

Joint Development Authority
Monday, April 3, 2023
Arden Hills City Council Chambers

Minutes
5:30 pm

Present:

Joint Development Authority: Chair Jon Wicklund, Commissioner Nicole Frethem, Commissioner Victoria Reinhardt, Commissioner Tom Fabel, Commissioner Tena Monson

Also present: Dave Perrault (Arden Hills); Jessica Jagoe (Arden Hills); Kari Collins (Ramsey County)

Roll call taken.

Approval of Agenda

Motion by Commissioner Frethem seconded by Commissioner Fabel to approve the agenda as amended moving Item 7 before Item 6. Motion carried.

Chair Comments

Chair Wicklund thanked the City of Arden Hills for giving him the opportunity to lead the Joint Development Authority (JDA). He stated he was thrilled by the fact this committee was committed to getting a master development agreement (MDA) signed. He indicated when he attended the first JDA meeting on February 6 he believed there was a collective commitment to results, in order to drive this project forward. He explained he would be support that, guiding the process, in order to get an MDA signed. He commented further on the workload the JDA faced and suggested a worksession be held on Monday, May 1 at 5:30 p.m. at the Arden Hills City Hall in order to discuss the creation of a JDA Energy Advisory Committee, if the JDA wants to coordinate their communication and what would be the best path forward to get to a signed MDA.

Public Input

Linda Swanson, 1124 Ingerson Road, stated “a Council that invites rather than discourages public participation, a Council that listens and encourages public participation, a Council that stores good will with residents, a Council that listens and encourages public participation”. She hoped Commissioners Fabel and Monson recalled these comments as they were part of their campaign pledge. She commented on the JDA agreement that was signed by the City and County on December 17, 2012 noting this agreement was still legally binding, noting the JDA shall keep minutes of all proceedings, all meetings of the JDA, its committees and subcommittees shall be governed by the open meeting law and data practices act. She noted the JDA shall develop mechanisms for public involvement for any planning or review process

including the preparation and approval of the TCAAP master plan and approval of development agreements. She explained all public meetings and hearings shall be held as required by law. She stated all books, reports and records of the JDA shall be open to public inspection. In addition, the JDA shall conduct its meetings pursuant to the open meeting law. She was of the opinion; the JDA advisory committee has the moral responsibility and legal responsibility to hold public meetings. She reported the JDA was to make sure everything was transparent and that meetings were not held behind closed doors. She requested the JDA Advisory Committee meetings be open to the public and that the JDA Advisory Committee meeting minutes be open to the public. She questioned why the JDA Advisory Committee would not hold open meetings but if this was being done, she would like to know why.

Donna Wiemann, 1406 Arden View Drive, indicated she had the same question about the JDA Advisory Committee. She explained she would like these meetings open to the public, along with the minutes. She stated if the JDA could not answer this question at this time, she would like to know how to get that answer. She questioned if the Ramsey County Commissioners recalled a time during mediation when the City of Arden Hills stated that they would be willing to increase the number of units from 1460 to a greater number. She realized this may not be able to be answered right now, but she wanted this answer. She commented on the request for development interest (RDI) that was drafted by a County staff person. She noted she worked in development and finance for decades and explained this RDI was very well done.

Richard Wenzel, 1931 Noble Road, commented he asked over a month ago where the County's proposal was for this project. He understood the group was interested in negotiations, but he believed only one side was working on this project. He questioned how negotiations could occur without a proposal from the County.

Chair Wicklund explained the JDA was taking comments at this time and staff would be responding to the comments at an appropriate time.

Mr. Wenzel reported he has lived in Arden Hills for over 50 years and the only thing that has been accomplished on the TCAAP site was that a roundabout has been installed at County Road H. He understood subcommittees have been formed, but still noting was being done.

Chair Wicklund thanked Mr. Wenzel for his comments and explained a new JDA was in place to move this project forward. He noted the goal of the JDA was to put a pathway in place to accomplish something.

