

Richland Economic Development Board

Meeting Minutes

The Richland Economic Development Board met on **Monday, March 13th, 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., , Clint Langreck - Richland County Administrator, Al Lins - Agriculture Rep., Rufus Hauke – Non-Profit Rep.,
Director Jasen Glasbrenner - Present
Board Member Absent: Don Fieldhouse - Retail 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 January 9th, 2023***
*Motion by: B. Roesler
Second by: K. Honer
Discussion: None
Vote: Passes Unanimously*
3. ***Approval of Agenda***
*Motion by: A. Lins
Second by: B. Roesler
Discussion: None
Vote: Passes Unanimously*
4. ***Discussion and possible action on the Economic Development Priorities survey (M. Breininger)***
 - Four of the 11 Board Members were able to reply to the survey. There were 34 priority items on the list. The top vote getters were as follows:
 - Housing was the number one priority
 - Business Attraction, Expansion, Grants and Supporting Employers.
 - Broadband, Symons Rec Center Success, UW-Richland, Workforce
 - Richland County Fair, Government Meetings, Southwest Regional Planning Commission
 - Alternative Energy, Childcare, Grocery Store, Industrial Park, Recreation, Redevelopment Authority

- A couple of years ago childcare would have been higher on the list but there have been a couple of successful projects.
- The workforce issue is the preeminent issue. Housing is tied to this very closely. We have plenty of jobs but don't have the necessary workforce.
- Director Glasbrenner indicated that there are many things occurring in the listed categories that people may be unaware of. The example given was of Broadband that was listed third. Broadband initiatives are already underway today that will result in 100% coverage of Richland County by 2028. Administrator Langreck concurred. This is an example of where County Board members, County Administration, Economic Development, Grants, and local providers have all been engaged in advancing broadband projects, but the public is still somewhat unaware so it remains a major discussion point.
- Chairman Breininger indicated that part of the intent of the survey was to help to identify the items that may be most important so that focus could be narrowed.
- *No Motion was made, or action taken.*

5. *Discussion and possible action regarding consultation with the Symons Natatorium Board for the purpose of strengthening the business model (Board)*

- Symons is a vital part of our community. Many people in the audience used the Symons facility extensively. It is a great asset and helps us create a good community environment.
- RED Board is working to make recommendations to adjust the 1987 Funding and Operating agreement that exists between the City and the County and to look at models for ongoing sustainability.
- T. Gobin – Director of Symons – shared data and indicated the City and County contributions were a relatively small amount of the operating budget. The Symons Foundation has helped to provide funds for equipment upgrades.
- There have been several years where Symons has operated over budget causing the City and County to have to come up with more money for operations or capital improvements.
- When news hit in July 2022 about possible County budget cuts and the possible effect on the future of Symons, membership enrollment substantially declined.
- A subgroup including M. Breininger, K. Honer, and A. Lins from the RED Board will look at the financial and contractual documents associated with Symons and make further recommendations to the Symons Natatorium Board.

6. *Economic Development Director's Report (J. Glasbrenner, Director)*

Richland Economic Development – Director's Report

Monday – March 13th, 2023

By: Jasen Glasbrenner - Director

Economic Development Projects / Efforts

1. County – CDBG Close Projects

- Richland Center Auditorium Accessibility Project
 - HVAC Sensors installed and final project close out is imminent

2. Richland County USEDA - Flood Recovery Grant Efforts

- Managed by Southwestern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission - This grant is scheduled to close in June
 - There is work taking place in Lone Rock for a possible rebranding
 - A County Comprehensive Plan Process has been offered to the County for “\$0” through this grant. It is my understanding that the next closest proposal came in at over \$100,000.

