

**COMMON COUNCIL MEETING**  
**May 7, 2013**

Present: Schraeder, Peabody, Brockman, Hansen (arrived at 6:02 p.m.), Klein, Miller, Pape, Will  
Absent: Werch  
Others: City Administrator Rich, City Attorney Wurtz, Captain Wallner, City Clerk Schommer

Will called meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

**Approval of agenda**

Motion made by Klein second by Brockman to approve agenda as presented. Motion carried.

**Conduct Public Hearing**

Will and Rich explained purpose of public hearing. It is to get input from the public regarding the city applying to the WI Economic Development Corp for a grant in the amount of \$500,000 under Community Development Block Grant to redevelop downtown area. Rich explained that grant monies are available to eliminate blight in the downtown area. Rich also explained that the grant is a matching grant with 40% being grant match and 60% city money. Will opened Public Hearing at 6:04 p.m. Julie Mathias, 224 Spaulding Ave, Ripon addressed council stating that she is not in favor of the city applying for the grant or for demolishing the former Davis Hotel (Mapes Hotel). Mathias suggested that the city put together a long range plan. Rich explained to the audience in attendance that the city is considering applying for the grant now is due to a timeline and that the state is encouraging the city to apply right away. In the future the state will be putting a moratorium on future grants. Mike Musha, 440 Joy Ave, Ripon asked what the \$500,000 grant money from state would be used for. Will stated the grant money would be used for acquisition of the property, demolition, move of utilities, paving, grading, prep work, retaining walls, etc. Musha warned council to be very careful and to think everything out before acting. He stated the city does not want to be in another situation as with Boca Grande. Mike Levenhagen, 638 W Fond du Lac Street, Ripon addressed council and stated he was also not in favor of the city applying for the grant. Levenhagen inquired why the potential developer doesn't go directly to Boca and work with them and not involve the city. Levenhagen also asked whether or not the city could support another hotel and wondered what happened to the concept of the connecting walkway to former American House and the spa idea. Levenhagen stated there were too many unknowns, "depends", with the project and would like council to think hard before acting. Jody Thiel, 333 E Jackson Street, Ripon also spoke against the project. Thiel stated she agrees with Mathias, that once the buildings are gone you do not get them back. Thiel would like the city to slowdown and to totally inform the public on what is really going on and for city officials to work together with the public for a solution. Will, Rich and Wurtz all explained that Boca Grande currently owns the building and could come in tomorrow and tear down the Mapes Hotel, or they could sell the property to another individual/company and the same thing could happen. The city does not own the property. The city is trying to help move a project along and would help any developer that approached the city for help. Will explained that the city is in a different position today than it was in 2009 when council decided to sign a developer's agreement with Boca Grande Capital and that the decisions before the council are different and that the city needs to move forward. Mathias asked Will if the city was in the hot seat to apply for the grant due to Boca not living up to their commitments and if this would help to ease some of the financial responsibility the city has with the TIF's. Will stated that if this project moves forward, it would help the downtown TIF. Craig Tebon, Manager for Ripon Main Street, Inc., 567 Watson Street, Ripon, spoke in favor of applying for the grant. He stated that it pains him to have to take down the Mapes Hotel, but the first and second floors of the hotel are demolished and the building is falling apart. The hotel is a blight property and this is an opportunity to move forward. Thiel approached council and requested they remember that Ripon is advertised as "Historic Ripon" and wondered where parking for the hotel would be and if more structures would need to come down. She

also encouraged council members to contact developers that refurbish structures instead of taking them down. Rich had received an email from Judy Locke, 683 Beechwood Ct, Unit 2E, Ripon, and distributed the email to council members. Will closed public hearing at 6:34 p.m. Council discussed issues raised and their own concerns regarding applying for the block grant. Schraeder inquired if this was application only and not bound to accept money or for the city at this time to spend money. Rich stated no, she was only looking for authorization to submit an application for the block grant. Schraeder asked Rich if this was cash on cash grant or an in-kind match. Rich stated an in-kind match. Schraeder inquired again that the city has a right to apply for the grant and if state grants it to the city, the city does not have to accept. Will stated yes. Schraeder asked Rich if the city has a plan in place to engage the public if and when it becomes time to go further. Rich and Will stated yes, the public would be informed and another public hearing would be held before it would go further if city is granted the money and the potential developer goes forward. Schraeder asked if council approves resolution before them it is not binding for accepting grant money and the city is not committed. Will stated that was correct. Approving resolution before council tonight was only authorizing City Administrator Rich to submit the application for the grant and did not commit the city. Klein asked where matching funds would come from. Wurtz explained money had already been earmarked for this project with the developer's agreement with Boca Grande and that money would be used. Brockman inquired if the city did not apply for the block grant could the two entities move forward and work together with financing. Wurtz explained yes they could, but he understood that the city applying for the block grant was a major factor in the equation. Klein read questions from email received from Judy Locke. Many of the questions had already been answered previously. Klein inquired if the 3<sup>rd</sup> party would still be interested if the city does not get the grant. Wurtz and Will replied they did not know.

### **Consider resolution – Authorizing submission of a Community Development Block Grant Application**

Motion made by Brockman, second by Hansen to approve Resolution No. 2013-06 Authorizing Submission of a Community Development Block Grant Application. More discussion ensued. Friendly amendment made by Schraeder adding to the original motion: the city apply for block grant with the understanding that council reserves the right to accept or reject the funds if granted to the city and that a public hearing with public input be made before any final decision is made regarding accepting or rejecting the grant money. Brockman and Hansen accepted the friendly amendment. Roll call vote taken: Schraeder-yes; Peabody-yes; Brockman-yes; Hansen-yes; Klein-no; Miller-yes; Pape-yes. Motion carried 6-1(Klein).

Motion made by Peabody second by Brockman to adjourn.

With no further business, Will declared meeting adjourned at 6:48 p.m.

Ann Schommer, City Clerk