George Winiacki, 4175 Old Highway 10, explained he has been a resident of Arden Hills for almost 75 years. He feared the JDA had a hidden agenda in place and encouraged the JDA to tell the public what the plan was. He indicated he did not like the two minute time limit for speaking. He suggested this be increased to three minutes. He noted he was having trouble with the fact the City was trying to redevelop a site that had filthy dirt and water. He anticipated there would be a lot of difficult variables the JDA would have to deal with throughout the development of this property and the risks could be huge. He noted the JDA

would be held accountable for this project, both the City and the County. He encouraged both parties to do their homework and to do it well.

Lynn Diaz, 1143 Ingerson Road, stated she was excited to see the JDA moving forward. She encouraged the JDA to put information online for the public. She explained she wanted to learn more about what the City controlled, what the County controlled and what the developer controlled. She encouraged the JDA to consider how the public could help throughout the planning process.

Stan Harpstead, 1277 Nursery Hill Lane, noted he used to be Mayor. He reported when he was Mayor, the TCAAP property was still owned by the Army. He explained the property was then turned over to the County and the County completed a remediation process to bring the site to residential standards. He encouraged the JDA to be open and transparent in their governance and to allow for public participation. He commented on how the City has turned over and he wanted to see the public involved in the TCAAP redevelopment. He encouraged the JDA to consider how to connect this project to other areas of Arden Hills. In addition, he encouraged the JDA to consider how traffic will be impacted by this development. He stated he was excited to what will finally happen on this property.

Gregg Larson, 3377 Snelling Avenue North, noted he was a former City Councilmember and Planning Commissioner. He stated it was gratifying to see the JDA functioning again with the recent change in City leadership. He encouraged the JDA to consider a financial model for this project that generates expenditures and revenues for each year of the development period. He noted the JDA also needed an updated AUAR, taking into consideration all new traffic impacts. Lastly, he noted the JDA needed to redraft an MDA with Alatus and suggested the legal team work to build on the past agreement drafts. He recommended the JDA allow the public to speak for longer than two minutes. He noted the standard that has been used in this chamber was three. He encouraged the JDA to allow the public to speak and to be a part of this planning process. He also recommended the materials that are provided to the JDA be provided to the public.

Consent Agenda

- a. Approve February 4, 2019 Minutes
- b. Approve February 6, 2023 Minutes

Motion by Commissioner Frethem seconded by Commissioner Fabel to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Motion carried.

JDA Advisory Committee Update

Director Perrault noted the JDA Advisory Committee met on February 24, March 10 and March 17. He reviewed the items the Committee was working on, which included the County seeking legal representation with Kennedy & Graven, and the County was seeking a relationship with

Goff Public for public relations. He noted the County was putting forward an RDI for the Thumb Parcel on TCAAP. He indicated this item would be addressed under Item 7C. He explained the Committee was planning future public presentations and public engagement to educate residents about the development. He stated the JDA would be provided with a presentation on parks and recreation, and economic competitiveness and inclusion at this meeting. He reported future public presentations would be on remediation, real estate trends, green energy and project financing.

Commissioner Reinhardt thanked staff for the report and noted the JDA was working diligently to move this project forward. She stated she was excited to be a part of this group.

Commissioner Frethem commented because this was a new team, there were some logistical items that had to be put back in place, such as a communications team and attorneys. She noted the County was trying to pull this back together quickly. She reported the Advisory Committee was working to address how the JDA moves forward quickly with momentum in a manner that is transparent and allows for public engagement. She commented on all that has changed in four years. She noted she supported the JDA holding a worksession meeting on May 1. She explained the JDA was working to address the questions residents have, along with how the housing market has changed, potential connectivity options, and to address the concerns regarding the soil quality. She discussed how the County was moving forward with an RDI for the Thumb Parcel.

