

Joint Development Authority
Tuesday, July 11, 2023
Arden Hills City Council Chambers

Minutes
5:30 pm

Roll Call

Joint Development Authority: Chair Jon Wicklund, Commissioner Victoria Reinhardt, Commissioner Tom Fabel, Commissioner Tena Monson

Members Absent: Commissioner Nicole Frethem

Also present: Dave Perrault (Arden Hills); Jessica Jagoe (Arden Hills); Kari Collins (Ramsey County)

Roll call taken.

Public Input

None.

Roadmap Review

Director Collins stated the Rice Creek Commons 2023 Planning Roadmap lays out meeting dates and goals through the remainder of 2023. This is a living document; it will be updated as the project progresses. The intent of beginning this work session with a review of the roadmap is to lay the groundwork for the community engagement discussion. Understanding when discussions and decisions are expected to happen will help the JDA decide when community engagement sessions may be meaningful and feasible. Staff reviewed the roadmap in further detail and requested feedback from the JDA.

Commissioner Reinhardt thanked staff for their efforts on the roadmap. She appreciated having a visual in place for this project.

Commissioner Fabel stated there are many indications for potential Advisory Committee meetings, but noted some may not be held.

Commissioner Monson reported the first Energy Advisory Committee meeting was held in July and this group would continue to meet monthly going forward.

Chair Wicklund requested a summary of the Energy Advisory Committee meetings be made available to the JDA. Director Perrault stated notes were taken at the meeting and would be posted on the website.

Commissioner Monson explained the Energy Advisory Committee had a goal of having their final plan an addendum to the MDA.

Chair Wicklund requested references to housing including the terms mixed housing, residential housing and affordable housing.

Commissioner Monson supported the JDA having a discussion about what the market would support for housing versus how the site was zoned. She wanted the plan to be flexible and adaptable for both now and going into the future. She supported developers coming in and speaking to the JDA about how developments were evolving.

Chair Wicklund stated this sounds like the JDA would have to readdress the TRC.

Commissioner Monson indicated this may be the case, depending on where housing, industrial and commercial fell into the new plan.

Chair Wicklund explained this could greatly change the roadmap for the development. He asked if this could be addressed at the August 7 JDA meeting under the Real Estate Market agenda item.

Director Perrault indicated this was his intention. He did not anticipate staff would have financials or energy information ready for the next meeting, which meant the JDA would have time to address the Real Estate Market. He stated he would be reaching out to folks prior to this meeting.

Director Collins reported she has reached out to a variety of individuals to speak to the JDA on this topic and she was finding September may be a better time than August to address the Real Estate Market.

Chair Wicklund questioned if bringing in experts with disrupt the relationship the JDA was pursuing with Alatus.

Commissioner Monson explained she believed Alatus would be very open to this. She was of the opinion the JDA had to bring in an expert that was not the developer to speak to market conditions. She was not excited about having to make any zoning or comp plan changes, but this may be a reality for the project.

Commissioner Reinhardt and Commissioner Fabel supported the JDA bringing in subject matter experts to speak to the Real Estate Market in August or September.

Director Collins explained she would work to find a subject matter expert to address the JDA on September 5. She indicated the JDA could address the topics of housing and density, land use and market conditions in September. The JDA supported this recommendation.

Commissioner Monson stated affordable housing may need its own separate meeting.

Commissioner Reinhardt indicated the Real Estate Market encompasses housing and density. She supported the JDA going deeper into each of these topics in September.

Chair Wicklund questioned what the JDA would be discussing in August.

Commissioner Monson recommended remediation information be presented in August.

Commissioner Fabel supported this recommendation but asked when the financial from Ehlers would be presented. Director Perrault anticipated the financials would follow the housing and density discussion.

Commissioner Reinhardt explained she could support remediation being discussed in August, but noted she believed no new information would be presented.

Director Collins stated she would look to see if the experts were available to attend the August meeting.

