

MINUTES
WOODSTOCK CITY COUNCIL
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP
November 2, 2015
Stage Left Cafe

The special Economic Development Workshop of the Woodstock City Council was called to order at 3:30 PM by Mayor Brian Sager on Monday, November 2, 2015 at Stage Left Cafe. Notice of this Special Meeting was posted 48 hours in advance at Woodstock City Hall. All media was notified of this Special Meeting. All Council members were notified of this Special Meeting

A roll call was taken.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Daniel Hart, Maureen Larson, Mark Saladin, Joseph Starzynski, RB Thompson, Michael Turner, and Mayor Sager

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: City Manager Roscoe Stelford, Economic Development Director Garrett Anderson, Building and Zoning Director Joe Napolitano, Economic Development Coordinator Krista Coltrin, and Grant Writer Terry Willcockson.

OTHERS PRESENT: City Clerk Cindy Smiley

Mayor Sager welcomed Krista Coltrin, the City's new Economic Development Coordinator and invited her to introduce herself.

K. Coltrin stated she is looking forward to working with the City, noting she comes to Woodstock from West Chicago having worked in Marketing and Communications. She stated she is looking forward to working with Garrett Anderson to combine to be a great Economic Development team.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no comment forthcoming from the Public.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Mayor Sager noted Council has discussed many priority items in the past year concerning economic development, some of which have moved forward and need to be updated. Others, he noted, have been put on hold until there is a better foundation of professional staff. This meeting's discussion will give everyone a chance to get on the same page and ask any questions regarding these initiatives.

1. Marketing/Promotion

M. Turner provided an overview and background on the City's marketing initiative through Promote Woodstock, Inc., a private entity that is funded by the City to put together a promotional campaign. He stated that following a search by PWI, the firm of a5, led by John Harris, was chosen to partner in this campaign. M. Turner stated they chose to focus first on tourism, rather than business. M. Turner noted that no members of Promote Woodstock are paid and that the group is funded through next April with promotional materials planned for that timeframe. He stated they have some reserved funds for the Lighting of the Square and Groundhog Days, but indicated they hope that additional funds could be found for their efforts in the current fiscal year.

M. Turner stated it is the group's wish to expand the promotional efforts to the Chicagoland area and in order to do so and really promote Woodstock, they probably need \$200,000 to \$300,000. He expressed his wish to expand the budget to \$250,000. He noted there may be funds that were previously earmarked for projects that are not being pursued which may be used for marketing. He provided those present with a list of projects and ideas on which these funds could be spent.

M. Larson stated the group has been working for approximately seven months and she has found there is no one place where all of the events are found and no process or system in place for this, which has been challenging. She then distributed a poster created by a5, noting this is one of the landing spots for events. She noted there needs to be opportunities identified to get this poster outside of Woodstock to increase the visibility of the events we have.

M. Larson then noted a5 is working on telling the story of people in Woodstock, which makes the City more inviting. She also noted that the Real Woodstock website and Facebook page are up and going and that Mr. Harris has done a few media buys. She stated WGN had a good spot on Woodstock yesterday as a result of a5's promotion of the Chester Gould event. She noted her opinion that there are some big things the group could do with more money.

M. Turner stated this has been a worthwhile effort that should be expanded. He stated marketing is like art and it is hard to see the results. He then stated if the City does not define itself and tell its story, other people will. He again reiterated his opinion that \$250,000 should be budgeted for next year with an additional \$25,000 through the winter.

D. Hart stated he has had great results with radio advertising, especially for events.

M. Larson stated she has been attending the business owners' meetings and getting a feel for the businesses. She also stated that a5 is planning to do something at the Lighting of the Square to gather e-mail addresses and get the City's message out.

Mayor Sager stated he is impressed that he sees John Harris out and about the City and feels this project is moving forward positively. He noted there appears to be three questions for Council to consider concerning the program.

First, is the data behind the program and whether Promote Woodstock and a5 are collecting data to justify the funds expended, including how much is getting out and what the response is.

Second, Council has discussed a banner program with the Woodstock Independent, noting the funds for this program remain in the budget. He indicated a question for the Council could be whether they wish to dedicate this money to Promote Woodstock instead.

