

Economic Development Review Committee meeting
September 14, 2011

Present: Angell, Barg, Cummings, James-Mork, Olson, Sonnemann, Wagner
Absent: Meyer, Strey
Others: None

Barg called the meeting to order at 3:03 p.m. in the 7th floor conference room.

Approve meeting minutes – August 31st

Angell moved and Cummings seconded a motion to approve the minutes from the August 31st meeting as presented. Motion carried 7-0.

Continue work on improving communication and cooperation

Barg reviewed a list of 5 items most favored by Committee members, based on feedback received since the August 31st meeting:

- Conduct regular (monthly?) meetings between staff members
- Identify what we do well now, and where we need improvement
- Develop joint plans, holding each other accountable for follow-ups
- Work together on long-term strategies for economic development
- Hold annual workshop of all involved with economic development

After some discussion, it was agreed to add a possible 6th item as follows: Hold “business roundtables” with business/community leaders. Members would like this item to be better defined before it is officially placed on this list.

Clarify roles of the partners on business development and redevelopment

As part of considering the role of each partner, much discussion occurred on what should be key elements of our overall economic development strategy. The following ideas were mentioned and reviewed:

- Form a “Ready Team” to meet with prospective companies. This team should be comprised of a core group, with other key players available when necessary.
- Upon receiving an inquiry, select a “case manager” to guide that prospect through the process, and to make sure they don’t “fall through the cracks”.
- Create an overall economic development website which must be regularly updated and maintained. This would be linked to each partner’s website.
- Identify businesses/industries that might be a good fit for our community, looking for suppliers to our current businesses, or products/services not now offered here.
- Start a “welcome wagon” for new businesses, like what we have for new residents.
- Develop a “first impressions” program with nearby and comparable communities.
- Strive to encourage and promote re-use of vacant commercial/industrial buildings.
- Use grant/loan programs and aggressive code enforcement to improve properties.
- Put greater emphasis on business retention (site visits, program information, etc.).
- Develop and implement a more active marketing and promotion strategy.
- Work more closely with all organizations involved in economic development

Announce next meeting date/time

Barg reminded everyone that the next meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 27th at 2:30 p.m. in the 7th floor conference room.

Sonnemann moved and Olson seconded the motion to adjourn. Motion carried 7-0. Barg declared the meeting adjourned at 4:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Steve Barg
City Administrator