

REPORT OF CITY PLAN COMMISSION

Tuesday, September 24, 2012 – 6:00 PM

Lincoln Center – 1519 Water Street

PRESENT: Mayor Andrew Halverson, Alderperson Jerry Moore, Commissioner Anna Haines, Commissioner Garry Curless, and Commissioner David Cooper (Commissioner Tony Patton and Commissioner Sarah O'Donnell excused).

ALSO PRESENT: Community Development Director Michael Ostrowski, Economic Development Specialist Kyle Kearns, City Clerk John Moe, City Attorney Louis Molepske, Comtroller John Schlice, Deputy Comtroller Carrie Freeberg, Alderperson Logan Beveridge, Alderperson Joanne Suomi, Alderperson Michael O'Meara, Alderperson Mike Wiza, Alderperson Mary Stroik, Alderperson Jeremy Slowinski, Alderperson Roger Trzebiatowski, Alderperson Randy Stroik, Alderperson Michael Phillips, Brandi Makuski, Matthew Brown, Brian Kowalski, Jeremy Solin, Corey Ladick, Bob Freckmann, Debbie Manthey, Bill Scholfield, David Senfelds, Sarah Wallace, Mary Ann Laszewski, Barbara Gifford, and Kent Hall.

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1. Review and recommendation on options to purchase certain real estate for development purposes, located in the towns of Hull, Stockton, and Plover, lying north of County Road HH, east of Brilowski Road/County Road R, south of Canadian National Railroad right-of-way, and west of Burbank Road, to be known as East Park Commerce Center. Such land consists of approximately 762 acres.
2. Adjourn.

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1. Review and recommendation on options to purchase certain real estate for development purposes, located in the towns of Hull, Stockton, and Plover, lying north of County Road HH, east of Brilowski Road/County Road R, south of Canadian National Railroad right-of-way, and west of Burbank Road, to be known as East Park Commerce Center. Such land consists of approximately 762 acres.

Director Ostrowski stated that this program was an initiative by the WEDC (Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation) from a 2010 study because of the lack of shovel ready sites within the State of Wisconsin. They are looking to create ten certified sites within the state for the first round. Sites must be a minimum of 50 acres and the site that was presented to them from the Stevens Point area is approximately 762 acres, which is the largest submitted. He continued to explain that one of the requirements under the Certified Sites Program is that there is a single ownership or single controlling entity. The cleanest way to do that is for the City of Stevens Point to take out an option on all of the properties and within those options there is a clause that allows the City to assign that option to a third party.

Commissioner Haines asked what the process would be afterwards, to which Director Ostrowski stated the property would need to be annexed and be zoned appropriately. This would occur at the October meetings. He indicated that the likely zoning will be M-1" light industrial or "M-2" heavy industrial. Commissioner Curless asked if that would be the zoning for the whole parcel, to which

Director Ostrowski stated yes. Alderperson Moore asked if the landowners want this, to which Mayor Halverson stated yes the options are with the landowners.

Commissioner Curless asked if the WEDC was a state organization, to which Director Ostrowski stated yes, and Mayor Halverson explained that it is the new Department of Commerce. Mr. Curless then asked how the process would work. Director Ostrowski stated that if there was a buyer of 50 acres, we would assign the option and depending on parcels there may be a condition that if you buy one parcel, you may have to buy another parcel based on the irrigation layout. Renegotiation with the sellers of the property could occur, or the City could assign the option to a third party, and they could then purchase the property directly from the seller. Mayor Halverson added that WEDC is a quasi public private organization that really is the center for all economic development that happens with the state. The Certified Sites Program leverages their marketing ability to work with prospective businesses that are interested in shovel ready sites. WEDC is the main reason for doing this given the amount of marketing opportunities that they bring to the table

Commissioner Curless clarified that the owner gets paid at the time of sale, and is able to farm the land up until then, to which Mayor Halverson stated correct.

Commissioner Curless asked about the new roads, to which Mayor Halverson stated it would be the city's cost based on the increment generated from the project. There would be a TIF District proposed for the entire East Park Commerce Center so as a project develops the utilities would get extended to that project, and then the tax collections that we would receive off of that project are what would then build the roads and extend the utilities to it or others. Mayor Halverson continued that as opposed to most business parks what normally happens is an acquisition of land, all the roads are put in, all the utilities are put in and the infrastructure is built up front. This takes millions of dollars, as opposed to this way, there is no immediate money up front for the City.

Commissioner Curless asked if a buyer wanted only 50 acres, they would have to buy the area closest to the west, to which Mayor Halverson stated not necessarily, but if they wanted utilities, it would be more expensive the further you go east.

Commissioner Haines asked for an explanation of how the site would be marketed, to which Mayor Halverson stated it will be marketed as one or multiple parcels to be used for one user, or several different users. Commissioner Haines then asked what types of development would want the entire 800 acre site, to which Mayor Halverson stated it depends, they know that certain sites want a great deal of land for separation and security, it could be data centers that require uninterrupted power. This area has no type of geological issues, no natural disaster threat besides a tornado that they would be interested in, so in terms of those types of projects, they like isolation for security purposes and a lot of land to separate themselves. He continued stating that the likelihood of one user taking the whole area is highly unlikely, but multiple users who want to build on 40 or 80 acres is possible. Commissioner Haines then asked what the size of the current Portage County Business Park and the Stevens Point Industrial Park is, to which Mayor Halverson stated that the Stevens Point Industrial Park is about 125-130 acres, and the Portage County Business Park is actually about 400 acres.