Third, he noted it was the thought the City would get this rolling and then partner with other businesses for this program. He questioned where Promote Woodstock is going with this partnership, noting as the City looks to the future what financial level is Council willing to move forward with for its part.

In response to the first question, M. Larson stated the group has not been collecting data so that whatever is collected at this point would be the baseline. She noted they would need staff's help with this.

D. Hart suggested that the first thing would be to have all businesses share the page. He indicated when he does this, he can get over 1,000 views in the first 24 hours. He also stated every business should help to promote Woodstock by putting Real Woodstock on their page, which costs nothing.

D. Hart noted that Facebook has good analytics and that an electronic kiosk would be great to collect data.

In response to a question from M. Turner as to what idea from the list provided earlier he would favor, D. Hart indicated a concert would bring people to town and that he always sees a rise in business when there is a concert.

M. Turner stated Promote Woodstock has a lot of energy and ideas and sees the concert idea as being substantial. He further noted that if money is put toward this it could be considered seed money and could be recouped and put back into the budget. He then described the idea of a concert series, whereby John Harris of a5 and Greg Gantner of Promote Woodstock would identify acts that target types of music that would appeal to Woodstock's audience and then hold concerts at the Opera House. He indicated this could begin in 2016 and could be a regional draw.

RB Thompson suggested encouraging the store owners to adopt consistent hours. He also suggested getting an electronic message board to place on Rt. 47 in place of or in addition to the Community Events sign.

In response to a question from J. Starzynski, D. Hart stated he can measure whether people actually are coming to his business when they "check in" via Facebook. He noted if the City had free WiFi, visitors could check in.

K. Coltrin noted there are other inexpensive ways to gather data, including an event booth that is manned by Council members where something is given away and data gathered, including people signing up for the e-newsletter. M. Turner responded that a5 is considering doing something at the Lighting of the Square.

Brief discussion followed of Facebook and the gathering of analytics. D. Hart suggested requesting data from gas stations who request zip codes.

In response to a question from Mayor Sager, it was the consensus of Council to move forward with and flesh out the City's electronic efforts and to require some analytics to be used as a baseline and that the program needs to look at moving out to others in the community for financing. In response M. Turner stated they have co-op plans and should be ready to start that within the next six months.

Mayor Sager then noted the question becomes financial support. It was the consensus of Council to forego the banner program with the Woodstock Independent and dedicate the \$7,500 budgeted for that program to Promote Woodstock.

R. Stelford indicated the City is currently in a hiring freeze and there have not been any modifications to the funds received from the state, so the City is in a good financial position.

Following further discussion, it was the consensus of Council that it is pleased with the efforts of Promote Woodstock to date that \$25,000 in additional funds be allocated to their efforts during the current fiscal year.

It was also the consensus of the Council to consider a higher commitment of funds to Promote Woodstock in the next fiscal year, up to \$200,000.

G. Anderson stated he has begun putting together plans for advertising and promotion in regional publications that are free and which will promote Woodstock.

2. Enterprise Zone Update

Noting that Councilman Saladin has been elected Chairman of the Enterprise Zone Board, Mayor Sager asked him to provide the update.

M. Saladin stated the Enterprise Zone Board met for the first time recently at the County building. He noted Charlie Eldridge was appointed Administrator of the Zone and has been asked to put together a budget, bylaws, and a website for the Zone. In meeting with Mr. Eldridge, M. Saladin stated it has been identified that the budget would be between \$40,000 and \$60,000 with each member, the City of Woodstock and the City of Harvard, responsible for half of this amount. M. Saladin noted this budget would cover the salary of the Administrator, development of the website, marketing of the Zone, and other administrative items. M. Saladin stated while this is a preliminary figure, the Zone Board would be looking to Council to put this amount in the budget.

Concerning marketing of the Zone, M. Saladin stated that some of the items included would be an inventory of sites and presentations by Mr. Eldridge to realtor and industrial associations throughout the Chicagoland areas.