3. County and City Branding

- Funded by the Richland County USEDA Grant
- We have requested final digital files of the branding artwork from the consultant and an implementation process by the City will begin momentarily
 - Awaiting final confirmation of branding elements for City Utility
 - Tourism is implementing their new branding

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.
- City Council has approved acquiring a realtor for the sale of Sale of 460 W 1st St and 291 N Jefferson St. I am actively working through a process to secure a realtor and will advise on the development agreement that will be for guaranteed construction on the lots.
- Stori Field Development – Working with City Planning Commission – The City has agreed to hire Vierbicher Engineering to assist us in moving through an RFQ Process to help identify possible developers. Conceptual Planning has been completed – Awaiting confirmation data on water system capacity to serve the development.
- Conversation Continue regarding Panorama II development. Challenges with interest rates. New financial pro forma is being completed. Had discussions with Ehlers – financial analysis services this week.
- Contact with other developers who have expressed interest in multifamily Housing.
- Discussions with multiple landowners
- Discussions with engineering firm on subdivision concepts

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 redeveloped and / or returned to use and the active tax role. Still awaiting final report.
 - During the week of 3/6/2023 the EPA offered a grant for conceptual design of a couple of blocks on Orange St. I am looking forward to collaborating with them.
- WRCO Program on March 7th, 2023
- Oversight of the CDI grant from Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) for Bethlehem Lutheran Church - Rockbridge Childcare facility. Grant amount is \$163,600. We have been working to get the system set up and the first draw request completed

- Working with Prosperity Southwest Wisconsin (PSW) on regional Workforce Mapping / Retention / Attraction Project. This work was made possible by a grant to PSW by WEDC. We held a Summit on Monday, Feb 20th. Rockwell and Walmart Management attended.
- PSW is also working on a regional Community Attractiveness project.
- Main St. Bounce Back Grants – \$10,000 each. Program closed Jan 1st, 2023. The final tally for the County was 27 grants. My office collaborated and provided verification and support letters for 24 of them.

6. General - City

- City Zoning Ordinance – Repeal and Replace project has been approved by the City and will be conducted by Vierbicher Engineering. This is critical to economic development of the City as it will attempt to address things like an increase in housing density through multifamily zoning, the inclusion of a zero lot line ordinance, a reduction in the use of the conditional use permit process, substandard lots reuse and greater inclusion of accessory dwellings
- City Strategic and Comprehensive Planning efforts through the Planning Commission. Recent focus has been on Stori Field, multifamily housing and Panorama 2 development financing.
- Community Wayfinding and City Signage project – Hoping to have a city committee execute sign project.
- Work is being conducted in 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

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

7. ***Discussion and possible action regarding the future of the Richland Economic Development Board and Director Position. (Board)***

- City gave initial notice of intent to withdraw from the City / County Economic Development Agreement in December of 2023 and it appears that the City Council is likely to continue to move forward with that intent on April 4th. This also has the effect of dissolving the RED Board.
- Mayor T. Coppernoll stated that the City's vote was not about ending the economic development agreement with the County, but rather to shore up economic development for the City of Richland Center instead of risking the loss of economic development to issues like County budget cuts. The Council's intent is to secure economic development and an unintended consequence of that action is the end of the current agreement. The intent is not to shut out anyone. We need people involved and we value the contributions of everyone.

- There have been two meetings between the City / County / RED Board to discuss alternatives agreements. The RED Board developed several options for an amended agreement but there was no clear consensus between the City / County / RED Board on any of the proposed options.
- At the City the Economic Development Director will report to the City Administrator like all other department heads.
- There was discussion around the City and the County looking at other ways to partner in Economic Development. County Board Chair – M. Brewer stated that economic development is very important to the County.
- M. Brewer thanked M. Breininger for all his efforts in Community and Economic Development.

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

- Bank failures and interest rates are in the news.
- Highway 14 condition leaves a terrible impression on Richland Center. This needs a high level of attention.
- Hospital development project continues to advance.
- Workforce being supplied through migrant workers and visa processes.
- Agriculture advancements in the area of greenhouses may allow great production in the Midwest on a year round basis.
- Administrator Langreck has announced his resignation from Richland County.

9. Confirm the next meeting date and time.

A meeting was set for Monday, April 10th, 2023 – 9am – If the City votes to withdraw from the agreement on Tuesday April 4th, then this meeting will not be an official meeting of the City or County.

10. Adjourn

Motion by: A. Lins

Second by: M. Brewer

Vote: Passes Unanimously

Minutes recorded by Jasen Glasbrenner, Director of Richland Economic Development