

**Minnetonka Economic Development Authority  
Meeting Minutes**

**September 16, 2003  
6:00 P.M.**

**\*\*Gray's Bay Room\*\*  
Minnetonka Community Center, Upper Level**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

EDA President Peter St. Peter called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

**2. ROLL CALL**

EDA Commissioners present: Paula Chatterjee (arrived late), Dan Duffy, Dave Larson, Bunny Robinson, Peter St. Peter, Ken Tauer, Al Thomas, and Bob Walker.

Staff present: Ron Rankin and Elise Souders.

Others present: Nellie Johnson, Vanessa Brown, and Shannon Bodnar from Crown Ridge apartments, and Winnie White Scherber.

**3. APPROVE MINUTES**

Robinson moved, Larson seconded a motion to approve the minutes of the June 10, 2003 EDA meeting. All voted yes. Motion passed.

**4. STAFF REPORT**

Souders reviewed the staff report items, including Minnetonka Boulevard/County Road 101, WHAHLT, Dial-a-Ride, the Southwest Rail Study, proposed developments, and upcoming events and meetings.

**BUSINESS ITEMS**

**5. COMMONBOND FUNDING REQUEST FOR THE CROWN RIDGE ADVANTAGE CENTER.**

Souders reviewed the request from CommonBond and provided information on what had been happening at the Crown Ridge Advantage Center. She said CommonBond was requesting \$10,000 for the Advantage Center at Crown Ridge and staff recommends approval.

Rankin noted St. Peter, Mayor Anderson, city staff, CommonBond staff, and Hopkins School District staff met on June 20<sup>th</sup> to tour Crown Ridge, and in late October there will be a follow-up meeting.

Thomas asked where the \$10,000 would come from and how many children were living at Crown Ridge. Rankin said the request would come out of the Livable Communities Account. Vanessa Brown said there are 42 children currently living at Crown Ridge, and provided more detail regarding their summer school efforts.

Duffy asked if CommonBond was confident they could raise the remaining \$14,600. Nellie Johnson explained CommonBond would be receiving a \$5,000 to \$6,000 grant from Hennepin County and General Mills was interested in possibly sponsoring Crown Ridge.

Thomas noted in the recommendations part of the staff report that positive changes had been occurring, and he wondered if the positive changes were in the concerns previously expressed, including: cleanliness, vacancies, and police calls. Shannon Bodnar said recently a caretaker had been hired who will be living on-site, which should help address the cleanliness issues. She said they had also have had six households move in, twelve applications are pending, and that the police calls had been reduced.

Duffy asked how many vacancies there are currently. Bodnar replied there are sixteen vacancies, with three to four move-ins scheduled for October. She noted while the number of vacancies had not decreased a lot, the majority of the residents who had been creating a lot of the problems had left.

Tauer inquired if there were more market rate units or more subsidized units that were vacant. Bodnar said at the current time more of the subsidized units were open. Tauer also asked if there was one type of unit that was difficult to rent than another. Bodnar replied there was not one that was more difficult than another; however, currently there are more two bedrooms open than the rest. St. Peter requested the specific breakdown of units be sent to staff to be included in the Council report.

Tauer asked how the vacancy rate of Crown Ridge compared to other buildings. Bodnar said Crown Ridge has a vacancy rate of 16%, while it is at about 12% in most other suburban rental buildings, and with the move-ins and applications pending that Crown Ridge should be comparable to other buildings in the next few months.

St. Peter asked how the police and school district staff felt about the changes that had occurred at Crown Ridge. Souders replied the police staff said it does take time to notice changes in the frequency of police calls when there is a change in management, and they would continue to monitor what is occurring. She also noted the school district staff would be continuing to work with Crown Ridge and their concern is that CommonBond continues to follow through on what they say they are going to do. Rankin noted with the police calls, while the number may not necessarily go down, what should be looked at is the severity of the calls. Bodnar said they had been working with residents to teach them when it is appropriate to call and when it is not.

