

AUGUST 15, 2016 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

4 p.m. Council Chamber. Members present: R. Moore , B. Stoneberg. Absent: J. Pearson. Others Present: A. Christianson 1, A. Christianson 2, A. Kenyon, S. Moore, B. Morgan.

Call to Order:

R. Moore called the meeting to order and served as Chair.

Guest:

Rusk Co. Memorial Hospital Administrator Charisse Oland was introduced. Mrs. Oland told of her experiences in hospital administration in Sioux Falls, SD and also in Eau Claire. She was also involved with efforts that brought revolving sculpture programs to these locales. Both locales have sculpture walks. She noted how downtown Sioux Falls seemed nearly devoid of retail when they started their Main Street and sculpture projects. While she indicated these sculpture programs were only one piece of the recoveries of these downtowns she wonders if a downscaled effort of this sort might be a part of rejuvenating downtown Ladysmith. A number of sculptures are typically leased to the community for a year in hopes that private businesses or other donors will purchase them. Those that aren't purchased are then replaced with different ones the following year. Or, the City could select one to purchase based on a popular vote. Mrs. Oland complimented the arts and music programs here, which she described as excellent for a small community. She noted, in response to a question, that she believes downtown Eau Claire now has 35 sculptures.

Mrs. Oland invited those present and the entire Council to attend the unveiling of RCMH's new sculpture at 3 p.m. on Thursday, September 22nd at the hospital entrance.

Downtown Appearance:

A question was raised whether there are other measures that can be taken to improve downtown's appearance. It was recalled that adding visual features downtown was recommended in planning documents done following the 2002 tornado. One rendering showed upgrades to the farmer's market pavilion, along with a brick sign backdrop and a free standing clock out front. Placing a new four sided clock on the SE corner of the old Pioneer Bank has also come up as older residents remember the one once located there. Similarly, there has been discussion at previous Community Development meetings about placing a new Native American sculpture at the south end of the Brooklyn Bridge where a concrete one stood until it was heavily vandalized in the 1940s.

Ladysmith History Notes:

Adm. Christianson reported that, with assistance from Main Street Design Committee members Brian Joles and Phil Ruege, he believes he has photos presumed necessary to complete a dozen or more Ladysmith History Note signs, which are proposed to be erected in front of local properties, most of them downtown. He will get a revised quote from The Sign Shop, and another from Jim Stanton, to print these. He asked about preferences on sign size and shape.

Those present were also asked to consider whether the City should charge property owners, and if yes, how much. Many want what is free. One way to avoid being overwhelmed might be to charge 50% to current property owners who are interested in participating.

Fair:

Referring to an old Rusk Co. fair photo included with those planned to be used for the History Notes effort, concerns were expressed about the seeming continued decline of the fair. Terry DuSell and the

late Wally Stanger were mentioned as a couple of people who invested a great deal of personal effort promoting the event. Apparently, the only obligation County government has to the fair is to provide for animal judging.

Occupational and Personal Interest Mural:

It was reported that Mrs. Pearson met with the abutting property owner in regard to the City locating an occupational and personal interest mural along the west side of 1st St. from the south side of Bo James' restaurant to the alley mid-block. The owner seems amenable if the City provides the owner a depiction on the mural without charge.

Concerns were expressed about whether the City might run out of location options for military murals. It is believed that there continues to be considerable interest

Motorcar Railway Project:

Adm. Christianson reported that, while he believes the proposed motorcar railway ride can be asset to the community, where to locate it is in question. He believes we should continue to work toward getting the motorcar operational, while there is interest, and asked those present to give some thought to where else it could be located. Although Flambeau Mining hasn't said no outright, it is concerned about liability as underlying landowner. FMC attorneys are to consider whether they can draft a document that adequately protects the firm. Recreational immunity would not apply if there is a charge for the ride. In the case of the Memorial Park to fairgrounds route, at least one neighbor has reservations about noise interfering with the peace, quiet and relative isolation of the area. It is also likely that the grade is too steep as the route nears the fairgrounds. Overcoming that could require costly earthwork.

Mr. Morgan advised that a couple motorcars are likely to be made available to the City, if it wants them, in exchange for efforts by local volunteers to restore the wooden cab for a vintage locomotive owned by the MN collector who has previously exchanged rail equipment with the City.

It was also suggested that, perhaps, the units in the motorcar railway could be named for local rail display volunteers like Hank Golat and Ray Carlson.

Mr. Morgan reported that some ladies want to know if they can decorate the locomotive and first passenger car in the visitor center rail display for the holidays. He sees no issue with allowing this. Mrs. Stoneberg advised that she has a motion activated Santa that could be made available for this purpose.

Mrs. Moore recalled having provided the City a drawing of rail equipment being displayed in the large parking lot west of the County Government Center. She asked what became of the vintage rail carts damaged in the tornado. Mr. Morgan stated that one of these is being restored at the Bruce High tech ed shop.

Mr. Morgan also suggested that the owner of the Wisconsin Great Northern dinner excursion train at Trego be contacted about willingness to raise the front end of our FP7 locomotive on a contractual basis. It has settled noticeably.

Information:

Mr. Kenyon recalled how he noted initial surprise that local information racks contain materials from area communities, but not our local area. He then learned that space in these racks is leased from the rack provider.

One Way:

Mr. Moore suggested that consideration be given to making Miner Ave. one way to facilitate addition of angle parking. He went on to say that consultants who prepared downtown revitalization plans after the 2002 tornado advised that parking should have never been removed from Lake Ave.

Adjourn:

The meeting adjourned at 5:45 p.m.