



Joint Council/EDC Worksession  
April 4, 2023  
5:00 pm

Present: Mayor Kari Niedfeldt-Thomas  
Councilmember Abdullahi Abdulle  
Councilmember Graeme Allen  
Councilmember Pam Axberg  
Councilmember Emily Dunsworth

Absent:

EDC: Chair Harry Carter, Commissioners Faycal Belkhous, Lynn Hilsген, Michele Norman, Victoria Prasek, Jacqui Sauter and Paul Zisla

Staff in Attendance: Devin Massopust, Ben Gozola, Carl Gillies

Guests in Attendance:

Policy Direction Discussion with the Economic Development Commission

Massopust asked that all in attendance go around the room and introduce themselves.

Massopust reported 2015 marks the last time the City Council and Economic Development Commission convened a joint meeting to discuss Council's "overarching focal points" which guide the EDC's yearly work plans. This meeting will change, update, or reconfirm those focal points, and will ensure the EDC is focused on matters of import for our current Council. He explained this meeting would assist the Council and EDC in understanding City Code guidance for the EDC, reconfirming the Commission focal points, provide time to review the Commission's work plan for 2023/2024, and to address any other topics of importance for Councilmembers or Commissioners.

Gozola reviewed the duties and responsibilities for the EDC per City Code. It was noted the Commission's current focal points were business retention and expansion, place-making initiatives, housing programs and physical redevelopment opportunities.

Carl commented on how the EDC has been addressing the focal points since 2015. He reported the EDC discussed business retention and expansion at 25 meetings since 2015 and put a business retention and expansion program/policy in place in January of 2016. He explained the EDC addressed placemaking initiatives at 16 different meetings. He noted the EDC discussed housing related matters at eight different meetings and reviewed physical redevelopment opportunities at 28 different meetings.

Gozola asked the EDC Commissioners to speak to their areas of expertise at this time.

Commissioner Sauter explained she served as the Chair of the Twin Cities North Chamber of Commerce. She discussed how she worked to get businesses involved both with the City and the Chamber of Commerce.

Gozola spoke to how EDC Commissioner Anthony Pledger was interested in sense of place, event tourism and how to embrace yearly events or themes to drive people into the community. He commented on the meeting the EDC had with the ice castle personnel and noted the ice castles was a great event for the City of New Brighton to host on an annual basis.

Further discussion ensued regarding the tremendous success of the ice castles in 2022-2023.

Commissioner Norman hoped an interactive map could be created by the ice castle personnel for 2023-2024. She stated this map would lead visitors to local businesses and restaurants.

Commissioner Prasek discussed her background, noting she was the treasurer of the French American Chamber of Commerce. She explained this organization was quite small, but worked with delegations that come from other countries to the Twin Cities. She stated a group from Paris is coming in May and would be visiting some local medical manufacturing companies. She commented further on her marketing day job.

Commissioner Zisla explained he believed one of the main strengths of the community was its schools. He supported the City building on the connection it has with the school district. He believed there would be a benefit to local businesses if the schools were brought in and made aware of the type of training they required of their employees.

Gozola stated the EDC would be also be addressing the zoning code update in the coming year, along with Block B and the group would be receiving TIF education. He asked if there were any other items the EDC should be addressing in the coming year.

Councilmember Axberg supported the EDC addressing placemaking in collaboration with PREC. Gozola commented on the community mural that was completed and noted the EDC was working on banners for the Old Highway 8 corridor.

Chair Carter supported the EDC continuing to focus on business retention and expansion in 2023. He thanked Commissioner Sauter for all of her efforts to reach out and get to know the business owners in the community.

Commissioner Prasek suggested the EDC reach out to the local schools to see what type of career training opportunities may exist.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas commented on the career fairs that are hosted by the school district.

Councilmember Dunsworth questioned if a liaison from the school district should be invited to attend future EDC meetings. She supported the City being involved in a City-centric job fair for students.

Commissioner Sauter commented on the manufacturing cohort that was being pursued by the Chamber of Commerce. She reported a Ramsey County Recruitment Resource Fair would be held at the Roseville Skating Center on Thursday, April 13.

Councilmember Dunsworth stated she would like the focus to be on addressing issues that have overlap with other Commissions in order to make huge impacts for the community.

Commissioner Norman suggested contact information for the schools be included in the City newsletter. She believed this would greatly benefit families and businesses in the community.

Commissioner Zisla recalled that Ramsey County had a workforce solution department and they would have programs or resources available to residents of New Brighton.

Councilmember Allen believed it would benefit the City to have a lot of partners to address jobs and career opportunities in the community. He then asked where the city was with monument signs. Gozola reported the EDC looked at where the monument signs were located and what were the main entrance points into the community. He stated this work was put on hold given the fact PREC was working on a parks master plan and the EDC wanted these signs to have a unified theme.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas questioned if the City had funding set aside for the new park signs. Massopust reported the parks master plan did include funding for new signs.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas explained she supported all four of the focal points for the EDC. She discussed how the Council has been reviewing the housing study and she believed it would be beneficial for the EDC to review this study as well. She commented further on how Old Highway 8 was ready for redevelopment and the Council would benefit from feedback on this corridor.

Massopust stated another topic for the EDC to consider was local workforce solutions, noting this may fit under business retention and expansion.

Councilmember Dunsworth indicated she supported the four main initiatives for the EDC as proposed by staff.

Councilmember Allen explained another item to consider for the EDC would be to incorporate local businesses into the climate action plan.

Councilmember Abdulle supported the EDC continuing to pursue business retention/expansion and sense of place initiatives. He questioned what type of work the EDC did to address housing programs.

Commissioner Zisla commented on how the EDC can address housing themes or zoning issues for the City.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas supported the EDC reviewing the recent housing study and providing feedback to the City Council.

Councilmember Abdulle suggested the EDC consider reviewing the transportation options available in the community and how the lack of transportation was impacting the businesses and residents in New Brighton.

Councilmember Allen supported this recommendation noting the City should be seeking more transportation services from Met Council for its residents.

Councilmember Dunsworth recalled there was a business that did not move into New Brighton because the City did not have enough mass transit in place. She supported the EDC further addressing this issue because transportation impacted both residents and businesses.

The Council and EDC commented on how the rising price of housing was impacting New Brighton and its residents.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas suggested a Small Business Saturday event be considered for New Brighton.

Commissioner Norman commented on how Stockyard Days could be used to assist in creating a sense of place for New Brighton.

Gozola thanked the Council and EDC Commissioners for their feedback and discussion.

Worksession adjourned at 6:26 pm

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Terri Spangrud". The signature is fluid and elegant, with the first name "Terri" and last name "Spangrud" clearly distinguishable.

Terri Spangrud  
City Clerk