

**CITY OF WILLIAMSTON
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
SEPTEMBER 17, 2007
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

1. Call To Order:

The meeting was called to order at 8:05 p.m. by Chairman Mike Thomas.

2. Roll Call:

Chairman Mike Thomas, Vice Chair Peter Porciello, Corporation Members Dean Atkins, Rachel Olson, Dan Frank, and Council Representative Michelle Hyne.
Absent: Adam Lesperance and Mary Sapienza.

Also Present: Deputy Clerk Holly Thompson and EDC Attorney John Gormley.

Motion by **Porciello**, second by **Frank**, to excuse Lesperance. **Motion passed by voice vote.**

3. Audience Participation:

Chairman Thomas called for public comment at this time and there was none.

4. Approval of Agenda:

Add item 10d. Granger Update.

Motion by **Atkins**, second by **Porciello**, to approve the agenda as amended.
Motion passed by voice vote.

5. EDC Regular Minutes of July 16, 2007 & Special Minutes of August 27, 2007:

Motion by **Frank**, second by **Porciello**, to approve the regular EDC minutes of July 16, 2007 as presented. **Motion passed by voice vote.**

Motion by **Porciello**, second by **Atkins**, to approve the special EDC minutes of August 27, 2007 as presented. **Motion passed by voice vote.**

8. Committee/Sub-Committee Reports

8a. Property Committee:

No report.

9. Action Items

9a. MEDA Application:

The board was unsure whether the Community Development Director already went to the MEDA meetings or if Member Lesperance still was interested in attending.

Motion by **Frank**, second by **Atkins**, to table the MEDA application until the next meeting. **Motion passed by voice vote.**

10. Discussion Items

10a. 1500 Building Plan B:

Chairman Thomas commented that if Habitat for Humanity does not want to buy the 1500 building, the EDC should discuss another plan for the building.

Attorney Gormley commented that the EDC should consider listing the building since the City has plans to move.

Member Hyne asked if there had been a vote on that.

Attorney Gormley commented that the City has authorized the purchase of the Community Center before Member Hyne was on Council.

Member Hyne commented that a purchase agreement is one thing, but it is not a done deal. They have an offer to purchase.

Attorney Gormley commented that if they are going to move the EDC should sit down with the City because the City is not going to use both buildings.

Member Hyne commented that she has voiced her concerns about purchasing the Community Center and putting over two million into building a new DPW building. With revenue sharing, we could be in serious trouble if the City is counting on that.

Chairman Thomas asked if she wants to sell the Public Services building to make money for the City.

Attorney Gormley commented that the EDC cannot sell it unless the City agrees. He suggested sitting down with the City and asking them that.

Member Hyne commented that the City needs a DPW building that they use for storage. She believes the information was not readily expressed that it is what it is used for. She was not aware of it until prodding on her own behalf.

Attorney Gormley commented that the DPW equipment has been stored elsewhere before the 1500 building was purchased.

Attorney Gormley that the plan is to list it.

Member Hyne commented that the EDC needs to stay in a holding pattern until something is done with the state budget and revenue sharing.

Attorney Gormley commented that the EDC should ask the City if they are planning to move so that the EDC can list the property to get a buyer for the building in two years.

Member Hyne commented that the City does not know until the state knows what is going to be done to revenue sharing. It could be very serious.

Attorney Gormley commented that the revenue sharing changes every year, and has been decreasing every year.

Member Frank asked how long the City would have to move out if Habitat decided to buy the building.

Attorney Gormley responded that the lease terms have passed and they have given up their option to purchase. They can make another offer to purchase it at sometime.

Member Hyne commented that if the Community Center purchase does not go through and the building needs to be kept.

Chairman Thomas commented that the EDC should wait until after the Council election to see if things change.

Member Hyne commented that she feels the EDC should wait until the state's budget is worked through to have a firm idea as to what will be received for revenue sharing.

Attorney Gormley commented that this needs to stay on the agenda.

Member Porciello asked if listing the property would get Habitat to make an offer if they want the building.

Motion by **Atkins**, second by **Porciello**, to have the 1500 building listed for sale on January 1, 2008 by the EDC with the City's input for the appraised value.

Member Hyne commented that she believes the EDC should wait to list the building. She has a problem with the expenses of the community center, renovation, the DPW building, street issues, the WWTP facility and other big issues.

Member Porciello asked if there would be funds to help build a new DPW building.

Attorney Gormley responded that if the building sells for what it is appraised for, it would be a positive in both the City and the EDC's favor.

Member Hyne commented that the proposed DPW building would be \$950,000.

