

Richland Economic Development Board

Meeting Minutes

The Richland Economic Development Board met on **Monday, January 9th, 2023 at 9:00 am at the Council Chambers of the Richland Center Municipal Building, 450 S Main Street, Richland Center, Wisconsin** to discuss and/or take action on following agenda items:

Mission Statement: Fostering a community of Opportunity, Success, & Excellence

Board Members Present: Mike Breininger - Chairman, Marty Brewer - County Board Representative, Todd Coppernoll -City Mayor, Ashley Oliphant - City Administrator, Kari Honer - Financial Rep., Eric Klang - Manufacturing Rep., Bruce Roesler - Healthcare Rep., Don Fieldhouse - Retail Rep., Clint Langreck - Richland County Administrator, Al Lins - Agriculture Rep., Director Jasen Glasbrenner - Present
Board Member Absent: Rufus Hauke – Non-Profit Rep.,

Minutes:

1. *Chairman Mike Breininger called the meeting to order and asked for confirmation that the meeting had been properly noticed – Director Glasbrenner confirmed.*
2. *Approve previous meeting minutes from November 11th, 2022*
Motion by: B. Roesler
Second by: M. Brewer
Vote: Passes Unanimously
3. *Approval of Agenda*
Motion by: M. Brewer
Second by: B. Roesler
Vote: Passes Unanimously
4. *Economic Development Director's Report (J. Glasbrenner, Director)*

Richland Economic Development – Director's Report

Monday – January 9th, 2023

By: Jasen Glasbrenner - Director

Economic Development Projects / Efforts

1. *County – CDBG Close Projects*
 - Richland Center Auditorium Accessibility Project
 - Working to facilitate the grant close out process
 - Auditorium HVAC Sensors on back order have hindered the close out
2. *County USEDA - Flood Recovery Grant Efforts*
 - This grant is scheduled to close in June
 - County Outdoor Recreation Plan is being worked on

- There is work taking place in Lone Rock for a possible rebranding
- Possible County Comprehensive Planning Work at no additional cost to the County.

3. County and City Branding

- Part of USEDA Grant to the County
- Branding Manual completed for County
- Manual and Digital files handed off to County Administrator for implementation of use of new logo and motto.
- City in final stage of branding manual approval
 - City will then move through signage and wayfinding projects

4. Housing

- Working to advance programs for infill housing, new subdivisions, new multifamily housing and blighted home removal and replacement – We need housing of **ALL** categories.
- Infill Housing – Working on Sale of 460 W 1st St.
- Infill Housing – 291 N Jefferson St. – Facilitation of RFP process and award of demolition contract. The blighted home and garage have been demolished. Resale process being developed.
- Stori Field Development – Currently working with Vierbicher Engineering on Conceptual Development Plans and infrastructure capacity analysis.
- Conversation Continue regarding Panorama II development. Challenges with interest rates.
- Consistent work with the City Planning Commission on possibilities of future development

5. General – County

- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) – Technical Assistance Program
- Deliverables are a feasibility study for Orange St and the contaminated Weber Dry-cleaning Site in Richland Center as well as a process outline / document for Richland County so that potentially contaminated sites in the county (Lone Rock, Rockbridge, Sylvan) can be returned to use and the active tax role.
- WRCO Program recorded for Jan 4th - Monthly
- We have been notified that the Community Development Investment Grant from Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) for Bethlehem Lutheran Church and their Rockbridge childcare facility has been successful. The Grant amount will be \$163,600. We are reviewing and processing the final award contract.
- Working with Prosperity Southwest Wisconsin (PSW) on regional Workforce Mapping Project. This work was made possible by a grant to PSW by WEDC.
- PSW is also work on a regional Community Attractiveness project.
- Main St. Bounce back grant program is now closed. Around 20 grants released throughout Richland County at \$10,000 ea.

6. General - City

- The new City Website is now Live – Work continues to update data and make certain there are operating procedures in place.
- Repeal and Replace process for the City Zoning Ordinance. Interviews conducted with three engineering firms who could potentially be hired for the project. This is a multi-month project and it would be highly advantageous to have it completed for this building season.
- City Strategic and Comprehensive Planning efforts through the Planning Commission. This will eventually include long term city development planning.
- Community Wayfinding and City Signage project.

- Working to move forward with contract for rework of the North Industrial Park so lots are more saleable – Surveying and change in lots, site grading plans, DNR permits for land disturbance, system for grading and fill removal.

7. RED Board

- Minutes and document prep for meetings
- Administrative work around providing proposals from the RED Board to the County Board regarding future funding options for RED.

