

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE  
CITY OF WILLMAR, MINNESOTA  
THURSDAY, JANUARY 26, 2012**

**MINUTES**

The Community Development Committee of the Willmar City Council met on Thursday, January 26, 2012, in Conference Room No.1 at the City Office Building. Chair Dokken called the meeting to order at 4:45pm.

**Present:**

Jim Dokken	Chair
Bruce DeBlieck	Council Member
Steve Ahmann	Council Member
Denis Anderson	Council Member
Bruce Peterson	Director of Planning and Development Services
Kevin Halliday	City Clerk/Treasurer

**Others present:** Andrew Bjur – Green Step Cities, Don Winkler and Les Nelson – Mid Minnesota Development Commission, David Little – West Central Tribune.

**1. PUBLIC COMMENTS (FOR INFORMATION ONLY)**

There were no public comments offered at this meeting.

**2. GREEN STEP CITIES (FOR INFORMATION ONLY)**

Andrew Bjur, representing the Green Step Cities program, presented information to the Committee about the program. The Green Steps Cities program is a series of best practices to guide cities towards energy efficiency and environmental sustainability. A local group has begun work on the program, but any formal effort requires Council support.

There are a total of 28 best practices included in the program. Due to the size of Willmar, the City would need to complete/adopt 16 best practices. Seven of the practices have already been completed except for the paperwork. Most of the best practices involve policy without cost to the City. Over time, the program leads to cost savings.

Over 30 Minnesota cities are currently in the program. Designation as a Green Step City may open the door for certain grant opportunities. A Council resolution supporting the program is the first step towards participation. Mr. Bjur offered his assistance and that of the citizens group in completing the remaining best practices. It was noted that the Planning Commission has reviewed the program and recommends that the Council pursue the designation. Reasons offered by the Planning Commission for City involvement is that the program emphasizes good land use, conservation of resources, and energy efficiencies for municipal operations. Mr. Bjur will provide written materials and a draft resolution for consideration at a future Committee meeting.

**3. EDA GRANT (RESOLUTION)**

Staff provided background information on the EDA infrastructure grant program. The opportunity to apply came up suddenly as Kandiyohi County has received a FEMA disaster declaration and is now eligible for EDA funding under their distress criteria.

Les Nelson of Mid Minnesota Development Commission explained the grant program details. It is a

competitive grant process to assist distressed communities with economic development. There is a tight timeline to follow. A Council resolution would be required by February 6<sup>th</sup> with a draft application due February 10<sup>th</sup>. A full application would be due March 9<sup>th</sup>.

The Grant would be to seek \$1.25-\$1.5 million for industrial park expansion. These funds would be used to augment the local options sales tax money currently available for the project. The FEMA disaster declaration gives the City an 18-month window of opportunity to apply for the grant. Mid Minnesota staff was recommending that the City apply as soon as possible to keep pace with the industrial park expansions plans that are already on the table. It was noted that the grant was by no means a sure thing, and that it may not even be possible for staff to develop the necessary information in such a short time, but that if the time frames could be met the grant was worth pursuing.

Following discussion, a motion was made by Council member Ahmann, seconded by Council member DeBlieck, and passed for the following:

**RECOMMENDATION:** To adopt a resolution authorizing submittal of the application for the EDA industrial park expansion funding.

**4. WARD REDISTRICTING (MOTION)**

City Clerk Halliday presented options for redistricting of the Council wards. Due to significant growth in Ward 1, the distribution of ward populations is skewed. The two proposals detailed how the population could be shifted to meet ward targets (See attachment A). A final decision by the Council on redistricting needs to be made by ordinance and adopted by April 1, 2012. The Committee discussed the options presented.

Following discussion, a motion was made by Council member DeBlieck, seconded by Council member Anderson, and passed for the following:

**RECOMMENDATION:** To proceed with proposal number two, and to post the redistricting proposal on the City website for public comment.

**5. PROPOSED ANNEXATION (FOR INFORMATION ONLY)**

Staff presented information on the options municipalities have for annexation and how those options relate to a proposal by residents of 8<sup>th</sup> Street Northeast to be annexed into the City.

**6. JOHN'S SUPPER CLUB (FOR INFORMATION ONLY)**

Staff presented the most recent update on the John's Supper Club redevelopment project (See attachment B).

7. There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting adjourned at 6:05pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Bruce D. Peterson, AICP  
Director of Planning and Development Services