to keep snowmobiles off the plaza area, adding there have been

98 discussions about utilizing a permanent barricade. Signage also has been included in the budget.

99

100 Ald. Binash inquired about having a foot wash on the site.

101

102 Jarrod said he does not believe a foot wash would be utilized much on the upper portion of the

103 site and that as of now it is at most a bid alternate. Jarrod said a foot wash likely will not be

104 included in the plan. Jarrod referred to an area that might include a fire pit (alternate gas

105 fireplace) that could be turned on and off remotely or with a timer. Jarrod also referred to an

106 area that could be utilized for programming different events.

107

108 John inquired about the project budget.

109

110 Jarrod said SEH is projecting a budget of \$2.3 million. The projected budget for the trailhead

111 building is approximately \$365,000. Jarrod noted the budget includes the parking lot, retaining

112 walls, grading, railings and erosion control. Jarrod expressed optimism that the bids will be less

113 than what has been budgeted, but he also said, "A lot of these are bid items I don't deal with a

114 lot. If we don't get the right bid environment we could get the wrong people bidding, and it

115 could be what the estimates say."

116

117 John asked if there is a "drop-dead price."

118

119 Jarrod said that price is \$2.3 million and that the city will be bidding with some alternates.

120 Jarrod said he believes the project budget has a contingency in it "that is sufficient unless

121 something happens ... that causes a wide price fluctuation that we'll be able to stay within our

122 budget. I'm hopeful that the project will bid less than what we have in the project estimates right

123 now." Jarrod said it is important to have components that will not require maintenance over

**Joint Common Council/Community Development Authority  
of the City of Onalaska**

Monday, January 18, 2016

4

124 time, noting that treated wood will not be utilized for decking material. Instead, Jarrod said  
125 composite material will be utilized, and while this material will be costly it also will be visually  
126 appealing and will not require maintenance. Jarrod said he believes the architectural features  
127 will be “tasteful and economical, yet still stand the test of time.”

128

129 John noted that there is no flagpole.

130

131 Katie said a suggestion had been made to put a flagpole near the trailhead building.

132

133 Jarrod said an individual has offered to donate a flagpole to the city. Jarrod also noted that the  
134 trailhead building will include a clock on the end of the building. The site also will include an  
135 arch that either will say “Explore. Experience. Enjoy” or “The Great River Landing.”

136

137 John inquired about the developable area to the south.

138

139 Jarrod referred to a slide that shows a repaved section of Irvin Street and the alley located behind  
140 the former Braund Lumber site. Jarrod said it could be utilized as access to future development  
141 in the area.

142

143 Mark asked if cost was the factor behind the elimination of the water element.

144

145 Jarrod said it had difficult to reach a consensus on what to do and expressed hope that the Great  
146 River Landing Committee would keep working. Jarrod said carrier pipes will be installed and  
147 that the groundwork for a water feature will be in place should one be constructed at a later date.  
148 Jarrod expressed hope that once the project goes out for bid the city can extend SEH’s contract  
149 so it may examine “a certain number” of architectural features such as art and fountains. Jarrod  
150 said the city can seek donors once some possible options are determined. Jarrod said the focus is  
151 on making sure that Phase I is constructed and he expressed hope that there will be individuals  
152 who want to see a fountain or public art on the site once the project begins to take shape. Jarrod  
153 referred to a slide showing brick columns and a steel column and said the column will be  
154 constructed so it may be extended up at a later date and artwork may be added.

155

156 Ald. Binash inquired about catching natural rainwater and making it flow on the sides.

157

158 Jarrod said it is possible the project could include a tank to catch rainwater off the roof of the  
159 trailhead building. The water would be put into a tank and used to sprinkle the lawn. Jarrod  
160 referred to a discussion at a Great River Landing Committee meeting where a suggestion had  
161 been made to have a water feature where water would bubble out of the ground, flow toward the  
162 trailhead building and return to the tank.

163

164 John asked when the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources would grant its approval.

**Joint Common Council/Community Development Authority  
of the City of Onalaska**

Monday, January 18, 2016

5

165  
166 Jarrod said he sent Wisconsin DNR representatives an email last week inquiring about the  
167 necessary permits. Jarrod noted that the agreement the city has with the Wisconsin DNR has  
168 been “sitting” since 2013 and said there are elements included in the agreement that no longer  
169 are part of the project. Jarrod expressed hope that a meeting time will have been established by  
170 the end of the week with Wisconsin DNR and Great River State Trail representatives and said  
171 two things will be needed. One is an agreement related to land transfers, and the other is a state  
172 permit to work in the right-of-way.

