

**Community Development Authority
of the City of Onalaska**

Wednesday, January 9, 2019

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1 The meeting of the Community Development Authority of the City of Onalaska was called to
2 order at 3:30 p.m. on Wednesday, January 9, 2019. It was noted that the meeting had been
3 announced and a notice posted at City Hall.

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5 Roll call was taken with the following members present: Ald. Jim Binash, Ald. Jim Olson, John
6 Lyche, Ron Johnson, Joe Bucheger, Ann Brandau, Mike Gargaro

7

8 Also Present: City Administrator Eric Rindfleisch, Planning Manager Katie Aspenson, City
9 Engineer Jarrod Holter, Jeff Miller and Bryan Harjes of Hoisington Koegler Group, Inc., Ald.
10 Diane Wulf

11

12 **Item 2 – Approval of minutes from the previous meetings**

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14 Motion by Ald. Binash, second by Joe, to approve the minutes from the previous meeting as
15 printed and on file in the City Clerk’s Office.

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17 On voice vote, motion carried.

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19 **Item 3 – Public Input (limited to 3 minutes/individual)**

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21 Mike called three times for anyone wishing to provide public input and closed that portion of the
22 meeting.

23

24 **Consideration and possible action on the following items:**

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26 **Item 4 – Review and Consideration of Onalaska Redevelopment Project:**

27

28 A. Review Feedback from Public Information Meeting:

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30 1. State Road 16 Corridor; and

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32 2. Downtown Onalaska

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34 Katie said Bryan and Jeff will be discussing the public information meeting that was held

35 Tuesday evening at Irving Pertzsch Elementary School.

36

37 Bryan said he and Jeff want to cover the following topics today:

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39 • The open house review

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41 • Setting a course for the implementation of priorities and strategies both for the State Road

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43 16 Corridor and Downtown Onalaska

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45 • A loose outline of the draft report the CDA will examine at its February 13 meeting

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42 Bryan said the focus of today’s meeting will be to recap the public information meeting. Bryan
43 noted the first two phases have been completed and said HKGi is working on defining a
44 preferred redevelopment plan and seeking approvals during the first quarter of 2019.

45

46 Bryan provided the following summary of the public information meeting:

47

48 **Downtown Onalaska**

- 49 • The Downtown Onalaska plans were on the main stage, and the State Road 16 plans were
50 on the riser area. HKGi provided some background with existing conditions in the area,
51 and also some of the previous planning from 1999.
- 52 • HKGi focused on circulation in the downtown district (e.g. paseo improvements, Irvin
53 Street improvements, ideas to connect parking, other options for potential shared parking
54 opportunities).
- 55 • HKGi “distilled down” development opportunities in what it is calling a potential
56 redevelopment/reinvestment area. There are programming opportunities at the Onalaska
57 School District Office site, and Marvin Wanders has proposed constructing the Great
58 River Residences on city property.
- 59 • There was a discussion about park, trails and open space, and continuing planning for the
60 Great River Landing concept at the waterfront.
- 61 • HKGi highlighted the “character areas” in the downtown district (downtown core mixed
62 use, riverfront residential, the Great River Road business corridor, downtown mixed
63 residential district).

64

65 **State Road 16 Corridor**

- 66 • HKGi showed attendees the study area, along with the roadway network that is
67 established.
- 68 • HKGi discussed challenges at intersections, opportunities for additional crossings either
69 of Interstate 90 between Theater Road and State Road 16, or the overpass area that had
70 been mentioned by Gundersen Health System.
- 71 • HKGi broke down some general initiatives that were narrative based with supporting
72 imagery.
- 73 • HKGi discussed transportation as well as redevelopment, with the focus on starting
74 smaller with the active sites and infill in the larger commercial lots, and parks, trails and
75 open space, blending it with connectivity and the ability to examine connections to the La
76 Crosse River Conservation Area, or integrating it with parks and plaza areas with
77 potential commercial development.
- 78 • Attendees were shown a summary of the market findings both for State Road 16 and
79 downtown.
- 80 • HKGi also shared the feedback obtained from the stakeholder meetings.