Commissioner Fabel indicated the Advisory Committee meetings were the same kinds of meetings that have occurred since 2012 with staff gathering information and preparing recommendations for the JDA. He noted the only difference was only two Commissioners were participating in these meetings with staff. He stated with only two JDA members in attendance, a quorum was not present and no decisions were being made. He explained these two JDA members were working with staff to come up with and help guide the JDA. He reported minutes have been drafted for each of the Advisory Committee meetings and this was public information.

Commissioner Monson asked if staff was working on a financial model. Director Perrault stated this would be brought to the JDA at a future worksession or regular JDA meeting.

Chair Wicklund questioned where the public would find the JDA Advisory Committee meeting minutes. Director Perrault explained the minutes have not been posted on the website, but he can work with County staff to get these minutes posted. In addition, he noted the full packet for this meeting was posted on the City's website.

New Business

- a. Receive Presentation from Ramsey County Parks and Recreation (Building 189 Schedule – Rice Creek Regional Trail Summary Presentation)

Scott Yonke, Planning and Development Director for Ramsey County Parks and Recreation, presented the JDA with information on the Building 189 project schedule and commented on the proposed Rice Creek Commons regional trails. He commented further on the location of the Rice Creek Regional trail corridor. The long term improvements that were proposed for the trail corridor were reviewed. The evolution of the central segment of the Rice Creek North Regional Trail Corridor from 1998 to 2020 was discussed. He then commented on the future improvements within the Central Segment noting connectivity was the focus. It was noted Building 189 would be removed this spring and a large trailhead would be created in this area.

Commissioner Reinhardt asked if the new trails would be ADA accessible. Mr. Yonke reported the new trails would be ADA accessible.

Commissioner Fabel questioned how the trail crossed over the freeway. Mr. Yonke indicated the crossing occurred over the County Road H bridge.

Commissioner Fabel inquired if there would be an ability for the trail to cross at Highway 96. Mr. Yonke stated there was a plan to cross Highway 96. He reported this matter was being addressed within the County's master plan.

Commissioner Fabel asked if the trailhead could have a community center. Mr. Yonke commented at this point, he was unsure what would be installed at the trailhead. He stated the County would be engaging the public to see what they would like to see in this area.

Commissioner Frethem questioned if there would be County trails south of Highway 96 for TCAAP to connect to. Mr. Yonke reported Highway 96 was a regional trail and noted there were connections to Long Lake Regional Park and Vadnais Snail Regional Park.

Commissioner Frethem thanked the County for the update on Building 189. She stated she was pleased this building would be coming down. Mr. Yonke explained the County had a webpage for this project if the public was interested in learning more.

Commissioner Monson thanked the County for the presentation. She explained she appreciated the County's vision for the trail corridor. She inquired when future improvements would be completed. Mr. Yonke stated the improvements were to be determined at this time. He noted Building 189 would be removed by the end of July. He indicated all future projects would move forward based on funding. He estimated it would take \$15 to \$30 million to construct the trails and anticipated it would take at least five years to complete.

Chair Wicklund thanked Mr. Yonke for his presentation.

- b. Receive Presentation from Ramsey County Community & Economic Development (Economic Competitiveness & Inclusion Plan/Equitable Development Framework)

Director Collins stated in 2019, Ramsey County led the development of a comprehensive economic development strategy centered around equitable growth and the intent to strengthen economic competitiveness in the region. This process was led by the county with the help of local and national consultants that supported the development of in-depth analyses of the county's economy, including:

- A market and industry cluster analysis.
- A property-based fiscal analysis.
- A countywide housing assessment.

Director Collins explained the data was startling and demonstrated county-wide deficits in housing infrastructure (particularly deeply affordable housing units), missing or weakened pathways to intergenerational wealth through avenues such as homeownership, and limited accessibility to start and grow a business/access to livable wage jobs. The research and engagement led by the team coalesced around eight strategies. These eight strategies were as follows:

1. Preserve and increase the supply of rental housing units for lowest-income residents.
2. Expand affordable home ownership opportunities and improve housing stability for communities that have experienced historic wealth extraction.
3. Foster inclusive economic development within county transit and key commercial corridors.
4. Support communities in equitable site development.
5. Sustain and accelerate workforce recovery programs.
6. Develop pathways to entrepreneurship and Black, Latinx, Asian, and Indigenous business ownership.
7. Attract and grow high-wage industry and innovation: technology, advanced manufacturing, and life sciences.
8. Strengthen business retention and expansion infrastructure to support communities.

