

**Northfield Master Plan Steering Committee/EDA  
Meeting Summary – July 15, 2010  
First National Bank**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Rick Estenson, Rhonda Pownell, Jim Pokorney, John Klockeman, Mike Berthelsen, Erica Zweifel, Tracy Davis, , Pete Sandberg, Steve Engler, Tim Geary, Jay Jasnoch, Victor Summa

MEMBERS ABSENT: Scott Richardson, Chris Sawyer, Neil Lutsky, Glen Castore

ALSO PRESENT: Jeff McMenimen (HKGi), Economic Development Director Jody Gunderson, Community Development Director Brian O’Connell, John Fink, Edric Lysne, Larry Larson, Tom Sorem

The meeting was called to order at 6:10 p.m.

**Preferred Master Plans**

Jeff McMenimen began the meeting with a review of the progress on the master plans being developed for each of the two sites. He presented updated parcel plans with associated development summaries, landscape plans, circulation plans (vehicular, bike and pedestrian), and street cross sections. The plans reflect revisions based on comments provided by Steering Committee/EDA members at the June meeting, including the following:

North Site:

- Added the extension of CR 23 from the proposed roundabout at CR 23 and SH 19 south to Decker Ave. on the plan graphics.

South Site:

- Changed the small lot single family residential land use to medium density residential.

A question was raised regarding the total number of housing units included in the current building program on the north site. The direction from the Steering Committee was to reduce the total number of dwelling units on the north site. Jeff McMenimen stated that the amount of land dedicated to housing in the plan was reduced and that therefore the total number of housing units was also reduced, with density factors remaining the same for both medium density housing (12 du/ac) and high density housing (20 du/ac).

*Note: Subsequently, Jeff reviewed the housing counts on the north site plan presented in April versus the plan presented tonight. The housing numbers on the current plan are 36% fewer than on the plan presented in April. The April plan would have a total of approximately 888 housing units. The revised plan would have a total of approximately 570 housing units.*

**Development Guidelines**

Following discussion of the current master plans, Jeff presented the beginning work being prepared on the development guidelines. The materials presented included the draft outline of the guidelines, the purpose and intent of the guidelines, how the guidelines are to be used, the relationship of the guidelines to other planning policies and documents in the City, examples of how the guidelines will address specific issues and the graphic format of the guidelines. A draft of the development guidelines will be presented to the Steering Committee at the August 19<sup>th</sup> meeting.

A request was made to provide a copy of the draft guidelines to the Planning Commission prior to the August 19<sup>th</sup> Steering Committee meeting. Mr. McMenimen said they would try to have something to deliver prior to that meeting but could not promise a full draft before then. At any rate, the Planning Commission would receive a copy of the draft guidelines by August 19<sup>th</sup>, a month before the next scheduled joint meeting with the Planning Commission/Steering Committee/EDA (Sept.)

A question was asked regarding the coordination between the development guidelines for the business parks and the Land Development Code (LDC) being prepared by the City. Which would have priority, the LDC or the development guidelines? Typically, the document that has the more stringent requirement has priority. Brian O'Connell stated that the LDC and the City's Zoning Ordinances may incorporate specific requirements outlined in the development guidelines once they have been adopted. Also, the City's Zoning ordinance could reference the development guidelines, making them enforceable.

The question was asked if the guidelines would address building height (multi-story) issues. Mr. McMenimen stated that building height, massing and articulation would be addressed among other building related issues.

The question was asked if the master plan document would address parking issues, specifically on-street parking. Mr. McMenimen stated the guidelines would address parking issues related to private development sites and that the master plan document would also address on-street parking issues as these would be within the public R.O.W. It was noted that the draft street cross sections include on-street parking in some instances. It was noted that the on-street parking should be seen as a developer incentive if those spaces count toward meeting the parking requirements.

The question was asked if the diagram included in the draft guidelines for site planning (which illustrates the concept of street-fronted buildings with parking located behind the buildings) would be relevant towards all of the development parcels. Mr. McMenimen stated that in certain land use situations that it would (mixed-use, housing, office, office-showroom), but that in other situations (large industrial/warehouse sites) other solutions may be required.