81

82 Bryan shared the following feedback obtained from Tuesday evening’s meeting:

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- Between 40 and 45 individuals attended, and a majority of the attendees were in favor of many of the ideas that were presented. Most of the focus was on the downtown corridor.
 - Building height was the primary concern that was raised. Concerns also were raised about walling off use to the Black River.
 - There was positive feedback about the Great River Landing, and attendees do not want to see any changes to it.
 - There was a request to see more redevelopment/reinvestment, landscaping and signage improvements in the area between Elm Street to Ash Street, which is on the south end of the project area. Might there be an opportunity for gateway monumentation at the corner of State Trunk Highway 35 and Ash Street? Also, think long term about redevelopment opportunities near the businesses and homes located to the west in that area.
 - Construct a sidewalk on the west side of 3rd Avenue South to create a connection between Kwik Trip to both Onalaska High School and the residential neighborhood.
 - Slowing traffic on 3rd Avenue South via traffic control (stop sign).
 - Improve the alleyways, especially between 2nd Avenue and 3rd Avenue. Attendees approved of the idea of creating a paseo.
 - Regarding bicycle lanes along STH 35, there is space for bicycle riders. Jarrod noted there is no painted-on bike symbol on the pavement.
 - Is it possible to add parking on the north side of the Great River Landing for individuals who utilize the trails for snowmobiling?
 - Can there be shared parking at the lot utilized by Onalaska United Methodist Church located at 5th Avenue and King Street, and also at the Onalaska School District Offices parking lot?
 - The Irvin Street streetscape enhancements from the riverfront to Irving Pertzsch Elementary School received positive feedback.
 - Improve the alleyway between King Street and Main Street.
 - Seek out additional downtown parking, and integrate shared parking with additional development.
 - Enhance lighting at the Main Street crosswalk as well as other key downtown streets.
 - Place an entryway feature at the southern end of STH 35.
 - Regarding the map of the development districts, attendees shared several positive comments regarding the types of uses, the character of what the development would look like, housing, creating a walkable district in which citizens may reside and walk to goods and services.
 - Is Marvin Wanders' proposed project too close to the Black River? Bryan noted the area in which the Great River Residences would be constructed is out of the floodplain. Also, will there be traffic and visibility-related issues with the construction of the Great River Residences?
 - Continue to make walking easy through the riverfront residential area. Bryan suggested

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- 123 that the city be cognizant of how the Great River Residences are designed, and also to
124 maintain some views to the waterfront.
- 125 • Attendees brought up the affordability of residing in the downtown mixed residential
126 area. Is there an opportunity to create more affordable housing in this area? Also, would
127 there be opportunities to own a townhome or a condominium in this area?
 - 128 • Continue the beautification in the downtown district.
 - 129 • Stop constructing for automobiles, thereby alleviating parking challenges. Utilize public
130 transportation.
 - 131 • The downtown district could suffer with an abundance of affordable housing.
 - 132 • Increase bicycle and pedestrian access to bring individuals to the downtown district.
 - 133 • Establish a fresh market grocery store along the primary STH 35 zone.
 - 134 • Create a traffic circle at Riders Club Road and East Avenue.
 - 135 • Create a small condominium development or a small park behind Angelini's Ristorante,
136 which is located along the northern stretch of STH 35.
 - 137 • There was support for coffeeshops and farmers markets.

138
139 John said he and City Administrator Rindfleisch had spoken to a woman who is remodeling her
140 second-floor bathroom and asked if she should stop doing so because she had seen the notice for
141 the public meeting and feared she would lose her home due to redevelopment in the downtown
142 area. John said he and City Administrator Rindfleisch told the woman to continue with
143 remodeling her bathroom and upgrade her home as much as possible so it would increase in
144 value. John suggested creating a preamble that would describe the purpose of redeveloping the
145 downtown district.

146
147 Ald. Binash said someone had suggested finding out who owns the motel located south of the
148 Blue Moon on STH 35, razing it and constructing condominiums.

149
150 Ald. Olson said the owner of Miller Quik Print had told him he does not believe the vision for
151 the city goes far enough south on STH 35, and this individual suggested expanding the vision
152 farther south to create a better opening to what the City of Onalaska will be.

153
154 Ron suggested an ATV trail might be more attractive than a snowmobile trail.

155
156 Ann noted there was heavy snowmobile use along the Norwalk/Kendall/Elroy area when there
157 was heavy snow cover, which meant a significant amount of tourism. Ann said it is her
158 understanding the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources does not allow ATV use on the
159 trails. Ann also said she would not discount the revenue generated by snowmobilers during the
160 winters when the area receives significant snowfall.

