

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
Meeting Summary
January 14, 2021

Attendance: **Doug Moormann, Chair**
 Nancy Spencer, Mayor
 Traci Theis, City Council
 Tom Moeller, City Manager
 Lori Thompson, Assistant City Manager

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 PM.

- 1. Residential Tax Abatement Incentive Program.** At its previous meeting, the committee directed Mr. Moeller to research and develop a proposal for creating a tax abatement incentive program that would meet one of the goals of the Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan goal is to incentivize remodeling of existing structures over teardowns/rebuilds. Mr. Moeller presented information regarding the creation of a Community Reinvestment Area (CRA) to incentivize both remodeling projects for residential properties along with new and remodeling construction that meet Leadership in Energy Efficiency Design (LEED) criteria. He noted he used the City of Cincinnati's current policy along with information from the City of Blue Ash's CRA policy in their central city. He asked the committee to discuss the concepts for the program and potential criteria for different levels of abatement. Mr. Moormann noted that a CRA must be approved by the State of Ohio and this could take some time to create the legislative process for approval. Ms. Theis stated she would prefer only offering the incentive to remodeling projects. Ms. Spencer stated she does not rule out incentivizing new construction in the future, but would prefer to concentrate on remodeling and additions to existing homes. Mr. Moormann asked if we can amend a proposed original (remodeling only) CRA to include the new construction in the future. Mr. Moeller stated he believes Council will have to approve new/revised legislation and have the State of Ohio approve it before any amendments or modifications to the CRA can be implemented. The committee also noted one of the goals is to encourage remodeling for seniors to be able to "age-in-place". There was also discussion regarding a minimum value threshold for a project to be considered for the incentive/tax abatement. Because property tax revenue impacts the school district, the committee directed Mr. Moeller to discuss this program with the school administration before any further action is taken.
- 2. Downtown Redevelopment District Creation – Update.** Mr Moeller presented additional information regarding the creation of a DRD. Criteria for a DRD includes retaining a minimum of one "historic structure" within the 10 acre designated area. It appears that the structure must be on the National Historic Trust Registry in order to qualify. Ms. Spencer stated she likes the flexibility of use for the funds generated by a DRD, but she was less enthused as there is uncertainty as to whether the current historic district structures would qualify. Mr. Moeller noted that staff was in contact with local historical consultant Beth Sullebarger who has experience in these matters. Ms. Theis noted that the Train Station is likely to be retained by the City and that it may qualify

under the NHT criteria. After additional discussion, the committee directed staff to revisit the issue with Ms. Sullebarger to obtain a proposal for the seeking the National Historic Trust designation before any additional action is pursued.

- 3. Discussion on City Branding.** Mr. Moormann asked the committee to discuss potential next steps in working towards a City “brand” in advance of two upcoming projects, Euclid Avenue and the Miami/East Galbraith Roundabout. He stated he wants to make certain if there are branding elements such as landscape and signage they are included in the projects. Mr. Moeller noted that the Euclid Project does not introduce any elements like this in the initial construction. He stated both projects allow for a “blank canvas” for including design improvements at a later date. He stated both projects have open/green areas in which gateway signage and landscape/hardscape improvements can be added at a later date. After additional discussion, the committee agreed to further pursue this issue at a later date.
- 4. Business Retention Program Discussion.** Mr. Moormann asked the committee for its thoughts on the city taking steps to conduct some outreach to local businesses in the face of the COVID -19 pandemic. With businesses experiencing a lot of changes in how they operate, he would like the City to meet with them to discuss their needs and determine if there is anything the City can do to assist. Mr. Moeller stated he has spoken with Chamber of Commerce representatives about this in the past. Ms. Theis suggested a roundtable meeting via ZOOM to allow businesses to meet with City Officials. After additional discussion, the committee directed Mr. Moeller to contact the Madeira Chamber to determine next steps and develop a process for this effort.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 PM.

Doug Moormann, Chair