

**City of Rhinelander/ Downtown Rhinelander Inc.
Rhinelander Downtown Economic and Brown Street Streetscape Study Special Committee**

Thursday, March 27, 2014
Meeting Notes

Members attending: Dan Kuzlik, Tom Peterson, Dana DeMet, Ken Krall, Kyle Rogers, Mayor Richard Johns, Blaine Oborn, Pat LaPorte, Diane Dodge, Kay Hatch, Mike Hastreiter, Jim Hext, Joe Flanders, Mark Pelletier, Gary Becker, Suzanne Vincent, Ken Juon, Tim Kingman, Sally Latimer

- I. Call to Order & Introductions facilitated by Sally Latimer
- II. Overview of the prepared timeline document for the project- Gary Becker
 - a. Gary reported that the economic market analysis was not completed at this time.
 - b. Discussed the format for the **Public Meeting set for April 30, 5:30-7pm at Hext Theater**
 - i. Meeting will start with an overview of the process and general information
 - ii. Following the introduction “information stations” will be set up for participants to visit and learn with the following topics:
 1. Economic
 2. Streetscape/Design
 3. Redevelopment
 4. Construction mitigation
 - iii. There will be a closing discussion with a chance to bring up general questions. In addition, comment forms provided by Vierbecher will be handed out for participants to ask questions or make comments. Sign-up sheets provided by DRI will also be available for participants to indicate their interest in being involved in ongoing conversations on a specific topic.
 - iv. It was pointed out that we needed a person/s to serve as a host at the door to welcome participants who may come in after the directions have been given so they know where to go and how to participate. Who this is will be decided by the Steering Committee.
 - c. **Gary Becker** will draft a promotional piece and a press release for DRI, City and Chamber to use as marketing for the public meeting.
- III. Discussed the need for a dedicated web site where all organizations could direct the public to get updated information on the process.
 - a. **Jim Hext** volunteered to donate a web page to serve as the communication link. He will obtain a domain name and start the process by next week. We discussed the name- **“rhinelanderstreetscape”** (Jim has secured the name.)
 - b. It was decided the web site comment section would have a required name and email address to prevent anonymous negative comments.
 - c. Web site comments would be sent to Karla’s email to be directed to the appropriate source for an answer.
 - d. City, DRI, Chamber all agreed to put links on their web pages to direct people to this site. The address should also be in the press release and information flyer.
- IV. Next meeting for the **Steering Committee is set for April 8 at city hall**. Members of this committee include: Pat LaPorte, Maggie Steffen, Mark Gutteter, Mark Pelletier, Blaine Oborn, Gary Becker and Suzanne Vincent.
- V. **July 23 is the next public meeting at Hext Theater from 5:30-7pm**. The plan will be presented and discussed. Format for this meeting will be designed by the Steering Committee.
- VI. **September 24 is the final meeting with the City Council and DRI Board**. At this meeting the final plan will be presented and how it will be implemented including what streets will be closed and when. The funding plan will also be presented. It will be open to the public as a result of being a City Council meeting.
- VII. The engineering design team will start the process of designing the sewer/ water system under the street following the September meeting. The will go to bid in Jan/ Feb.

- VIII. Blaine Oborn discussed the overview of the city action. According to Blaine, Rhinelander traditionally allowed sewer water and storm sewer water to flow into the same pipes. This is a violation according to the USDA. As a result Brown Street has no storm sewers and is drained through cross streets. The USDA will grant the city part of the funding to complete this project. The remaining must be funded through other grants and fees. The street connections will be designed to hook up to the individual buildings and in some cases the connection can be made by the city. In other cases the building owner will have some responsibility to connect if their connections are not up to the code required. The number of streets affected is still under discussion based upon the scope and cost of the project. As a result the map presented showed a base project and additional areas. (please refer to the map presented).
- IX. A discussion of the Streetscape Design Issues touched the following discussion items: **Suzanne Vincent** will lead the design of the street scape with assistance from the staff from Town and Country.
- a. How often do we hold events in the streets? (about 4-6 times per year)
 - b. Need for wider sidewalks so we can have a furniture section (right next to the street) where we could have planters, seating, trash and bio swales (natural plantings for rain water catchment).
 - c. Light poles that can hold banners, flowers, security cameras, sound system, Wi-Fi, electricity, flags etc.
 - d. Holiday lighting (it was mentioned that we should contact WPS about lighting ideas.)
 - e. Bike lanes
 - f. Hodag stamp in one of the intersections
 - g. Metal banners to mark the opening of the downtown area
 - h. A discussion was held about the need for a "town square". There were several points made:
 - i. Stevensport Square is underused, Court House should be incorporated into the plan, the river is still an important feature and how could be connect it to the plan, the band shell is located far away from the downtown.
- X. The actual street and how it might be configured was also discussed and the following conflicting ideas were presented. It was requested that **Tim Kingman**, City Engineer, bring some information about the streets and regulations for streets to the next meeting of the streetscape committee.
- a. Ideas discussed were: closing the street to pedestrians, making it one way, having angle parking only on one side and parallel parking on the other side, leaving it the same, etc. etc. All of these ideas will be discussed as they relate to the width of the street and municipal guidelines for city streets. No options were decided.
 - b. It was agreed that Davenport and Brown is currently the center and it is a busy traffic area.
- XI. Discussed the need to identify parking for the people who live downtown. Currently there are only two 24 hour parking lots. Blaine mentioned that there will be changes to this issue as they are taking over another lot across from the library. It was also mentioned that parking by office workers is also a problem but can be addressed by individuals when they notice a habitual rule breaker.
- XII. 11:40am Meeting adjourned to take a tour of the downtown- Dan Kuzlik, Blaine Oborn, and Joe Flanders took Gary and Suzanne along with some others on a tour. Discussion continued at lunch and after in the DRI office.