161
162 Bryan said he and Jeff had not received a significant amount of feedback regarding the State
163 Road 16 corridor. There was some feedback regarding safety and traffic accidents, and Bryan

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164 said he believes HKGi is addressing some of those concerns by suggesting improved circulation.
165 However, Bryan also said the city will need to work with the State of Wisconsin, landowners and
166 the development community to address those concerns.

167

168 B. Discussion of Implementation Strategies and Tools for Onalaska Redevelopment Plan

169

170 Bryan first addressed the downtown corridor and the key components to consider moving
171 forward:

172

- 173 • Capitalize on the proposed Great River Residences Project and utilize it as a possible
174 catalyst for a residential development project.
- 175 • Address improvements on the water side of the Great River Landing, perhaps in the form
176 of a fishing pier, additional trail components, or canoe/kayak rental.
- 177 • Reconstruction of Irvin Street (2nd Avenue to 3rd Avenue) and potentially create a paseo
178 in 2019. Also establish a flashing beacon pedestrian crossing at that intersection.

179

180 Mike said he would rather see the beacon moved down one more block.

181

182 Jarrod said he believes it would be beneficial to install a beacon at the Irvin Street intersection.
183 However, Jarrod also expressed concern that a motorist will accelerate through a yellow light at
184 the intersection of STH 35 and Main Street and not see the flashing beacon one block north.
185 Jarrod said, “We’ve always tried to direct people up to the signal light because it’s the safest spot
186 to cross. We’ve given that signal 10 seconds when you press the button that all sides stop.
187 Hopefully you’re in the crosswalk and visible. ... I think if you moved it down another block on
188 Hickory Street, the problem down there is you’re getting further away from where people are
189 trying to cross.”

190

191 Bryan noted Irvin Street connects to the waterfront and is the one identified crossing of the rail
192 line in that location. Bryan also noted it was one of the strengths to make that connection across,
193 and he suggested having more conversations with the state and understanding what the impacts
194 would be.

195

196 John noted he has seen pedestrians jaywalk from the Great River Landing across STH 35, and he
197 suggested doing landscaping or installing a barrier.

198

199 Jarrod noted there are stormwater planters serving as natural barriers, and he told John larger
200 cities have barriers that “herd” pedestrians to a safe crosswalk.

201

202 Bryan made the following suggestions regarding the downtown district:

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- 204 • Explore having farmers markets or art fair programming after hours in the Onalaska

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205 School District Office's parking lot. These events possibly could be paired with concerts
206 in Dash-Park after alley improvements have been completed.

207 • Have more conversations about shared parking opportunities in the downtown district
208 while understanding the evening programming that occurs at some of the churches within
209 the district.

210 • Continue investigating the relocation of the Xcel Energy substation, and also bury some
211 of the overhead powerlines to tie in with key infrastructure improvements into the
212 alleyways with the paseos or some of the streets.

213 • Utilize the Railroad Quiet Zone to mitigate some of the noise at Irvin Street.

214 • Pave the Great River State Trail from the City of La Crosse through Onalaska, and widen
215 the shoulder off the trail to accommodate snowmobilers.

216 • Update parking requirements in the downtown district.

217 • Allow the Community Development Authority to become more active in the acquisition
218 and assembly of the strategic properties within the broader downtown area.

219 • Promote redevelopment within the downtown districts.

220

221 John suggested perhaps creating a publication that could be given to property owners within the
222 redevelopment zone HKGi has identified asking them to consider selling their properties to the
223 City of Onalaska if they are considering selling. John also questioned whether that could be
224 translated into a tax base, meaning it would be profitable for the city if values increase. John
225 described it as a "long-term math question" and said he believes some property owners likely
226 would be willing participants.

227

228 Bryan told John there is a risk of doing so, citing the market crash of late 2007 and 2008 and the
229 reduction in property values. Bryan asked, "What is the measurement? How and when do you
230 measure that, and over what timespan do you measure that value? I don't know the answer to
231 that question either, but that's my initial reaction to [John's] question."

232

233 Jeff said he does not believe the document will identify specific properties, but suggested that
234 perhaps the city should be looking at specific blocks within the downtown district.

235

236 Joe asked if developers have approached city officials and the CDA and asked questions about
237 some of the goals the city is attempting to accomplish.