In response to a question from Mayor Sager as to whether Mr. Eldridge would be Woodstock's spokesperson in marketing the Zone, M. Saladin stated this would be the case in certain instances. Mayor Sager noted that Woodstock may wish to look at its own spokesperson. M. Saladin suggested that Economic Development Director Garrett Anderson should be Woodstock's spokesperson. Mayor Sager indicated his opinion that Mr. Anderson plus Councilman Saladin should act in that capacity.

Brief discussion ensued of the revenue that may be realized from applications made to the Zone. In response to a question from M. Turner on whether a larger budget would allow the Board to be more aggressive and see greater returns, G. Anderson stated Woodstock does not need to fund a larger budget for the Zone because much of the marketing can be done through the Economic Development Department's budget. Discussion followed of what other communities are doing to promote their zones. M. Saladin stated these discussions are very preliminary as the Zone has not yet been certified.

In response to a question concerning what the Board Administrator does as opposed to the City's Economic Development Director, G. Anderson stated the Administrator reports to the Zone Board and compiles the reports required by the state.

Mayor Sager noted that much of the information being discussed is not really controlled by the City, but is in the control of the Enterprise Zone Board, which is an entity of the state. He stated the Board has the authority to make decisions for the Zone and the City is a partner.

In response to a question as to whether there is a correlation between the salary of the administrator and the success of the Zone, M. Saladin stated there is not enough data to determine this at this time. He noted what is unique about this Zone is that it is comprised of two municipalities which will require unique marketing. He stated the administrator will speak to the Zone as a whole and that Woodstock will have the ability to speak about Woodstock specifically. He stated the initial discussion today is

really about start-up and how much the City of Woodstock is willing to contribute. R. Stelford noted the City has a contractual obligation to contribute one-half the costs.

Discussion followed of the area that makes up the Zone and of the Intergovernmental Agreement.

In response to a question from Mayor Sager, there was consensus to support the start-up of the Enterprise Zone up to an initial amount of \$25,000.

3. Targeted Uses

Mayor Sager noted Council has talked about this on the surface but has never really focused on whether it is something the City should move forward with and opened the floor for discussion.

M. Turner noted an example of a targeted use would be identifying the desire to place a car dealership on the former Farm and Fleet property and then using a targeted approach in the City's Economic Development efforts to find a dealership.

G. Anderson said he was impressed by a statement made at the recent MCEDC meeting that you really need to identify areas in which you can lead. He suggested that Woodstock determine the areas in which the City's economic development efforts could best succeed and focus efforts on those.

Discussion then ensued of the various markets in which the Council feels the City may be able to take the lead, with G. Anderson recording these ideas. Discussion continued of the City's infrastructure points that may be strengths to realize these ideas, including water/sewer capacity and the new fiber project and how these can attract new businesses. M. Turner suggested that Mr. Anderson discuss with the medium and larger companies in the City, what makes Woodstock unique. M. Larson stated her opinion that it is the City's emphasis on culture. Discussion also took place concerning workforce development because of the need for certain types of workers by the businesses.

G. Anderson then presented maps of the City's various zoning areas and invited Council to view and mark up the maps. An interactive discussion of the maps took place.

M. Turner then noted his displeasure with zoning concerning rental housing, stating that many of the older homes have been chopped up into rental units. He stated he would like to be aggressive and give an incentive to the owners to turn them back into single-family homes and to encourage other owners to keep their homes as single-family units.

J. Starzynski stated people deserve to have a rental home near the Square if they choose but noted property should be maintained. He noted his hope that once the City reaches Home Rule, higher standards can be imposed concerning property maintenance.

4. Incentive Programs

G. Anderson called attention to the items identified as "Business Incentive Programs" located in the information he handed out. He described these various programs in more detail one at a time and noted information concerning them can be found on the website.

Mayor Sager noted the City has worked for the past four or five years to put these incentive packages in place and feels it is a very positive step in the City's Economic Development efforts. He further noted that Council is open to further efforts to enhance business development.

It was the consensus of Council that the incentives for the Enterprise Zone, the Façade Improvement Program, the Revolving Loan Fund, and the Sales Tax Rebate Program are acceptable.

