

**MEETING MINUTES  
LONG RANGE PLANNING COMMITTEE  
March 2, 2010**

A meeting of the Long Range Planning Committee Meeting was held on **Tuesday, March 2, 2010 at 1:00 P.M.** in the Council Chambers of City Hall, 819 Superior Avenue, Tomah, WI.

Chairperson Brad Kortbein called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. Present: Steve Austin, Barbara Clinard (left at 2:30 p.m.), Brad Kortbein, Pete Peterson, Ed Thompson (left at 2:30 p.m.), and Rick Carlson. Absent: Scott Lawry, Joanne Westpfahl, and Gary Kirking. Also present: City Administrator Jim Bialecki, Building/Zoning/Planning Dir. Shane Rolff, Parks and Recreation Dir. Joe Protz, and City Clerk JoAnn Cram. Scott Harrington of Vandewalle & Associates was also in attendance. Also present: Steven Oseseck and Ryan Sauter from Shaw Environmental, Inc. Chris Hanson-Chamber/CVB and Mayoral candidate John Rusch were also present.

The meeting was called to order by Vice-Chair Brad Kortbein.

**Approve Meeting Minutes of February 2, 2010.** Motion by Thompson, second by Clinard to approve the minutes of the February 2, 2010 Long Range Planning Committee meeting. Motion passed without negative vote.

**Feedback/Follow-up on Public Presentation.** Citizens appreciated the open forum and positive comments were received. The meeting was very informative and well presented.

**Update on City Contacts.** City Administrator Bialecki advised there are sufficient contacts out there at this time. Additional information is needed now regarding timeframes, fiscal issues, infrastructure, price per acre, etc.

**Update on Vandewalle Contacts.** Scott Harrington of Vandewalle & Associates advised he has talked more with DOT regarding requirements for high speed rail should that come to Tomah. There are no current plans for DOT to do anything on Superior Avenue in their six year plan. DOT also discussed options regarding extending Townline Road. The DOT prefers one or two points of access as shown on the concept plans instead of individual driveways into the properties that will line up along Superior Avenue. Walgreens prefers to be at an intersection with lights but that is ultimately decided by the DOT.

**Review and Discussion of Draft Implementation Strategy.** Scott Harrington of Vandewalle & Associates advised they have created some "next steps" and a list of "to do" items. The Implementation Strategy is a work plan for the City and the railroad that identifies the steps they need to take to advance these ideas from concepts to actual on-the-ground projects. The implementation Strategy charts provide a detailed timeline that identifies the components of each project and when they should be pursued. The chart prioritizes each of the four concepts in terms of which ones should be pursued immediately and which ones are perhaps longer term opportunities.

The intermodal transportation hub and regional welcome center is identified as the most immediate priority for the city. The specific steps and goals include: Site layout and development program refinement, coordination with transportation service providers, private development components, coordination with regional tourism initiatives and final design and construction.

The next priority is the Wellness Village. The Wellness Village Concept is a high priority project with near term potential. The City has strong interest from a developer of retail pharmacy stores and this would be an ideal anchor project for the Wellness Village and site as a whole. The City also has interest from a senior housing developer would be another excellent accompaniment to this concept. Specific steps and goals include: Concept refinement, continue pursuing potential retail pharmacy developer, continue pursuing potential senior housing opportunity, overall developer and tenant recruitment and moving forward with the development process. There is interest in senior housing, veterans housing, pharmacy, etc.

The Tomah Institutional and Regional Food Initiative is an opportunity that directly ties in with the growing interest in agriculture, food, and energy issues at the state and national level. However, unlike the Regional Transportation Center or the Wellness Village concept, there is not an immediate specific development opportunity at the table to advance this project right now. Moving forward will require a longer timeline and a commitment to additional partnership building and funding identification. This includes concept refinement and grant identification, business plan, partnership building, food waste-to-energy system and pre-construction/final design.

