City of Albion

Special City Council Meeting

December 12, 2016

1. Call To Order

Mayor Brown opened the regular session at 6:30 p.m.

1. Roll Call

PRESENT: Maurice Barnes (1), Lenn Reid (2), Sonya Brown (3), Marcola Lawler (4), Jeanette Spicer (5), Andrew French (6) and Mayor Garrett Brown.

Staff Present: Sheryl Mitchell, City Manager; Cullen Harkness, City Attorney and Danielle Nelson, Special Projects Manager.

III. Citizen’s Comments (Persons addressing the City Council shall limit their comments to **agenda items only** and to no more than five (5) minutes. Proper decorum is required.

No comments were received.

1. Items for Individual Discussion
2. Discussion-Peabody Project

Bruce Johnson presented the Peabody Project to Council highlighting the following:

* Proforma-calculation of expenses, revenues, construction costs and etc. for MEDC.
* Looking for “gap” because historic renovations generally cost more than they bring in.
* The Target Market Analysis was used to determine market for apartments to be built.
* The Dobbin’s are actively seeking businesses that fit the needs in Albion, not just the first offer that comes along.
* Everything on the inside will be brand new-i.e. mechanical, plumbing and electrical
* They are seeking tax sharing/abatement with the DDA.
* The loan is for $600,000-240 months at a 4% interest rate
* $9,269 per year is what the property owners will make each year.
* The construction cost is $150/sq. ft.
* Historic renovation-will look like 1920 remodel but with modern fixtures on the interior with historic touches.
* They have been in contact with MEDC, State Historic Preservation Office throughout the process to ensure they are complying with the want & desires of MEDC & SHPO.

Comments were received from Council Member Brown and Mayor Brown.

1. Discussion-Comprehensive Plan

Danielle Nelson, Special Projects Manager updated the Council on the Comprehensive Plan as follows:

City Council Proposed Comprehensive Plan Edits

Economic Development

1. Language regarding "the Greater Albion Area" vs. "City of Albion proper"

Part of the mission of the Albion Economic Development Corporation is to promote economic development in the Greater Albion Area in recognition of the fact that developments both in the City of Albion proper and around the City of Albion in the immediately surrounding townships are good for job creation and economic growth for the citizens of Albion.

Taking a regional approach with economic development is the current trend among successful cities throughout the country and within Michigan. A good local example of this is Grand Rapids, Michigan. "The Right Place" is the EDC of Grand Rapids and has included the majority of the west side of the state in its area of influence. The amount of growth that the City of Grand Rapids has seen in the past decade is largely due to the regional approach that "The Right Place" has taken. They market not only the City of Grand Rapids but all of west Michigan as to spur job growth and creation in the areas surrounding Grand Rapids.

This leads to job creation and more disposable income which in turn spurs the growth and development of more businesses and thus more jobs. For more information, please visit: [https://www.rightplace.org/](http://www.rightplace.org/)

What can the City working in partnership with the EDC influence today?

* The EDC can continue taking the lead in attracting new companies to the industrial park, which technically is not within the City limits. The EDC will focus on helping to retain existing businesses and emerging businesses grow. In addition, the City and EDC have already begun to identify future sites, within the city limits, that could be zoned for industrial development. Those preliminary findings should be completed by the end of the month.
* All of the priority redevelopment sites listed in Appendix 2 are within the City limits of Albion.
* The "Redevelopment Ready Communities" process outlines the steps that should be taken to evaluate and market the sites:
* The City must articulate a vision for the priority redevelopment sites.
* The City should work with the EDC to verify that all negotiable resources and incentives for the sites are identified, including those that are offered by partner entities.
* A property information package for the prioritized redevelopment sites is assembled.
* Prioritized sites are actively marketed.

\*\*Potential Edits:

(1) Leave as is; OR

(2) Define "Greater Albion Area"; OR

(3) Add language along the lines of "focusing developments within the City of Albion proper"

2. Development of Austin Avenue Corridor

The City and EDC have already begun preliminary discussions regarding a vision for redeveloping the Austin Avenue corridor, which is explicitly listed in Appendix 2 of the Comprehensive Plan as a priority redevelopment site. Austin Avenue is listed as one of the corridors that the EDC will focus attention on within its Strategic Plan. A presentation on the Austin Avenue Corridor and the Albion Malleable site is scheduled for the December 19, 2017 City Council Meeting.