The discussion turned to extension of the TIF District and creation of a 2nd TIF District, particularly the support that could be garnered by the other taxing bodies involved. M. Turner stated he is adamantly supportive of the extension of the current district and creation of additional districts, if needed. He expressed his opinion that this is a reasonable use of tax dollars and does not add to anyone's taxes. He stated it is money well spent. Mayor Sager expressed agreement, but noted that the other bodies must be viewed as partners by the state in order to extend an existing TIF District.

R. Stelford explained the extension and creation processes, noting the other taxing bodies must be supportive or the state will not support the actions.

Following further discussion, it was the consensus of the Council that they are comfortable with the extension of the current Tax Increment Financing District, knowing it will take collaboration with the other bodies. Council also expressed consensus to look at other locations for a Tax Increment Financing District as a method for development.

Following a discussion of possible expansion of a current restaurant and creation of a restaurant campus, it was the consensus of Council that it would be supportive of the exploration of incentives for restaurants. Staff would work on the development of this program which would be brought back to Council at a future date for a possible policy change.

5. Staff Reports

G. Anderson introduced various staff reports that he has created, noting they will also be available to the Economic Development Commission. He noted that new sales tax data is now being provided by the state and called Council's attention to the Sales Tax Report being provided. Discussion followed of this report, with Mr. Anderson noting it will be made available by the state four times per year.

Mr. Anderson then called Council's attention to the Project Activity Report which was gone over in detail. Finally Council discussed the Business Contact Report.

6. Downtown and Corridor Plans

G. Anderson described for those present how Branson, Missouri invited the stakeholders in the various corridors to go for a "walk-about." They were asked what was needed in that corridor. Staff worked on these items, accomplishing the easiest first and then followed up two weeks later for feedback. Following this, the more difficult tasks were undertaken.

Discussion then followed of the Downtown and the various corridors in which this program could be used. M. Turner requested that outside experts be used when formulating the Downtown Plan to bring the outside perspective to the table. He stated this would be a separate step from the stakeholders' meetings. Mayor Sager noted the City has just added two new experts, Garrett Anderson and Krista Coltrin, to staff who will be able to provide much information and an outside perspective. M. Larson noted perhaps a developer could be used as an expert.

In response to a question from M. Larson concerning the timeframe for the Downtown Plan, G. Anderson stated he would like to get started as soon as possible.

Summary

Mayor Sager summarized the results of the Council Workshop as follows:

- 1) Marketing Plan
Develop and provide analytics for the City's marketing campaign, through conversations between John Harris, Dan Hart, Garrett Anderson, and Krista Coltrin.
R. Stelford will begin looking at a \$25,000 addition to this year's budget for the purpose of working with Promote Woodstock, Inc.
Staff will begin looking at \$200,000 for the Marketing Program as it begins to develop next year's budget.
- 2) Enterprise Zone
R. Stelford will look at a contribution of \$25,000 from this year's budget as its portion of the budget to start the Enterprise Zone.
- 3) Targeted Development
Garrett Anderson, Joe Napolitano, and Krista Coltrin will format a plan for targeted uses and bring it back to the Council.
- 4) Incentive Programs
Council expressed support of incentive programs and is willing to look at new opportunities. General support was expressed for incentives for a new restaurant on Rt. 47.
- 5) Staff Reports
Council expressed appreciation for the new reports supplied by Garrett Anderson and looked forward to continued use of same.
- 6) Downtown and Corridor Plans
Council encouraged staff to move forward with engagement and proceed with the individual corridors and other plan development.

It was the consensus of Council that this summarized the discussion and instruction to staff.

ADJOURN

Motion by M. Turner, second by M. Saladin, to adjourn this meeting of the Woodstock City Council to the next regularly scheduled meeting on Tuesday, November 3, 2015, at 7:00 PM in the Council Chambers at City Hall. Ayes: D. Hart, M. Larson, M. Saladin, J. Starzynski, RB Thompson, M. Turner, and Mayor Sager. Nays: None. Absentees: None. Abstentions: None. Meeting adjourned at 5:47 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Cindy Smiley
City Clerk