8. Active Committees, Boards & Groups

- Childcare Ad hoc Committee
- Prosperity Southwest Wisconsin – I serve as the Vice President
- City Committee and Council Meetings
- County Committee and Board Meetings
- City and County Department Head Meetings

5. *Clarification and discussion on the future of Richland Economic Development and the Economic Development Director position (M. Breininger)*

- Discussion regarding County’s commitment to fund economic development and requests by county committees to try to identify other funding for economic development that would release the County from their commitment. This caused concern over the stability of the Economic Development Office. As a result, the City took action to secure the future of economic development by fully budgeting for the office and employee and voted to give notice of intent to withdraw from the Economic Development Agreement with the County.
- The future of the Economic Development Board is uncertain if the City withdraws from the agreement
- The County has committed to fully funding their portion of economic development through 2023

6. *Discussion and action regarding recommendations to the City Council regarding the future of the Economic Development Board. (M. Breininger)*

- If the City withdraws from the agreement the RED Board could
 - i. Be Dissolved
 - ii. Work with the City to advise on Economic Development issues while not providing direct oversight
 - iii. RED Board could reestablish itself as a stand-alone independent board offering advice to the City and County
 - iv. Everything remains the same
- Mayor Coppernoll indicates he is not in favor of dissolving the RED Board. He expresses the fact of 38 different people having some type of oversight on the Economic Development Office by the nature of it being a City / County position with oversight by the RED Board. Concern was expressed regarding the County’s actions which caused stability concerns and created more work for the Economic Development Office of researching other funding models. The Mayor indicated that he had unequivocally stated that the City would not lose Economic Development at previous RED Board meetings. The City requested that the County Rules and Strategic Planning place full City funding on their agenda in December and they refused to do so. This ultimately

prompted the action of the City to fully fund and vote to give notice of intent to withdraw. This was not about the City not wanting to work with the County. The City and the County need to work together.

- Rules and Strategic Planning at the County have just met and voted to try to reach out to the City and RED Board to schedule some joint meeting to discuss this issue.
- County Board Chairman M. Brewer expressed support for economic development and the benefit of the RED Board.
- Al Lins – Expresses the possibility of increased funding for the County that could help the County to fund economic development. He believes that the City and the County working together is very important.
- Discussion of the three entities meeting together and the RED Board offering four potential options for the future of the RED Board.

Motion by: A. Lins to forward the four options listed above for inclusion in the joint meeting of the RED Board, City, and County

Second by: D. Fieldhouse

Vote: Passes Unanimously

- Director Glasbrenner states he believes that there needs to be a hard look at the efficiency of the management of the Economic Development position. There is enough economic development to do inside the county for an office of four. He cannot do it all alone. He is constantly put into a place where he has to evaluate the efficiency and the return on investment of his time. He states there is a greater return on investment from working projects in the City. He desires to help the whole county but he is in a place where he must justify his efforts to all that have oversight and it is very difficult to please everyone. His opinion is that the reporting of the position should be much more streamline and specific and he should potentially have one person or one committee to report to and they would be responsible for defending the work of the office and making sure funding is secure. There needs to be some high level conversations about the reality of being able to do what we dream about doing, the amount of work that really needs to be done, and the importance of a streamlined accountability structure.
- If the position was converted to a city position Jasen would report to the City Administrator like all other department heads of the City.

7. *Discussion on the housing shortage and current and future actions (Board)*

- Possibility of land behind the campus being considered for housing. This is a discussion at the County right now though the RED Board had brought this up about 2 years ago. There are still things holding up real discussions on this.
- Director Glasbrenner states the development of campus land for housing is complex and will be a long drawn out project that will cost a substantial amount of money. There seems to be a lot of speculative conversations taking place at the County that are not informed by the realities of development.
- There must be single family housing made available. This is one of the single most important issues to the future success of the City.
- Possible Stori Field development in 2024.
- Panorama 2 is still being worked on.
- Conversations on housing are taking place on a consistent basis.

- Land availability is very hard to come by.
- Discussion about changing workforce trends and how that is affecting housing stock as well.

8. *Board Member Reports, Updates, Future Agenda Items and Public Comments. No Board action will be taken on any matter originating under this item.*

- Recession talks and layoffs could ensue
- Higher interest rates
- New Hospital Development
 - New doctors coming to the hospital
- Purchase trends at Walmart are changing more to staple products rather than discretionary

9. *Next meeting is Tuesday, March 13th, 2023 – 9am*

10. *Adjourn*

Motion by: K. Honer

Second by: A. Lins

Vote: Passes Unanimously

Minutes recorded by Jasen Glasbrenner, Director of Richland Economic Development