In short, the next steps regarding the Austin Avenue Corridor include {1) gathering public input on the desired future use of this area and (2) adjusting the zoning to accommodate residents' and city leaders' vision for the future of this area. The next phase of the Comprehensive Planning process after Phase I is approved, is to evaluate and make changes to the current zoning and land use in Albion. Given that the zoning along the Austin Avenue Corridor does not match the current land use, this is a priority site for evaluation and planning. The intent of not including specific plans regarding Austin Avenue in the first phase of the Comprehensive Plan is to give that area of the City the attention that it deserves in the second phase of the planning process.

\*\*Potential Edits:

(1) Add further language regarding the Austin Avenue Corridor; OR

(2) Leave as is and continue the current efforts focusing on planning for and attracting developments along the Austin Avenue Corridor

Urgent Care Facility

Concerns regarding adding language about attracting an urgent care facility or other health care facility to Albion:

(1) The Comprehensive Plan is designed to guide the decisions and actions that the City can **deliver on**. The City is currently not in a position to open a public hospital. Even if the maximum millage were raised on residents, the revenue generated would not even be close to the amount of money needed to operate a health care facility.

(2) The Comprehensive Plan Phase I has identified in Goal 11to "Partner with various healthcare providers, patient advocacy groups, transportation services, AmeriCorps VISTA, and other stakeholders to support healthcare access [...)"

At this time, the City is reaching out to stakeholders to explore attracting a healthcare facility to Albion.

French moved, Reid supported, CARRIED, to move Discussion/Approval of Support for Land Banking Agreement with the Albion Reinvestment Corporation to Item C instead of D. (7-0, rcv)

1. Discussion/Approval of Support for Land Banking Agreement with the Albion Reinvestment Corporation (RCV)

Krista Trout-Edwards, Director of Calhoun County Land Bank highlighted the following information for the Land Banking Agreement with the Albion Reinvestment Corporation:

* The Land Bank is contemplating drafting a new agreement with the Albion Reinvestment Corporation. There are currently four (4) parcels that need to be removed from the agreement because they are occupied.
* Staggered redevelopment proposals
* Trying to get buildings attractive and up to code
* $70,000 has been invested since 2014 in the land banking agreement
* Quarterly meetings will be held with the Albion Reinvestment Corporation, Calhoun County Land Bank and the EDC to develop buyer requirements and small business development.
* Comments were received from Council Member Barnes who asked the Council to give their support of the land banking agreement.

Additional comments were received from Council Member Brown who asked what happens to the properties once they are re-developed.

Krista Trout-Edwards, Director of the Calhoun County Land Bank stated once the properties are re-developed, they would come out of the land bank agreement.

French moved, Barnes supported, CARRIED, to Approve Support for Land Banking Agreement with the Albion Reinvestment Corporation. (7-0, rcv)

1. 2016/2017 Budget

The following questions were asked by Council Members pertaining to the FY 2017 Budget:

Council Member French asked if the general fund is $22,000 over budget.

*City Manager Mitchell stated this was from the previous year and not moving forward.*

Council Member Barnes stated he felt in order to maintain qualified staff, we must pay better wages and hire assistants for department heads because of the amount of work they have taken on. We must compensate people for everything they do. We are down manpower and need to hire additional staff.

Council Member Lawler asked if we were still over 15% for fund balance.

*City Manager Mitchell stated our fund balance is currently at 31%*

Council Member Spicer stated she feels employees should be paid a livable wage but we will never be able to make everyone happy. We should look at compensating for jobs & responsibilities and compare to similar jobs.

Mayor Brown stated he would like more work sessions in 2017. i.e. one (1) per month.

V. Citizen’s Comments (Persons addressing the City Council shall limit their comments to **agenda items only** and to no more than five (5) minutes. Proper decorum is required.

No comments were received.

VI. ADJOURN

Spicer moved, Lawler supported, CARRIED, to adjourn Special Council Meeting. (7-0, vv)

Mayor Brown adjourned the Special Council Meeting at 8:31 p.m.

Minutes were taken by Danielle Nelson.