Director Collins explained these strategies have become the roadmap that is now referred to as the Economic Competitiveness & Inclusion (ECI) Plan. The ECI Plan was adopted on March 23, 2021, after 18 months of engagement with residents, businesses, community leaders, a steering committee, and the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners. The plan now acts as a guide directing community objectives, staffing and budgets for the next five years. The county has also been tracking its investment into these eight strategic areas through an ECI Tracker which can be found on the Plan's website.

Director Collins stated lastly, and per the recommendations of the ECI Plan, the County in 2021 worked with the Alliance for Metropolitan Stability on developing an Equitable Development Framework. This Framework is included in the packet and has become the tool in which County staff vet proposals requesting county funding, as well as proposals seeking the acquisition of county land. It was noted the core tenets of the Equitable Development Framework include:

1. Cultivating economic prosperity and invest in neighborhoods with social vulnerability through proactive leadership and inclusive initiatives that engage all communities in decisions about our future.
2. Enhancing access to opportunity and mobility for all residents and businesses through connections to education, employment, and economic development throughout our region.
3. Fostering strong communities and people by recognizing and building on racially and ethnically diverse communities' existing capacity for self-determination, and anticipating and preventing displacement of vulnerable residents, businesses, and community organizations.
4. Increasing opportunities for low-income households of color to live in all neighborhoods, with access to home ownership and rental opportunities.
5. Fostering places that are healthy, vibrant and resilient.

Director Collins reported the County would be following these tenets when considering the redevelopment of the Rice Creek Commons property.

Commissioner Reinhardt discussed how the County has been very intentional when it comes to economic inclusion. She explained Ramsey County has the goal to be a place where all people are valued and thrive. She discussed how the County was working to address climate resilience.

Commissioner Fabel asked if any project had been completed and scored on the County's new system. Director Collins reported the new score system had been used with all of the solicitations associated with ARPA. She stated looking ahead, this framework would be a tool to score and look at financial feasibility and core aspects of projects.

Commissioner Frethem stated she was pleased this was brought forward. She encouraged the public to take a deeper look into all of the data that was collected. She commented further on how interconnected the County's goals were. She stated it was her hope the A Line would be expanded into TCAAP. She further discussed how this plan would assist with finding numerous ways to create truly affordable housing.

Commissioner Monson thanked the County for the presentation and noted the County's goals align with her vision for TCAAP in that she would like to see a development that is walkable with small businesses.

- c. Authorize Request for Development Interest (RDI) Solicitation for Outlot A ("Thumb Parcel")

Director Collins requested the JDA authorize Request for Development Interest (RDI) solicitation for Outlot A, the Thumb Parcel. She reported the Solicitation is exclusively for Outlot A within the Rice Creek Commons project boundaries. Outlot A is available to be sold to interested buyers without additional infrastructure investment. The land sale proceeds are anticipated to be invested by the County into the larger vision for Rice Creek Commons. Ramsey

County is working with the developer, Alatus, on an agreement that provides exclusive development and brokerage rights for the remainder of the site. The development team represented by Alatus, LLC may participate in this solicitation as well by providing industry outreach or as negotiated with Ramsey County.

Director Collins commented further on the process and timeline noting the Advisory Committee, or a Selection Committee identified by the JDA, will review all proposals, and recommend finalists for JDA consideration. The County Board will enter into a Purchase and Development Agreement with the selected proposer. That Agreement will address the financial and other terms of the transaction. It was noted a tentative solicitation timeline is identified in the Request for Development Interest Solicitation.