173  
174 John inquired about road closures.

175  
176 Jarrod said that while there will be some difficulties for individuals attempting to access the  
177 waterfront, he does not envision any road closures occurring. Jarrod said the site design has been  
178 completed within the last two weeks and noted that the trailhead facility had been approved by  
179 the Common Council at its December 8 meeting. Jarrod also said the only access in and out of  
180 the parking lot is at Irvin Street, adding that there will not be a right-turn lane going into it.

181  
182 Mark asked if the Wisconsin Department of Transportation would construct a median.

183  
184 Jarrod said the city has connecting highway control on STH 35 and added, “There is nothing in  
185 the plans.”

186  
187 Ald. Binash referred to steel posts coming off Main Street that would prevent motorists from  
188 driving their vehicles toward the site.

189  
190 Jarrod referred to an area that is projected to have brickwork and said a motorist who runs his/her  
191 vehicle off the road would have a difficult time accessing this area.

192  
193 Ald. Blomquist asked if there will be a final presentation.

194  
195 Jarrod said there likely will be a short presentation at the February 9 Common Council meeting.

196  
197 Mark asked if there are stormwater concerns.

198  
199 Jarrod said pervious pavement will be installed, and there will be an attempt to reuse rainwater.  
200 Jarrod said the Wisconsin DNR has classified this site as a redevelopment site, so there is a  
201 slightly lower threshold for standards.

202  
203 **Item 5 – Consideration of options regarding the Tax Incremental District #4 (TIF):**

- 204  
205 a. **Resolution 3-2016** – Resolution to terminate a Tax Incremental District #4

**Joint Common Council/Community Development Authority  
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Monday, January 18, 2016

6

206 b. Reset TIF base

207

208 Fred said that after discussing this matter with city staff, Jarrod, former Land Use and  
209 Development Director Brea Grace and Brad Viegut of Robert W. Baird, it was determined that  
210 the city must discuss TIF No. 4. The TIF was created in October 2009 when there was an  
211 economic downturn. The projected equalized value is \$13,772,400, which is \$2,838,900 below  
212 the base of \$16,611,300. Fred said the city either can do nothing, reset the base, or close it out.  
213 Fred said closing out the TIF will require an audit.

214

215 Sean noted that the TIF was established as a “pay as you go” TIF and said no funds have been  
216 expended from the TIF District.

217

218 Fred said the TIF District was created as a “pay as you go” TIF because the city owns a  
219 significant amount of land in the district.

220

221 Jarrod noted that City Hall, Irving Pertsch Elementary School and First Lutheran Church are  
222 located in the TIF and said there is a significant amount of land not included on the tax roll.

223

224 Motion by Ald. Bialecki, second by Ald. Binash, to approve Resolution 3-2016 – Resolution to  
225 terminate a Tax Incremental District #4.

226

227 On roll call vote: Ald. Jim Bialecki – aye, Ald. Barry Blomquist – aye, Ald. Jim Binash – aye,  
228 Ald. Harvey Bertrand – aye, Ald. Jim Olson – aye. Motion carried unanimously.

229

230 **Item 6 – Closed Session:**

231

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

236

- 237 • Discussion related to development and refinement of negotiating and development  
238 strategies as well as review of development proposals for TIF 4 District.
- 239 • Consideration of contract with Timber Selissen

240

241 If any action is required in Open Session, as the result of the Closed Session, the Council and  
242 CDA will reconvene in Open Session to take the necessary action and/or continue on with the  
243 printed agenda.

244

245 Motion by Ald. Bialecki, second by Ald. Binash, to convene in Closed Session.

246

**Joint Common Council/Community Development Authority  
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Monday, January 18, 2016

7

247 On roll call vote: Ald. Jim Bialecki – aye, Ald. Jim Olson – aye, Ald. Harvey Bertrand – aye,  
248 Ald. Barry Blomquist – aye, Ald. Jim Binash – aye, Mike Gargaro – aye, Mark Hansen – aye,  
249 Ann Brandau – aye, John Lyche – aye. In Closed Session

250

251

252 Recorded by:

253

254 Kirk Bey