Attorney Gormley commented that the building would be located where the existing building on Elevator Street is.

Chairman Thomas stated that he understands Hyne's comments regarding these being uncertain times.

Member Hyne commented that it is a very unique time

Attorney Gormley commented that these are issues the City needs to address.

Member Hyne responded that she does not want to put it to the City because a majority of the Council supports the Community Center. Every time she has brought up her concerns about the budget, with the infrastructure issues that need to be addressed, she is told they will be paid for by either a bond or a millage and she believes the people cannot afford that.

Attorney Gormley commented that the problem is, is a majority of the board is in favor of the City moving into the Community Center, and they are going to act on it, leaving the EDC with an empty building.

Member Hyne commented that she cannot vote for something that she believes the City cannot afford.

Member Porciello asked what happens when Habitat decides they cannot afford the building.

Attorney Gormley responded that donations are difficult to get right now.

Vote on the motion: Yes: Atkins, Frank, Porciello, Thomas. No: Hyne, Olson.
Motion passed.

10b. DPW Building:

Already discussed above.

10c. Cover Sheets for New Businesses:

Chairman Thomas that the EDC has discussed making a packet of information for new businesses, and asked if there were any volunteers to work on it.

Member Hyne commented that she thought the Zoning Board of Appeals was talking about doing it.

Attorney Gormley suggested asking the Community Development Director to submit a proposal to prepare it.

Member Porciello asked if this is going to cost the EDC extra if they use McKenna to do this.

Chairman Thomas responded that he would talk to the City Manager regarding this issue.

Attorney Gormley commented that there may be an issue with the ordinances being different for each property because of zoning districts. There is also an issue with people not coming in before they purchase a building.

Member Frank commented that it would have helped to have avoided all the problems with the RiverHouse Inn.

Attorney Gormley commented that it would be beneficial for someone to sit down with the City Planner to discuss what the purchaser's plans are and what steps they would need to go through to reach their goal.

10d. Granger Update:

Chairman Thomas reported that Tri-State has bought property in the Industrial Park to locate their headquarters in Williamston. The sale is pending completion of Progress Court, which is being worked on currently by Granger. The agreement between the EDC, City, and Granger will need to be addressed at a later date.

Member Frank asked if there is a timeline.

Chairman Thomas answered that there is a timeline, but he is unsure what it is.

Attorney Gormley commented that this new company will generate a lot of revenue for the City and when they looked at Webberville and Williamston, they liked Williamston much more. They will have more upper scale employees, and want to locate somewhere that has more upper scale restaurants in the area.

Member Hyne commented that the Bucket looks tremendous and she thanked the owner for sticking with it and his financial commitment to the City.

Attorney Gormley concurred with Hyne's comments.

13. Audience Participation:

Chairman Thomas called for public comment at this time and there was none.

14. Attorney Comments:

None.

15. Corporation Member Comments:

Member Hyne encouraged everyone to go to the Bucket.

Member Atkins distributed information from the Citizens Research Council regarding the state of Michigan. He added that he would like to see the 'Continuation of the Farmers' Market' on the next agenda for discussion. He believes that the EDC should not fund something that loses money.

Member Frank asked if the EDC could get an expense/income sheet for the Farmers' Market.

Member Hyne asked that the Farmers' Market Manager be invited.

Member Porciello commented that in the Community Development Director Report it stated that there are vendors that have paid to be in the Market that have not attended yet due to their crops not being in yet.

Member Atkins asked how long the Farmers' Market has been in existence.

Chairman Thomas answered that it has been in existence three or four years.

Member Atkins commented that it has been losing money every year.

Attorney Gormley commented that there has been a problem with the drought this year, so produce has been low.

Chairman Thomas encouraged everyone to check out the new school stadium. He added that the lights in town will be coming on earlier again because it will be getting dark earlier and people may start complaining to the EDC that it is too dark downtown regarding this issue. He reminded everyone to give him agenda items before the meeting, so he can make sure they get on the agenda.

Member Hyne commented that the last game was amazing, and the stadium looks large when there is no one in the stands. People were looking for seats at the game, and the cheerleading, band, and football players were terrific. She agreed with Chairman Thomas that it will be a tremendous asset to the community.

16. Adjournment:

Motion by **Frank**, second by **Porciello**, to adjourn. **Motion passed by voice vote.**

Meeting Adjourned at 8:54 p.m.

***THE PRECEDING MINUTES ARE A SYNOPSIS OF AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION MEETING AND DO NOT REPRESENT A VERBATIM RECORD.**

Respectfully Submitted by: _____
Holly M. Thompson, Deputy Clerk

Date Approved: _____