The question was asked if the guidelines would address the issue of heat island effect. Mr. McMenimen stated that the guidelines would address this issue.

### **Developer's Roundtable**

Following the discussion regarding the development guidelines, Jeff led the discussion regarding the comments received during the Developers Roundtable conducted on June 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Jeff began with a brief discussion of the experiences of the participants of the developers roundtable, which included Eric Anderson (Ryan Companies), Mark Fabel (McGough), Gary Dreher (Told Development Company), Ross Feffercorn (RMF Group), and Derick Dahlen (Avant Energy).

Then Jeff walked through a summary of the comments received from the developer's roundtable participants. Those comments included the following:

1. Build flexibility into the plan and development guidelines
2. Seek ways to reduce development costs
  - Phasing of infrastructure
  - Utilize existing infrastructure where feasible
  - Nibble away at both sites if possible

3. City must tap into federal, state, regional and local sources of funding to provide infrastructure financing and developer incentive packages
4. Trunk infrastructure is critical to attract development
  - State Highway 19 improvements
  - CR 23 improvements
  - Interchange at CR 23 and SH 19
5. Partnerships between developer, city and landowners are going to return and will be necessary for development to occur
6. Must plan for a mixed set of uses
  - Industrial
  - Office
  - Housing
  - Civic
  - Support retail
7. Housing must be a part of the plan
  - Senior housing
  - Workforce housing
  - Rental driven
8. Leverage Northfield's attributes
  - Authentic, charming downtown
  - Two world class colleges
  - Intellectual capital
  - Successful alumni

Mr. McMenimen noted that the discussion regarding phasing of infrastructure was important and that the developers all suggested the development should begin where infrastructure was already in place. This seemed to point toward the 90 acre parcel of land owned by St. Olaf located along North Avenue. The road is already in place and water and sewer utilities are currently being designed to extend them to the Sorem property to the west. The notion of a land swap with St. Olaf was raised to open up that land for development in early phases of the project. It was suggested that it might not be necessary - that St. Olaf might be open to discussions about developing that property without the need for a land swap.

Mr. McMenimen discussed the developer's suggestion that the City be aggressive in trying to seek federal, state and local funding sources for financial assistance for infrastructure improvements and developer incentives. The idea is to provide an economic advantage for developers to work in Northfield over the other competing communities in the region. Additionally, the idea of partnerships between City, developers and landowners was discussed.

Regarding land uses, the question was raised about the civic land use located on the south site. Suggested uses for that site by the developers included an arts and culture and/or performance facility, which might have residual economic benefits to the community. An example of this is the Aspen Institute and Music Center in Aspen, Colorado, which attracts dignitaries, scholars, artists, musicians and visitors to Aspen each summer for events and seminars.

Other potentially important public uses discussed related to the developments included public parking facilities and civic stormwater management practices. These could contribute to greater development densities and provide incentives to attract development.

The question of housing was discussed. The developers all felt housing should be a component to the plan for the following reasons:

- create a unique business park with uses to support the workforce
- provide a development that will absorb more quickly in the market place
- enhanced economic benefits
- part of the amenity package offered in the development

It was suggested (by developers) that the City consider senior housing, assisted care housing facilities (CCRC's), workforce housing and rental housing. It was noted that these may be the only housing types in the current economic circumstances that are prospering.

It was noted that housing and other sets of uses would contribute to a more vibrant and safe development by providing land uses that would create life in the community at various hours of the day and days of the week.

The developers suggested the City be more aggressive in marketing the unique attributes of Northfield. This was further discussed with the Steering Committee and noted that once the master plan has been adopted, there must be an aggressive effort made to position these projects for success.

**Next Steps/Meetings**

Next meeting: August 19, 2010

September meetings: September 16, 2010 (Steering Committee/EDA/Planning Commission)  
*(tentative – to be confirmed by Jody Gunderson)*

September 23, 2010 (Public Open House)  
*(tentative – to be confirmed by Jody Gunderson)*

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.