Commissioner Fabel stated he would like to see modifications to the agreement.

Commissioner Frethem requested further information regarding the process that would be followed for the sale and development of the Thumb Parcel. Director Collins explained Ramsey County owns this property but per the bylaws any solicitation for the sale of this property has to be reviewed by the JDA. She noted this was a solicitation that may yield into an agreement with an end user. She reported the finalists would be brought to the JDA for consideration and the final candidate will be directed back to the County Board in order to approve a development and purchase agreement.

Commissioner Monson questioned if the Thumb Parcel required any cleanup. Director Collins explained at this time, it was envisioned a corporate campus would be located on this site and to her knowledge the site was cleaned to commercial standards.

Motion by Commissioner Reinhardt seconded by Commissioner Fabel to authorize Request for Development Interest (RDI) solicitation for Outlot A ("Thumb Parcel").

Commissioner Reinhardt explained this recommendation came forward after a closed session of the Board, which was a Ramsey County requirement. She reported because this property was ready for development, the County was recommending the RDI be considered at this time in order to provide cash flow for this project. She indicated the RDI does not bind the City or the County, but would provide options for developing the Thumb Parcel. In addition, this will create momentum for the overall project.

Commissioner Fabel stated he shared Commissioner Reinhardt's enthusiasm for this proposal. He indicated his one concern was on the project timeline. He understood the cash need was there, and for that reason, he supported a motion to amend the project timeline. He discussed how the timeline could be amended in order to move the project up.

Chair Wicklund requested staff speak to the proposed timeline. Director Collins reported there were certain variables that were outside her control and noted a certain amount of buffer had

been written into the RDI. She anticipated she could get the RDI out in two weeks. She suggested a date not to exceed the first week of October.

Friendly amendment made by Commissioner Fabel to amend the RDI project timeline for Outlot A with a date not to exceed the first week of October 2023.

Commissioner Reinhardt accepted the friendly amendment.

Commissioner Frethem explained she supported the project moving forward as quickly as possible in order to get money in the bank with the understanding the County also wants to get the best possible project.

Commissioner Monson questioned what the expectations were from the City once a developer is selected. She asked if this property was included in a TIF district. Director Perrault stated he would investigate this further and would report back to the JDA.

Commissioner Monson inquired if the City would be asked for financial support from this project. Director Perrault reported this was the first time the City would be going through this process. He did not anticipate the City would receive any financial requests, but he was unsure what type of projects would come forward. Director Collins commented the goal for this site would be to maximize land sales. She indicated the County hopes to get a range of projects that align with the goals for this site that will yield a high value. She did not anticipate a subsidy would be required, but this remains to be seen. Perrault noted that the TIF district did include the Thumb Parcel.

Amended motion carried.

Staff Updates

Director Collins updated the JDA on the signed contract the County had recently executed with Kennedy & Graven. She stated Jenny Bolton would be attending future JDA meetings.

Commissioner Updates

Commissioner Reinhardt stated she supported the JDA holding a worksession on May 1. She suggested a short JDA meeting following the worksession in the event there were items that needed action.

Commissioner Fabel supported this recommendation.

Commissioner Frethem concurred noting she added the May 1 JDA worksession meeting to her calendar.

Commissioner Monson indicated she supported the worksession meeting as well.

Commissioner Monson explained she wanted to talk about the communication strategy, energy advisory committee, a roadmap, public open houses, along with the traffic study on Highway 96. She indicated sports associations have reached out to her and they are wanting further information on how the City will support sports infrastructure within Rice Creek Commons.

Commissioner Monson commented she could support allowing the public to speak for three minutes at future JDA meetings.


Commissioner Fabel mentioned the Advisory Committee would meet between April 3 and May 1.

Chair Wicklund requested staff summarize the comments made by the public for the JDA in the next week or two.

Chair Wicklund requested staff provide the JDA with information from Goff on how the JDA should be delivering content to the public.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 7:36 pm.

Approved 

Jon Wicklund, Chair

Date