

Cook County/Grand Marais EDA
Board Meeting Minutes
April 14, 2020 4:00 PM
Meeting held via Zoom Conference

Present: Howard Hedstrom, Scott Harrison, Heidi Doo-Kirk, Anton Moody, Bev Green, Carol Mork, Hal Greenwood

Also Present: Betsy Bowen, Heath Ekstrom, Pat Campanaro, Jim Boyd

Meeting called to order by Hedstrom. No public comment received. Items added to New Business on the Agenda. Upon a Motion by Moody, second by Doo-Kirk and all ayes, the Agenda was approved. Motion carried. March 10, 2020 Minutes were reviewed. Upon a Motion by Mork, second by Doo-Kirk and all ayes, the Minutes were approved. Motion carried.

New Business

Consider request from Betsy Bowen for Business Development Funds

The board had a thoughtful conversation about the request, reviewing the history of the project and the financial background of the business and the project with Betsy. There was concern about allocating the requested \$15,000 from the Business Development Fund, in the current situation with COVID-19.

A Motion was made by Moody, seconded by Greenwood to approve the request of \$15,000. The vote was two in favor and five against. Motion failed.

A Motion was made by Harrison, seconded by Mork to approve the amount of \$5000 for this project. The vote was five in favor, two against. Motion passed.

Superior National Budget 2020

The board reviewed three budget scenarios as presented by the Superior National management team. It is not possible to accurately predict the number of rounds that will be played this year, as we are currently under a Stay at Home order and golf courses are not allowed to be open. The budget scenarios were based on number of rounds at 12,000, 7,000 and 5,000. Management team and staff will closely monitor revenue and expenses and adjust as needed. Upon a Motion by

Greenwood, second by Green and all ayes, the board approved to accept the scenarios as presented and be flexible. Motion carried.

Note: Mork left the meeting at 4:40 PM.

Consider Resolution No. 2020-01 to apply for funds from IRRR for Assisted Living
Community Asset Development Group is moving forward with plans for an assisted living facility in Grand Marais. The EDA discussed making application to and accepting funds from the IRRR Development Infrastructure Grant program. Upon a Motion by Green, second by Greenwood and all ayes, the EDA board approved Resolution No. 2020-01 to apply for the grant. Motion carried.

Consider Implementation of Project Backstop

On April 7, we were contacted by an anonymous donor. They are a small 501c3 foundation. They wanted to do something to help, as quickly as possible, knowing that people were hurting as they waited for federal and state funding to come through. They wanted to do this in a small community where the impact would be felt. They chose Cook County. They wanted to get the funds into the hands of those who were needing help, by the end of April.

In addition to Project Backstop for small businesses and the Cook County Arts Relief Fund, they are sending financial gifts around Cook County and Grand Portage, to organizations that help people who need a safe shelter and to organizations that help people with food security. A small group has been working with the donor, helping them make connections, as they desire to help the people of Cook County and Grand Portage in these ways.

Because they are a small Foundation, they have asked us to work with them in a confidential manner. They are only able to do this for Cook County and only one time. This special gift to us is totally outside of what they normally do. They have committed up to \$250,000.00 to help the people of Cook County get through these challenging times.

Upon a Motion by Greenwood, second by Doo-Kirk and all ayes, the board approved to implement Project Backstop for small businesses as presented. Motion carried.

Consider a Notice from Cook County Land Services regarding a request for variances on property near Superior National

The board discussed the notice received. The property owner has two lots and plans to build across both. Their project will have no impact on the golf course. The board agreed, by consensus, to not reply to the letter. No action is needed.

Financials for Superior National and Cook County/Grand Marais EDA

Harrison presented financial reports as of March 30, 2020. The reports will be forwarded to the auditors.

Harrison presented EDA bills to pay. Upon a Motion by Greenwood, second by Green and all ayes, payment of bills was approved as presented. Motion carried.

Old Business

2020 Priorities will be changing every day with COVID-19. EDA will offer to assist in follow-up of the fire in Grand Marais. Somnis stated that her retirement plans are “on the back burner” for now.

Short Term Rental Property Tax Classification is under discussion at the Legislature. The Chamber and local committee continue to monitor.

Update to Prosperity Agenda work is ongoing with Northspan. They will deliver a report soon and then work will stop until we understand how things will be.

Assisted Living discussions continue with the development group.

Cook County Workforce Solutions recruitment of workers from Puerto Rico is on hold until further notice.

Cedar Grove Business Park Somnis stated that she has an inquiry from a party interested in the lots adjacent to the Gunflint Trail. Somnis asked the board if they would consider these lots to have different values than recent sales, due to this location. Consensus of the board members was to continue with sale prices as have been recently approved. EDA may soon need to conduct a Public Hearing via electronic means for the sale of Lots 8 and 9, Block 5.

Other Business

The board discussed the possibility that payment of first half of property taxes may be less than 100%. The EDA would then receive less than the usual amount. Harrison, Hedstrom and Somnis will prepare some budget scenarios.

Silence will contact Hedstrom to record an interview in follow-up of today's meeting. Next EDA meeting is Tuesday, May 12. Assume we will meet via Zoom. Meeting adjourned.