Larson asked if the two bedroom units that are open accept vouchers and if they have any accessible units. Bodnar said the two bedroom units have the most openings and they continue to see vouchers coming in. She also said there are currently two accessible units that are open and they are working with agencies who serve possible occupants to fill these units.

St. Peter asked Scherber if Crown Ridge had established any working relationships with the groups she or Neil Hering are apart of. Scherber replied she was not aware of any. Bodnar said within the past several weeks, Crown Ridge had been doing direct mailings to churches and other agencies to talk about their programs.

St. Peter asked Brown to explain how school registration went. Brown said because the majority of children are returning students it meant filling out the appropriate paperwork and registering any new students. She said they were also able to get the paperwork completed for free and reduced lunches. Brown then expanded upon the collaboration that Crown Ridge has done with SCIP and how they are also working with Sojourner.

Walker asked why \$10,000 was requested and not a different amount. Johnson replied \$10,000 was the amount previously granted from the City to Crown Ridge, and to maintain that amount seemed appropriate. St. Peter noted the original grant was intended to be a one-time start-up grant. Rankin also mentioned it was to supplement the grant given by Hennepin County.

Tauer said Minnetonka has had a commitment to affordable housing, and while the city should not become a social service provider, it is important to see Crown Ridge succeed and the \$10,000 would be well spent.

Tauer moved, Thomas seconded a motion to recommend approval by City Council of \$10,000 in funding to CommonBond for the Crown Ridge Advantage Center. All voted yes. Motion passed.

Discussion followed on if Minnetonka Heights would be requesting continued funding, and where the Livable Communities Account fund comes from and what it is to be used for.

## **6. RESOLUTION APPROVING A REDEVELOPMENT PLAN AND A HOUSING DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR THE MINNETONKA BOULEVARD/101 HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT.**

Rankin provided the background and said a housing development and redevelopment plan must be put in place before the city can receive the grant funds from Hennepin County. He said the Planning Commission will have to review the plan as well to make sure it is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, and the City Council will also hold a public hearing on the plan. Rankin said approval of the plan would mean there must be blight or blighting conditions in the proposed redevelopment area. He explained what those conditions were and how they applied to this area.

Tauer asked if the redevelopment district could be larger than what is proposed or if this was just being done for this particular project. Rankin replied it was being done just for this request; however, in the future there could be the opportunity to expand it, provided it is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

St. Peter said if the district was larger than what is shown, then it would not be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, because the Comprehensive Plan was changed just for this area.

Larson said the evidence that was provided in the report was good and it coincides with the definitions presented.

There was discussion on St. Louis Park and their ordinances on repairing homes before resale.

Duffy asked who inspected the properties to make these findings. Rankin said city building, electrical, and plumbing/heating inspectors looked at the properties and made the findings.

Walker asked if other houses in the area might fall under the definitions of blight or blighting conditions. Rankin said there most likely could be others besides these three.

Walker also inquired if there has been any discussion on contiguous planning for the area. Tauer said the developer of The Sanctuary tried to buy a fourth parcel; however, the intent was never to push much further north. St. Peter said when the Comprehensive Plan was updated, they looked at reguiding four properties, then it became the southerly two, and finally none of the properties were reguided because of the public opposition. Tauer added it would not be good to look at reguiding land further north and the Comprehensive Plan update did not even look further north. It was thought these four parcels were a transition area with the school and other mid-density housing directly east and west of the area.

Thomas moved, Walker seconded a motion to approve the resolution for the redevelopment plan and housing development plan for the Minnetonka Boulevard/101 housing development and redevelopment project. All voted yes. Motion passed.

Discussion followed on how much money was anticipated from the grant and how the city can help WHAHLT obtain the affordable units.

## **7. OTHER BUSINESS**

Rankin reviewed the upcoming meeting schedule.

## **8. ADJOURN**

Larson moved, Robinson seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting. All voted yes. Motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 7:10 p.m.