238

239 City Administrator Rindfleisch told Joe developers have spoken with city officials and the CDA
240 regarding possible opportunities, and he said the key question is what type of tools are available
241 to provide assistance to the partnership. City Administrator Rindfleisch noted a Tax Incremental
242 District is one tool, and he said one of the questions at hand is how to get the CDA to participate,
243 and what financial tools does the CDA have.

244

245 Jeff said he hopes this plan will help developers see that the city knows what they want to see.

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246 Jeff addressed the Zoning Code rewrite with which HGKi is assisting the city, and he said he
247 anticipates that the city's zoning map will be updated substantially. Jeff referred to the city's
248 existing Land Use Map – which includes Commercial, Single Family, Industrial, Parking,
249 Recreation, and Institutional – and said it does not include Multifamily in the downtown district.
250 Jeff said the individuals who attended Tuesday evening's public information meeting had
251 expressed an interest in seeing non-single family in the downtown district. Jeff also said he does
252 not believe there currently are any mixed-use structures in the downtown district. Jeff referred to
253 the city's current plan map, which was completed in 2016, and said it looks to the future and
254 shows that most of the study area is guided for downtown mixed use. According to the city's
255 Comprehensive Plan, this allows Residential, Commercial, Institutional, Office, and Multifamily.
256 Jeff said, "The plan is in place to allow that," and he pointed out Mixed Density Residential
257 zoning on the map. Jeff said, "This project could direct what you think should happen for zoning
258 on the zoning map specifically. Most of the study area is zoned B-1 – Neighborhood Business.
259 A few properties are zoned B-2, and then R-2, which is low density and not multifamily." Jeff
260 also pointed out areas zoned P-1 – Public and Industrial, and he said, "What's not on here is
261 anything other than basically Single Family Residential or two-family. This is an opportunity to
262 influence this map going forward."

263
264 Jeff referred to another map on display and pointed out an area in which the city recently had
265 begun allowing overlay districts and noted it is basically the entire study area. Jeff noted the
266 Downtown Planned Unit Development area is the core area for a majority of the study area, and
267 Downtown Residential surrounds that area. Jeff said the purpose of the Downtown Residential
268 area is to preserve and allow existing housing to improve and reinvest.

269
270 Katie said by comparison, the Downtown PUD would allow anything (Mixed Use, Multifamily,
271 Single Family) with both Plan Commission and Common Council approval. Katie said, "It's
272 really the opportunity to let the development community come forward. But in the same token,
273 we've [heard] the comment, 'That's great, but what do you want?' We haven't been able to
274 provide anything to the development community short of saying we have a 1999 Master Plan and
275 a 2007 Waterfront Plan, but we don't have anything current. My hope is that when we have this
276 new plan and we have different development types and we have pictures of what we want to see
277 that we can show, we can [tell developers], 'These are examples. This is the vision.' Hopefully
278 we'll have some guidelines to tie into that so people can see what we want, then the PUD
279 becomes the tool to make it happen and then we still allow the creativity that people want
280 [whether] it's reduction of setbacks [or] green space might not be necessary because maybe it's
281 right next to Dash-Park or the Great River Landing. We take in terms of the context of the
282 district as a whole instead of piece by piece."

283
284 Jeff said developers do not like restrictions or parameters if they do not have to have them.
285 However, Jeff also said it is helpful to know what the city or a neighborhood wants so developers
286 do not make proposals that ultimately will be rejected.

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288 Jeff referred to a section of the Economic Development Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan that
289 states there needs to be an additional focus on the downtown district in terms of desired
290 businesses, and also the fact the approach to reserving and identifying sites for complementary
291 businesses should occur, and he said he believes it is relevant to this project. Jeff noted the
292 chapter calls out the downtown and STH 35 corridors, and he said they are locations the city
293 should be proactive in stating they are priority areas and that sites should be reserved when
294 redevelopment occurs.

