

**City of West St. Paul
Economic Development Authority
Work Session Minutes
February 26, 2018 at 4:30 p.m.**

1. Call To Order

Vice President Fernandez called the meeting to order at 4:31 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Present: Vice President Anthony Fernandez and Commissioners John Bellows, Ed Iago, Dave Napier, and Bob Pace

Absent: President Jenny Halverson, Commissioner Dick Vitelli

Also Present: Executive Director Hartshorn
City Manager Ryan Schroeder
City Attorney Kori Land
Park and Recreation Director Ben Boike
Community Development Director Ross Beckwith
Finance Director Char Stark
Fire Chief Mike Pott
Police Chief Manila Shaver
Assistant City Manager Sherrie Le
City Clerk/Secretary Shirley Buecksler
Jim Gromberg, Economic Development Coordinator – WSB & Associates

3. Agenda Items

A. Economic Development Chapter – Comp Plan Discussion

Hartshorn said the Met Council requires that comp plans be completed by the end of this year and that an Economic Development Plan is normally a chapter of a comp plan. As part of the process, staff has been working with Jim Gromberg, Economic Development Coordinator with WSB & Associates, on the attached Economic Development Plan for the Council's review.

Hartshorn said staff is looking for feedback from the EDA. Mr. Hartshorn introduced Jim Gromberg, who presented the draft plan of the Economic Development Chapter. Mr. Gromberg said the Met Council wants to see five key basics: 1) Industries/centers of employment; 2) Education and workforce; 3) Redevelopment Planning; 4) Business development; and 5) Economic information, monitoring and strategic initiatives.

Commissioner Iago questioned where the information came from and said that the listing Mr. Gromberg presented shows more businesses by category than are actually in West St. Paul. Mr. Gromberg said a lot of the information comes from how a business identifies itself, such as a gas station that also classifies itself as a retail store or an auto parts store. He said what the EDA really needs to look at is what businesses may need to expand and that all types of businesses are

covered. He added that the breakdown is personally where a business sets themselves and where their sales are.

Commissioner Iago said the list is a public document but has so much misinformation. He also questioned the authenticity of the information that WSB is gathering from another source. Commissioner Iago said this information is a public document and people will question the credibility of it.

Schroeder asked if the information is based on zip code; Mr. Gromberg said yes.

Hartshorn added that the data could be including banks located within grocery stores.

Commissioner Fernandez asked what the Met Council is looking for in this document, if the plan is good until 2040.

Mr. Gromberg said the Met Council is looking for businesses located in the city. He added that information that is more specific could be retrieved but, in reality, it is the type of information they want. Mr. Gromberg said the key is to keep the information as vague as possible and that it may need to be re-evaluated in ten years.

Commissioner Bellows questioned how much of this is submitting information for the Met Council as compared to information the City can use in the comp plan. Mr. Gromberg said should look at what types of businesses are in the community. He said that manufacturing has always been a mainstay but that the type of businesses in the community are starting to change to others that serve the community well. He said this gives an idea of what to focus on and consideration regarding what other businesses may make the community stronger.

Commissioner Bellows said, when comparing West St. Paul and Mendota Heights, that Mendota Heights has 30 percent more jobs to individuals than West St. Paul and that this could be due to their industrial park and informational areas. He said this might not be as likely for West St. Paul, in regards to what is available for redevelopment, and asked how this fits into the process.

Mr. Gromberg said it is about redeveloping strategies. He said that Mendota Heights has some dense areas for employment but West St. Paul does not. Mr. Gromberg said the key is to look at West St. Paul's redevelopment areas to determine what we want to see there, in order to encourage that type of redevelopment. He said the first step is to identify available sites.

Boike asked how many other communities WSB is working with that call out for redevelopment; Mr. Gromberg said most of them.

Commissioner Bellows said, on the housing side, there is an unusual mix with an increasing average value projected, while the median value may not keep up. He said this indicates that West St. Paul is not as bad as other areas and asked how typical this is and whether we should include it in this plan. Mr. Gromberg said that housing is a separate chapter. He said the concern for the community is lower end housing. He added that these areas could become problematic and bring down the value of other housing areas. Mr. Gromberg said, when there is a cluster of houses falling into a lower value, they need to be looked at and determined how to prop them up or encourage redevelopment. He also added that the data would indicate areas to focus on.

Mr. Gromberg presented the draft comp plan, including areas for possible redevelopment. He said there are 14 implementation strategies or goals and that these are areas to focus on in the next year. The Commission gave suggestions for changes to the document.

Schroeder asked Mr. Gromberg when they are looking for feedback from the Council; Mr. Gromberg said by mid-March. The Commission thanked Mr. Gromberg for coming to the meeting.

B. Abra Auto Discussion

The Commission discussed possible relocation sites for Abra Auto.

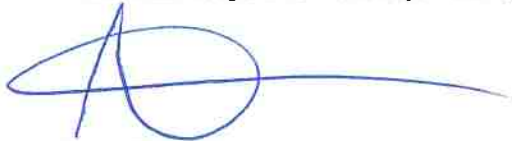
C. TIF Discussion

Hartshorn provided the Commissioners with an update on this discussion.

4. Adjourn

Motion was made by Commissioner Napier and seconded by Commissioner Bellows to adjourn the EDA Work Session meeting at 5:24 p.m.

All members present voted aye. Motion carried.



Anthony Fernandez
Vice President
City of West St. Paul