

**City of Decorah Economic Development and Property Committee Meeting - minutes
Monday, September 21, 2020 – Immediately following the regular city council meeting. The
meeting convened approximately 6:40pm.**

Electronic meeting pursuant to Iowa Code section 21.8 – In circumstances where such a meeting is impossible or impractical due to concerns about COVID-19 and social distancing for the safety of Council members and the public.

In support of Iowa Governor Kim Reynolds' proclamation declaring a State of Public Health Disaster Emergency in Iowa, the current COVID-19 situation makes it "impossible and impractical" to meet in one location. Due to this the Decorah City Hall was open to the public for the September 21, 2020 City Council Economic Development & Property Committee meeting. However, seating was limited to ensure proper social distancing. Seating was available on a first-come, first served basis. However, the meeting was made available telephonically.

Chairman Steve Luse called the meeting to order and the following answered roll: Ross Hadley, Kirk Johnson, and Emily Neal.

Mayor Lorraine Borowski, was also in attendance. Others in attendance: Andy Carlson, City Manager Chad Bird, City Engineer Jeremy Brill, and several Dept Heads.

Agenda

Chair Luse, Hadley, Johnson, Neal

Discussion regarding commercial tax abatement for 802 Commerce Drive; Hearthside Fireplaces & More, LLC

Russell Novak presented an application for commercial tax abatement for his project at this location. He noted the project is using the existing shell but that he is renovating the entire external site including the parking lots, signage, drainage, and landscaping. He also noted he is finishing the building's construction, which has been just a shell for several years. He stated he expects to hire two full time and one part time employees for the new business.

He defined the business as a home and hearth fireplace store and said he would invest around \$600,000 in the improvements and business.

Neal asked when the project might start, Novak responded as soon as possible. He hoped to have the outside work completed before winter so they could then focus on the interior work.

Hadley asked about the full amount of the investment and Novak replied it would be more than \$500,000.

Carlson noted he liked this business model and that he likes to see these types of abatements; for small, local businesses.

Hadley agreed with the project and with Carlson's assessment of the abatement program.

Neal asked about sustainability and Novak noted there would be solar on the roof.

Carlson and Hadley suggested a five-year abatement schedule and directed Bird to review options.

Discussion regarding commercial tax abatement for 302 Washington Street

There was general discussion about options for abatement with the owners of this property. The council expressed interest in working with the owners on an abatement schedule.

The owners received an application and stated they would return when their plans are more defined and they thanked the council for the consideration.

There was no other business and the meeting adjourned at 7:03pm.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Chris A. [unclear]".

Economic Development & Property

Initiatives that build the economic capacity of the local area. Shall review city economic development efforts and recommend actions regarding economic development. Physical planning, technological innovations, marketing, annexation, incremental finances and tax abatements to increase the invested assets per capita. Sustainable initiatives that promote the standard of living, life expectancy and economic health. Acquisitions, disposal, and maintenance of real property. May also review capital building projects and improvement programs.