295
296 Bryan addressed the State Road 16 Corridor, telling CDA members HKGi had created three
297 topic areas: transportation, redevelopment, and parks and open space. Bryan said the following
298 items were key pieces HKGi had heard throughout the process as work on the document
299 proceeds:

- 300
- 301 • Explore options for new public roadways to enhance connectivity and reduce congestion
302 at State Road 16 intersections, particularly in the Pralle Center Drive triangle and the
303 northern part of the study area (Theater Road to State Road 16).
 - 304 • Can there be a connection along the La Crosse River Conservancy area? Also, in terms
305 of a long-term objective, can there be a connection to the Valley View Mall side of State
306 Road 16, which is in the City of La Crosse?
 - 307 • Create an overpass over Interstate 90, east of Interchange No. 5, or possibly create a
308 roadway connection between Best Buy and Farm and Fleet.
 - 309 • How can the stacking distances for turning movements at the intersections be improved?
310 The key intersection is County Highway PH to State Road 16. Perhaps there could be a
311 synched signal system, along with additional access management. Perhaps there also
312 could be future redevelopment in this area in the form of shifting the County Highway
313 PH intersection further north.
 - 314 • Continue ongoing planning with WisDOT and the City of La Crosse on access points,
315 intersection control, and safety improvements. There had been discussions with WisDOT
316 regarding establishing center turn lanes in the near term.
 - 317 • Begin redevelopment in the focus areas by continuing to make progress on the active
318 sites (the former Old Country Buffet and Fauver Hill sites, the greenfield site on the
319 Gundersen Health System campus).
 - 320 • Address infill on the overparked parking lots.
 - 321 • Repurpose oversized buildings that are subdivided.
 - 322 • Integrate larger redevelopment sites with the potential roadway improvement projects.
 - 323 • Larger redevelopment sites do not have to be retail. Explore housing, office use or
324 service-related uses.
 - 325 • Keeping the line of communication open with the City of La Crosse regarding the Valley
326 View Mall site.

- 327
- Enhance the pedestrian and bicycle connectivity components between businesses and crossing State Road 16. There is a regional trail connection with gaps through the corridor, and connections are needed from La Crosse through Onalaska.
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- Integrate park plaza spaces with redevelopment.
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- Enhance wayfinding and signage for the on-street bicycle path components and regional trail elements).
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334 C. Discussion of Onalaska Redevelopment Plan Outline

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336 Bryan said this was intended to summarize the entire planning process and provide
337 recommendations going forward. However, Bryan said he now believes there are two
338 documents: one community, one town. Bryan said the downtown and State Road 16 areas are
339 uniquely different, and each district has different strategies. Bryan said he believes both
340 documents will follow a similar format in their approach:

341

- Describe the purpose of the plan and the approach.
- Describe any prior planning so that HGKi can link what it has learned to past planning components.
- Describe existing conditions (land use, transportation, and parks, trails and open space).
- Show the redevelopment scoring, including a market summary (commercial, retail, residential). The redevelopment scoring is the combined analysis that goes through the mapping components HKGi had examined (e.g. age of structure, vacant properties, land value per square foot).
- Share the feedback obtained from the stakeholder meetings, the developers' roundtable, and the public information meeting.
- The documents will establish a framework for the redevelopment process, and this framework will serve as design guidelines for the development community both in the downtown and along the State Road 16 corridors.
- The documents will address implementation; specifically, roles and responsibilities; the key redevelopment initiatives and priorities on which to focus over the next one to five years; the general approach to phasing and how it transforms over time; financing and tools such as TIFs and grants.

359

360 Bryan said much of the content HKGi is developed and now must be formatted into a report.
361 Bryan said the reports will be presented in an 11-by-17 .pdf format, and that he and Jeff want to
362 have the documents be part of the CDA's agenda materials for its February 13 meeting. Bryan
363 said the goal is to give CDA members one week to review the documents and discuss them at the
364 February 13 meeting. Bryan said another goal is to target the March CDA meeting for approval
365 of the documents.

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367 Katie said it is the intent to recommend approval of the documents to the Common Council upon

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368 CDA approval. Katie said that while the documents can be included on a Plan Commission
369 meeting agenda, “this is really a CDA-driven product.” Katie said the Plan Commission will
370 serve as the reviewing body when Planned Unit Developments come in.

371

372 **Item 5 – Review and Consideration of Onalaska Redevelopment Planning Invoice #018-**
373 **036-6 from Hoisington Koegler Group inc. (HKGi)**

374

375 Motion by Joe, second by John, to approve Onalaska Redevelopment Planning Invoice #018-
376 036-6 from Hoisington Koegler Group inc. (HKGi) in the amount of \$6,281.68.

377

378 On voice vote, motion carried.

379

380 **Adjournment**

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382 Motion by Ald. Olson, second by Joe, to adjourn.

383

384 The meeting was adjourned at 4:37 p.m.

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386

387 Recorded by:

388

389 Kirk Bey