Commissioner Monson indicated another option for the August meeting would be to discuss County funding options for housing. Director Collins stated the County could speak to what has changed since 2018 on the housing front.

Commissioner Fabel requested staff provide the JDA members with an updated version of the roadmap.

Community Engagement Planning

Director Collins stated the JDA has expressed interest in hosting community engagement sessions. The goals, topics, format, and timing of these sessions is up for discussion at this work session. The prepared document outlines a proposal for a potential fall community engagement event (September or October). This proposal is intended to be a starting point for discussion and will be revised based on feedback provided in this work session. She then read a prepared statement from Commissioner Frethem noting her thoughts regarding future community engagement events.

Chair Wicklund asked what one priority or message should be sent to attendees at the community engagement events.

Commissioner Reinhardt stated she clearly wanted to hear from the public, but also information should be shared with the public. She wanted to answer and address all concerns regarding the remediation of the site. She believed these events were about communication and getting data to the public in a manner in which people can consume and to better

understand where this leads the JDA. She hoped that by providing new information, fears would be calmed, questions would be answered and the public would feel engaged.

Commissioner Fabel stated he believed it would be important to help the public understand that the JDA was coming into a process that has been ongoing for 10 years and many decisions were made prior to the current JDA coming into existence. It was important for the public to understand this was not just starting fresh, but rather this was a JDA which has come to a process that was ongoing and some changes were going to be needed due to the five year hiatus. He saw value in the history of this project being addressed.

Commissioner Monson recommended a cohesive vision be presented to the public in order to make the public aware of the good that can come out of this project. In addition, she wanted the economics of this project to be cleanly presented to the public.

Chair Wicklund questioned what success would look like at these events.

Commissioner Reinhardt stated she was uncertain how to define this with a number. She questioned how many people typically attend County events. Director Collins recommended success not be quantified but rather that success be articulated by the diverse thought, interest and engagement from the public. She commented further on how the County holds their community engagement events. She hoped an event would have a strong local and regional voice that was interested in the project. She hoped a diverse group of individuals would carve out the time to attend the community engagement event.

Commissioner Monson questioned how many people attended Commissioner Frethem's event. She believed the Commissioner Frethem held a very successful community engagement event.

Commissioner Fabel did not anticipate the JDA would receive an enormous crowd, nor did he believe a cross representation would be in attendance. He hoped the JDA would be satisfied after the event was completed and that thorough information was provided to the public.

Chair Wicklund inquired if there was any creative hook that could be used to drive people to the event.

Commissioner Reinhardt stated for this type of event, professionals would be used to help assist with marketing the event in order to catch people's attention.

Chair Wicklund summarized the comments from the JDA noting the goals of community engagement events were to build relationship and trust, to provide clear data for the public, and to provide a vision with 3D renderings for the project. It was his hope that having the City and County officials standing side by side on this issue, this would help in breaking the tension.

Director Collins commented on how words matter and stressed that as the JDA speaks about housing, it be referred to as housing infrastructure in order to cover all housing types and

styles. She asked when this event should be held. The JDA supported holding the community engagement event in October.

Commissioner Fabel commented on how the City Council was interested in holding its own open house in order to engage with the public.

Commissioner Reinhardt stated it would be her hope that the JDA's event would be enough. She noted the County would not be holding a separate community engagement event.

Director Perrault anticipated that holding this open house would address the questions and concerns of residents. He indicated the City could hold its own open house after this event to further address questions from the public.

Commissioner Monson recommended the City's open house be in response to the JDA's community engagement event. She suggested the impacts to the school district be further considered for this event, along with City costs, revenues and traffic impacts.

Chair Wicklund asked if the City or County has been in communication with the school district. Director Perrault stated he met with the school district two weeks ago to reaffirm they were comfortable with the previous plan and this was confirmed. He noted they did want to take a closer look at the other scenarios that were being considered. He explained he would be meeting with the school district again in October or November to further discuss the density scenarios.