Similar to the TIRF initiative, there is no immediate development opportunity at the table related to the Technology Campus. However, the infrastructure of the site is a unique opportunity and potential developers and partners may come forward so the City should be prepared to advance the concept. Further, federal and state funding for alternative energy development is at an all-time high and local individuals in the community who have experience with these systems have expressed interest in development on the site. This includes concept refinement and feasibility grant writing, user/tenant identification and recruitment, development recruitment, backup power system, and development which include land transfers, entitlement and the development process.

The last component is the funding strategy. A comprehensive funding strategy that both leverages local tools and attracts outside resources is critical to the success of this project. Meeting with federal and state legislators is critical in finding potential grants. The fact that this site is vacant, has a low tax value, and has one owner also creates opportunities to leverage local economic development tools such as a Tax Increment Financing District and a Business Improvement District. Federal and state funding programs should be pursued. TIF and BID's should be pursued sooner rather than later. Discussion was held regarding the benefits of establishing a TIF or BID. The business improvement district is an additional taxing district. The levy is less than the regular levy but the money can be used for most of what you can do with a TIF plus additional operational expenses such as mowing grass, plowing parking lots, planting trees, advertising to recruit businesses, etc.

Canadian Pacific implementation priorities and steps include: Environmental Remediation, Redevelopment Design, and Property Entitlements. There are different types of contamination (some in the water and some in the soil). Redevelopment Design consists of creating a final and more refined redevelopment plan for the property. A final plan for access and circulation into and within the property and needed site improvements needs to be created. Property entitlements, addressing the zoning, creating a subdivision phasing strategy, and negotiating land transfers will be some of the final steps of the process for Canadian Pacific Railroad. The property needs to be subdivided and zoning issues addressed.

**Status of Preferred Concept Site Plan.** The railroad wants to hang onto the property that the spurs are located on. There are potential customers who could use the spurs. They would like the rail station as close to Superior Avenue as possible. It was also suggested that the railroad and the City swap some property near the ballpark area. This would make the site more developable where an existing ball field is situated. The map provided is a draft and a tool that is a work in process with additional discussions planned for the future to get it agreeable for all parties. What does the City want to see happen on this property that removes the blight that is on the property but also that improves overall economy, job base, help the downtown and bring this all together? If the City can move these initiatives forward, the private market will start to recover. The City will create attractors for new business to locate here. This is a large piece of property under single ownership and we have a willing seller. We have a seller that is very realistic about the land uses and going through this process with the City to determine what reasonable land uses are. The land value will need to be addressed in the near future and decisions regarding who does what part of the process so that everyone is satisfied at the end of the day. There is a great cooperative situation here which makes the potential for success much higher.

**Discussion of Final Steps, Deliverables and Timetable.** Who facilitates or calls the question on when to get together with the Railroad regarding prices of the property? A phone call to initiate the discussion with the railroad can be done at any time by the Committee. A big part of the land value is a function of

what you can do with it and what is realistic in the market place and what is the local government going to accept as far as zoning and local controls? The City should do things to try to make the community grow but there is balancing that plays a role in that process. The next step is to determine how much the City is willing to contribute to this project and who will benefit from the City's contributions. A TIF or BID are suggestions on helping this process along. This sight is blighted; however, it has a lot of potential for varied uses in the future. City Administrator Bialecki would like to provide everyone on the Committee and the Council with a document from the Department of Revenue that talks about TIF and 10 points the City has to ask itself in creating a TIF. Additional discussion needs to be held prior to determining whether or not to create a TIF or BID. Relocation costs of the ball field will also need to be addressed. The end use drives what type of remediation is required as far as cleanup of the blighted areas.

**Branding – Chris Hanson.** Due to time constraints, this item was tabled until the April meeting.

**Schedule Future Meeting Dates.** The next meeting date will be April 6, 2010 at 1 p.m. The March meeting will be the last meeting for the CDBG grant process as Vandewalle & Associates' participation/funding has concluded. The Redevelopment Strategy Project Management Team sub-committee will schedule a meeting with railroad officials prior to the April meeting. At 7:30 A.M. on March 5<sup>th</sup> the Empire Builder High Speed Rail group meets in La Crosse.

Motion by Carlson, second by Austin to adjourn. Motion passed without negative vote. Meeting adjourned at 2:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

JoAnn Cram, City Clerk