

Present: Mayor – Joyce Hudson
Council members Jeff Kennedy
Jim Aden
Tim Strauser
Jeff Whiting
City Administrator Bruce Clymer
City Clerk Connie L. Dalrymple

Press: Gothenburg Times - Beth Barrett

Also present: Jennifer Wolf, Denise Romatzke, Larry Franzen, Sally Yochum, Anne Anderson, Steve Peterson, Dean Kugler, Jerod Slagle, Deb Jensen, Greg Viergutz, Chad Sander, Chavon Daum, Randy Stubbs

Mayor Hudson opened the meeting at 12:00 noon. Advance notice and a copy of the agenda were given to the Council and members of the press. City Council meetings are conducted in accordance with the Open Meetings Act, a copy of which is available for public inspection on the north wall of the Council Chambers.

The meeting was presented as a Town Hall public hearing for presentation of downtown revitalization plan and receipt of public comment on the planning portion of the project.

Administrator Clymer presented, via power point, a summary of the plan emphasizing that none of the proposal is 'written in stone'. It's merely a proposal of projects that could be undertaken based on prior input of the business community.

Total grant funds are \$250,000 including \$10,000 administration costs. That leaves \$240,000 in grant funds plus a 25% minimum match of \$84,000 for the project.

Categories identified and some possibilities for each are:

1. Physical projects – storefront / facade improvements, accessibility assistance, warehouse space, energy efficiency
2. Economic Development – business recruitment, educational programs, business retention plan
3. Marketing projects – on-line shopping, consistent hours of operation, analyzing window displays and in-store merchandising

More detailed information on each concept and additional possibilities are included in the written plan which is available for review at the City Office.

There will be a public hearing at the City Council meeting on January 27 at which time the Council will finalize the projects that will be submitted to the State for Community Development Block Grant funding.

Discussion was had on the requirements and guidelines for revolving loans, energy audits, façade improvement, and general questions about how programs would be set up and made known and available to business operators. The possibility of a Downtown Improvement District was also raised. A DID would establish an ongoing fund for business improvement after the grant is completed.

All funded projects are to be completed within the 24 month term of the grant. No expenditures can be made until the State has officially released funds. Business owners can proceed with any plan for a portion of any project included in the final grant application. That way, if plans are prepared and owner funds available, the individual plan could be submitted immediately upon release of funds.

As an example, Administrator Clymer informed those present that Nebraska Public Power District will work with businesses to conduct an energy audit at no charge. This would allow the business to proceed with any energy efficiency improvements immediately once funds are available.

Jennifer Wolf of Dawson Area Development distributed a final survey for implementing the downtown revitalization program and asked that businesses return it as soon as possible due to the grant application deadline.

Whiting moved, Strauser seconded, to close the public hearing at 1:11 p.m. Roll call vote: Yea – Aden, Kennedy, Strauser, Whiting. Nay – none.

Aden moved, Strauser seconded, to adjourn the meeting at 1:12 p.m. Roll call vote: Yea – Whiting, Kennedy, Strauser, Aden. Nay – none.

Joyce Hudson, Mayor

Connie L. Dalrymple, City Clerk