Commissioner Curless asked how the value per acre was determined, to which Mayor Halverson stated all the property owners agreed to the value. He continued stating that a business park and growth and development on this site has been going on for years. Three years ago City staff was working on drafts of pre-annexation agreements that we would be looking at with these land owners, and this certification process has driven the plan forward and the opportunity was understood as far as getting the land out there for the available businesses. Commissioner Curless

asked if the owners will accept this price, to which Director Ostrowski stated this is the price that they are willing to accept, and this is a two year option based on the requirements of the WEDC program and after two years, there will be further negotiating.

Commissioner Haines asked if this program is a onetime thing, or once a year. Mayor Halverson stated that they are rolling out three years of certification, so there will be 30 sites in the state that will be certified eventually, and this is the first round.

Commissioner Curless asked if the city would be able to handle a developer purchasing the whole 760 acres, to which Mayor Halverson stated it depends on what the user is, what the value of the property is going to be post purchase and how many jobs would be created. If all of a sudden you are working with a property that is into the nine figures of assessment, the City can take down the land pretty quickly for that. He continued to state that the large capacity of our utilities, allows us to handle a complete build out of actually all 3,300 acres that are in our growth area.

Commissioner Cooper clarified that this is the first round of certification, and that there are no other certified sites in the state today, to which Mayor Halverson stated correct, and that if annexed into the city, zoned and submitted to the state for certification, our site will be one of the first 10 in the state, but definitely the largest.

Aldersperson Moore asked how many 40 acre plots are available in the city for building, which Mayor Halverson stated only one, which currently has an option.

Commissioner Haines asked if the zoning would go with our current zoning code, to which Mayor Halverson stated yes and that the north half would be heavy industrial with the south half being light industrial. Director Ostrowski added that the determination was based on the location to the railroad and that the current Portage County Business Park is split similarly with the M-2 to the north and M-1 to the south. Mayor Halverson stated that the property would be used for manufacturing and industrial purposes, but that does not leave out a large professional offices along the Highway HH corridor with plenty of buffer, landscaping, and a lot of obvious buffers between lighter industrial uses as it would progress to the north. The utilities would come in from west to east along the two 40 acre lots by County Road R and Highway HH as well as from north to south.

Aldersperson Trzebiatowski asked if a developer came in, would we retain the option of placing the business based on the type of business or is it up to them where they want to go. Mayor Halverson stated that the city would be aggressive with the setback from the existing Canadian National line for that spur, the other main concern is the switching situation to the west. There is no way for a spur to go through the existing Portage County Business Park due to the close proximity to the switching station. Mayor Halverson continued to state that regardless of where they locate the business, we will purposefully make sure that the spur can progress directly past the property and continue to serve everything to its east as well.

Kent Hall, 200 Pine Bluff Road, stated that the annexation makes sense, and that it has been described in the comprehensive plan. He pointed out that the Portage County Business Park has a master plan and he asked if Stevens Point could also have a master plan as well. He has a concern for the current bird habitat and for the woodlands that make up about 100 acres of the area. He would like to survey the woodlands for breeding birds of summer and ask the city to try to save the major part of the habitat for parkland.

Bob Freckmann, 871 Oak Ridge Lane, stated that the 100 acres of woods is of reasonably good quality, and feels that with that large of an area, it makes sense to include parkland instead of just

solid development. Mr. Freckmann stated that he would be willing to do a botanical survey of the woods at no charge, for it to be used in the final decisions of this property.

Aldersperson Wiza asked for clarification on the annexation, the assessed value of the taxes that would be brought into the city, if there were any costs to the city, and if certified and annexed who would control the options. Director Ostrowski stated that the annexation will be brought before the commission and council for the October meetings and that the land will remain agricultural when brought to the city. Mayor Halverson stated that unless we actually buy the land, which we are not, there would be no cost to the city. Director Ostrowski stated that the city would be in control of the options not the CDA.

Jeremy Solin, 4501 Nicolet Avenue, stated that he is not in favor of sprawl to the east, but he would like to see consideration for innovative uses of these lands with green space in the infrastructure. Furthermore, he stated that a more aggressive approach at bringing in manufacturing sites from an overall systems prospective, and businesses environmental components such as green manufacturing companies needs to be addressed.

Mayor Halverson called a recess of the Plan Commission at 6:30 PM for the start of the scheduled Finance Committee meeting.

Mayor Halverson called the Plan Commission back into session at 6:32 PM.

Commissioner Curless asked if there was any land that would be set aside for green space. Director Ostrowski stated at this point no, we could establish covenants, or we could use a planned industrial district as opposed to just a standard industrial. Mayor Halverson stated that the issue could be considered for the future, but right now, we have to take the appropriate steps for the options and then be able to annex, establish zoning, and then any future planning for that site can happen. He continued stating that there are several master plans for that area that deal with transportation as well as needing flexibility based on need of the developments that may go into that area.

Commissioner Haines stated she is uncomfortable with moving forward without a master plan for that area because it is so open.

**Motion by Aldersperson Moore to approve recommendation on options to purchase certain real estate, located in the towns of Hull, Stockton, and Plover, lying north of County Road HH, east of Brilowski Road/County Road R, south of Canadian National Railroad right-of-way, and west of Burbank Road, to be known as East Park Commerce Center. Such land consists of approximately 762 acres; seconded by Commissioner Cooper. Motion carried 4-1, with Commissioner Haines voting in the negative.**

2. Adjourn.

**Meeting adjourned at 6:34 PM.**