



CITY OF BURLINGTON

Administration Department

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**CITY OF BURLINGTON
Committee of the Whole Minutes
Robert Miller, Mayor
Beverly R. Gill, City Clerk
December 20, 2011**

1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Mayor Bob Miller called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m. starting with roll call. Aldermen present: Bob Prailes, Ed Johnson, Peter Hintz, Jim Prailes, Tom Vos, Steve Rauch, Jeff Fischer, Katie Simenson

Student Representatives: Dale Morrow, Paul Dhillon

Also present: City Attorney John Bjelajac, City Administrator Kevin Lahner, Police Chief Peter Nimmer, Fire Chief Richard Lodle, Treasurer Steve DeQuaker, Supervisor Streets and Parks Dan Jensen, Library Director Gayle Falk, Assistant to the Administrator Megan Johnson, Tom Foht of Kapur Engineering and Stephanie Schulte of RCEDC

2. CITIZENS COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

None

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR DECEMBER 6, 2011

A motion was made by Fischer with a second by Simenson to approve the minutes from December 6, 2011. With all in favor, the motion carried.

4. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION BY THE RACINE COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION REGARDING THEIR ANNUAL REPORT

Ms. Stephanie Schulte of RCEDC presented the "RCEDC Annual Report" to the mayor and council. Schulte listed several projects throughout the county that RCEDC had worked with the past year including Canella Response TV of Burlington.

Schulte said a survey had been sent out to existing businesses in Racine County to find out the opportunities and challenges they face. The companies responding to the survey reported seventy-five percent have had an increase in business with eleven percent reporting a decrease.

From the survey received, Schulte listed the reported strengths of Racine County as: location, availability of workforce, customers, suppliers and a nice mix of business services. The survey reported the weaknesses as: labor, poor employee work ethic, unable to find skilled workers, unable to find customers and suppliers and a lack of community leadership.

Schulte added that sixty-seven companies in Burlington were sent surveys with fourteen replying at this time. The local companies reported a sixty-nine percent increase of business with twenty-three percent reporting a decrease. The local companies said the cost of doing business was low in Burlington but it was hard to find customers and suppliers in the area. The companies also replied that loyalty from customers isn't there anymore as price is the driving force.

In addressing some of the problems throughout the county, RCEDC has implemented programs to assist the businesses in addressing some of the negatives.

Johnson questioned if businesses are willing to train individuals for the jobs. Schulte replied that businesses prefer to hire those who are already trained as it is too expensive to do the training.

Vos suggested that this message be brought to the high schools as the students need to be made aware of options. He suggested that college isn't always the answer as the Vo-Tech Schools can offer a good education towards a good job.

Vos was pleased to hear that current businesses have not been overlooked by RCEDC as the emphasis is usually on attracting new businesses to the area.

Fischer asked if RCEDC had sensed that current businesses are looking for answers from the government for some of their problems. Schulte commented that for the most part, business wants government to lower the taxes and do something about health care and get out of their way so they can do their jobs.

Johnson requested more information on the negativity that was earlier reported toward businesses in the city. Schulte replied that the surveys indicated that Burlington is a "closed" community with those either being on the inside or the outside. Those who felt they were on the outside said they did not feel their businesses were appreciated.

Vos said he did not understand that statement as he had always thought of everyone as being part of the community. He would invite any of those businesses to attend a council meeting and bring their suggestions.

Lahner said that once the surveys are complete, they will be reviewed to see what improvements can be made.

Schulte said there were also positives from the survey among which noted the sense of community and good leadership.

Fischer said he would like more specifics with the information that was provided this evening because it lacked details.

The mayor reminded council this report only contained partial survey results and once all of the companies responded, a more detailed report will be made available.

Fischer then questioned what the timetable was for this survey. Schulte replied that it is a three-year project beginning in 2011 through 2013 to interview 400 businesses. Fischer asked if there wasn't something that could be done for these businesses during that time period. Schulte replied that seventeen businesses have already been assisted in various ways.

Simenson questioned how many businesses have been assisted in Burlington. Schulte said the seventeen assists referred to Burlington. Schulte further explained the names of the companies are confidential but what has been done by RCEDC is not confidential. Lahner added that confidentiality was an important part of the process.

5. **DISCUSSION REGARDING SAFETY OPTIONS FOR CROSSWALKS AT W. STATE STREET/NORTH ELMWOOD AVENUE AND W. STATE STREET/SOUTH MAPLE AVENUE**

The mayor opened the discussion on the safety options for crosswalks on West State Street.

Jensen explained the proposed installation at West State Street and Elmwood Avenue would be similar to those at Veteran's Terrace with an estimated cost of \$20,640.00. The signage at the intersection of Maple Avenue and West State Street would be removed.

The mayor remarked the cost of \$20,640 was a pittance in regard to the safety of a child.

6. **RESOLUTION 4515(40) "A RESOLUTION TO CONSIDER APPROVING TASK ORDER NUMBER EIGHTY-FIVE WITH KAPUR & ASSOCIATES FOR THE 2012 STREET AND SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM"**

The mayor introduced Resolution 4515(40) to the council for consideration.

Simenson questioned if all the sidewalks had been completed for 2011. Lahner replied that all sidewalks were completed with one exception. That city had agreed to have the homeowner do the work, but it hadn't been done. Lahner sent a letter to the homeowner giving him until the end of 2011 to complete the job or the city will add it to the 2012 Sidewalk Program.

Rauch questioned if the alley paving on Summit Avenue is part of the 2012 Street and Sidewalk Improvement Program. Lahner replied that Summit Avenue was not part of this resolution.

Hintz questioned the reference to the Echo Park Bike Path and if that meant it was going to connect Steinhoff to Echo. Lahner replied that it refers to the peninsula area in Echo Park and not to the connection of the two parks.

Bob Prailes questioned the status of the bike path along Highway W. Foht said there was an original grant either in 2003 or 2004 and the city went through the process. There were issues along Highway W which included wetlands, utilities, the cemetery and land acquisition; the grant did not allow any money for acquiring land. Foht stated they went back to the State of Wisconsin and requested either shortening the terminus or requesting additional funds for purchasing land. Foht stated that at this time, the project is in limbo.

Lahner stated there had recently been discussion with both Racine County and the Town of Burlington regarding the bike path. The city's current ending point is Lake Street. Lahner said there are also issues of the right-of-way existing on either side of the street which would create a zigzag problem with the path.

Vos could not see the point of only doing a portion of the bike path without completing the job.

Foht said in his opinion the best solution would be to work something out with the Town of Burlington and Racine County.

Foht stated that he could contact the State of Wisconsin again and describe the situation on Highway W to see if there are more funds available. Lahner replied that it takes months to get any response from the state.

This resolution is scheduled for the December 20, 2011 common council meeting.

7. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Bob Prailes with a second by Johnson to adjourn the meeting. With all in favor, the meeting adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Beverly R. Gill
City Clerk
City of Burlington
Racine and Walworth Counties