

**MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 4, 2023 COMBINED MEETING OF THE PROPEERTY AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEES**, 5:15 p.m., Council Chamber, Members present: A. Christianson Sr., M. Hraban, N. Johnson, J. Hoover, Dr. S. Weiss. Others present: A. Christianson Jr., K. Gorsegner, S. Moore.

**Call to Order:**

Christianson Sr. called the meeting to order.

**Tour:**

Those present went down to the former Wells Fargo bank, where seller's agent Brian Reynolds led a brief tour of the facility.

**Appearance:**

After returning to City Hall Planning Commission, Tourism Commission, RLF Board and Rusk County Tourism Committee member Sue Moore appeared before the Committees assembled using the attached handout as a guide in offering comments about measures the City could take to "keep up appearances" and the importance of doing so.

**Development Tools:**

There was discussion of how time consuming it would likely be to acquire and resell individual lots to promote development of additional housing, such that a better course of action at this time might be to attempt to market property the City already owns. The lots along the north side of Worden Ave. between 1<sup>st</sup> and W. 2<sup>nd</sup> Streets, which were previously occupied by Barb's Flowerland, Finish Line tavern and Ladysmith Laundromat. In addition to making the property available at low cost to entice potential buyers some preliminary design would could be done This design work would be TIF eligible, as such a project was the premise around which TIFD #15 was created. In the meantime, Adm. Christianson will continue work on preparing a Request for Proposals to develop housing on the site, which will be targeted to area developers and builders.

**Property Maintenance:**

Chair Christianson noted his repeated efforts in recent years to interest the Council in creating a new in-house building maintenance position to handle little repairs before they become bigger and considering the amount of improved property and structures the City owns or operates. After the meeting it was clarified that this worker would not be able to legally address electrical or plumbing work, but could take the lead in finding qualified vendors to take care of these needs. Christianson noted, in response to a question, that he would suggest the pay rate would be just below that for Public Works lead workers in effort to keep someone in it as knowledge of facilities lends to operational efficiency and having constant change would not lend to that efficiency. Motion was made by Weiss, seconded by Johnson and carried by voice vote to recommend that the Council pursue this recommendation provided, however, that the position will maintain City-owned facilities, only, and not those overseen by the Joint Management Committee.

**Billboards:**

Adm. Christianson will continue to shepherd this effort through to completion.

**Caboose Repair:**

Motion was made by Johnson, seconded by Hraban and carried by voice vote, with Hoover abstaining, to recommend Council approval of Proposal to repair rotting siding on the vintage caboose displayed at the visitor center, at a cost of \$1,200.

**Plow Museum Enclosures:**

Motion was made by Hraban, seconded by Johnson and carried by voice vote, with Hoover abstaining, to recommend Council approval of a Proposal to enclose the men's and women's restrooms along with a storage room between them at the Plow Museum at a cost of \$850 to The Mining Fund. The already approved materials are in storage on-site.

**Closed Session:**

The Committees did not go into closed session as planned. Recent appraisals of several Industrial properties managed by the Joint management Committee were distributed for review. There was some discussion of how to manage these properties going forward with options including selling or trading them or, in at least one case, enlarging or upgrading them.

**Adjourn:**

Upon motion by Hoover, which was seconded by Hraban and carried by voice vote, the meeting adjourned at about 7 p.m.

## Community Development Committee

### Ideas for Consideration

1. When Miner Avenue gets redone, be sure to consider including electric boxes where trees were for future use with holiday or everyday lighting.
2. Any possibility for stamped cobblestone look edges at curbs &/or at corners or colored concrete?
3. Continue to develop more historic appeal in building facades, signage, use of black wrought iron fences etc
4. Get a "sister city" (Ladysmith, Africa? Ask Hoover) and advertise the fact on a historic sign
5. Encourage Theatre owner to complete his shop/store next to theatre instead of just letting equipment and idea "sit" there for years. Same with antique shop across the street. (If the City gives money to a building owner, stipulate it must be utilized and complete project within one year or money must be returned)
6. Encourage owner of building or owners of Chinese restaurant to fix and make use of outdoor lighting on deck. This could be a beautiful and attractive spot seen when coming up the bridge. See if they would be interested in getting a beer & wine license to make it an even better attended spot to eat. One of the few river view spots in the city not being well used.
7. Try to get a developer to purchase the rest of building complex next to Chinese Restaurant, raise roof on buildings to add second story condos/apartments with a deck overlooking the river. A great convenient complex of possibly three apts for seasonal owner/occupants and to bring in more tax revenue. Again this is prime river frontage!
8. Put white lights on five trees at top of bridge (County Ct House lot) to be on around holidays (along with Christmas tree and carolers) and also weekends all year to attract visitors.
9. Encourage a garden club to keep all green spaces planted & free of weeds.
10. If redoing the Council Chambers, keep the costs down to use funds in some of the ways suggested here. It is more important to show off the beautiful city we have to locals and visitors rather than that of one public space. Possibly solicit volunteers to remove the old wall paper. Paint the chambers with a forest green and tan color sceme (relaxing, comfortable theme) and to honor our logging industry from the very beginning.

Ideas gained when recently visiting St. Charles, a resort town in Missouri just north of St. Louis with cobblestone sidewalks and streets. Took many photos of trash receptacles, benches, store fronts. Always glad to be of help to make our city even more attractive.

- Sue Moore 715 415-5879  
Nov, 2023