Chair Wicklund commented on how a dual scenario may have to be presented to the public for what is and what is being considered. He recommended the JDA further discuss the community engagement event at the August meeting.

JDA Advisory Committee Updates

a. Format Discussion

Director Perrault stated the JDA Advisory Committee discussed the possibility of making certain committee meetings open to the public to attend. Meetings where sensitive topics are being discussed, such as the details of real estate negotiations, would remain closed to the public. The JDA Attorney has advised that open meeting laws do not apply to JDA Advisory Committee meetings, so meetings are open to the public at the discretion of the committee. The JDA Advisory Committee would like to bring this discussion to the JDA.

Commissioner Reinhardt supported keeping things open as much as possible.

Commissioner Fabel commented the Advisory Committee has had limited utility. He noted this group has worked to establish relationships and mutual trust. But in terms of the work being

done, he believed there was limited utility. He was of the opinion if staff believed it was useful from time to time to have these meetings open to the public, that would be fine with him.

Commissioner Monson stated she supported the meetings continuing as is. However, she also had no problem with the meetings being open to the public. She anticipated that if the meetings were not proving fruitful, that the JDA Advisory Committee meetings could stop.

Chair Wicklund stated the consensus of the group was to allow the JDA Advisory Committee to make a determination on whether or not to open the meetings to the public.

b. June 9th Meeting Report

Director Perrault stated the JDA Advisory Committee met on June 9th, 2023, to discuss updated infrastructure costs, financials and deal points of the MDA related to the Rice Creek Commons development. He explained this meeting was held between JDA Advisory Committee members, staff, members of Alatus, Ehlers and legal representatives. He explained big picture items were discussed. The timeline of the project was further discussed and it was noted construction may not begin until 2027. He reported the County was seeking outside financing sources for the project.

Director Collins reported the County requested \$25 million from the State for the build out of the spine road and this would be considered in 2024.

Director Perrault indicated Alatus also provided additional density scenarios at 1785, 2050 and 2360 housing units. These scenarios had increased density in the Town Center North and South as well as the possibility of the southwest corner of the development having townhomes.

Chair Wicklund encouraged staff to consider building height in conjunction with increased density. Director Perrault stated the price of concrete was quite high, which has led the developer to propose townhomes in the southwest corner because the Town Center was as dense as it could be.

Commissioner Monson questioned if the 1460 density could even be reached if the building heights were all reduced.

Chair Wicklund asked staff to investigate this further with the developer.

Commissioner Monson inquired when a term sheet would be drafted. Director Perrault stated ideally a term sheet would be drafted by the end of the year and this would set the stage for completion of the MDA for next year.

Further discussion ensued regarding the process that would be followed with the MDA.

Administrative Director's Report

Director Collins stated the solicitation for the thumb property would close on July 28.

Commissioner Monson asked how the public could get information from the County's Development Directors. Director Collins suggested questions be directed to her and she or staff members Larina DeWalt or Ella Mitchell could respond.

Commissioner Fabel inquired if the County has had an appraisal done for the California parcel. Director Collins stated this had not been completed, but she could look into a quote.

Development Director's Report

Director Perrault stated the City Council approved the TRC amendments at their June meeting and this would go to the County for final approval on August 1. He noted the JDA Advisory Committee would meet next on July 27

Commissioner Updates

Commissioner Reinhardt explained in August she was looking forward to further discussing the community engagement event that would be held in October.

Commissioner Fabel stated he was interested in hearing more from the County about what type of funding was available for housing.

Commissioner Reinhardt requested the timeline information for this funding be provided to the JDA in August.

Commissioner Monson indicated the JDA may want to consider bringing on a consultant to assist with grant writing for the funding that was available to assist with future energy projects. Director Collins reported the County does have a green energy team that was vetting the eligibility of this project.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 7:21 pm.

Approved Jon Wicklund
Jon Wicklund, Chair

8/15/23
Date