



MINUTES OF THE COMMON COUNCIL - SPECIAL SESSION

TUESDAY, JULY 22, 2025 AT 6:30 PM

COUNCIL ROOM, MUNICIPAL BUILDING, 450 S. MAIN ST., RICHLAND CENTER, WI 53581 & VIRTUALLY

CALL TO ORDER: Meeting was called to order by Mayor Coppernoll at 6:30 PM. Members present were Ron Fruit, Karin Tepley, Tom McCarthy, Rachel Schultz, Melony Walters, Douglas Martyniuk, and Ryan Cairns with Steve Downs arriving at 6:38 PM. Absent: None.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Motion by Alderperson Tepley to approve the agenda. Seconded by Alderperson Walters. Motion carried unanimously.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION

Hotel Developer Selection & Incentive Discussion: Kayla Thorpe and Keith Dahl of Ehlers presented their analysis of two hotel development proposals submitted to the City. Thorpe emphasized the need to select a single developer before creating a Tax Increment District (TID) and explained that both proposals had been evaluated using normalized financial assumptions for fair comparison. Dahl noted that transparency and a realistic assessed value, estimated at approximately \$4 million, are essential for determining the viability of TIF assistance and protecting the City's investment. Cobblestone's proposal was more defined, featuring a four-story hotel with a formal proforma and clear financial terms, including a \$1.4 million assistance request and \$1 land purchase. In contrast, Grand Stay offered a customizable three-story option with more flexible design but less financial specificity, relying on transparent contractor discussions due to the lack of a recent comparable build. Discussion highlighted the importance of selecting a developer to initiate agreement negotiations, with staff and Council members weighing long-term involvement, financial clarity, and alignment with community goals. The Ehlers team concluded that both options could be feasible and urged the Council to choose a partner to advance the project and evaluate the potential for TID creation. Motion by Alderperson Tepley to pursue Cobblestone as the hotel development partner. Seconded by Alderperson Downs. Motion carried 7-1.

The Council discussed the potential inclusion of a Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) Community Development Investment (CDI) Grant in support of the proposed hotel development. It was noted that while it may be possible to begin the grant application process concurrently with project negotiations, doing so would require investor cooperation and could introduce delays or uncertainties. Attorney Windle advised that the development agreement could be structured to allow for the inclusion of a grant if one becomes available, helping to offset project costs. Administrator Ashley Oliphant noted that with a TID likely to be created to support a hotel development, it may be desirable to use the grant to support an organization already serving the community. It was determined that acceptance of CDI grant applications will resume. Motion by Alderperson Cairns to direct staff to negotiate an incentive package with Cobblestone that is financially prudent for the City. Seconded by Alderperson Tepley. Motion carried 8-0.

Lamont Residential Subdivision – Development Options & Grant Fund Allocation: Economic Development Director Jasen Glasbrenner presented development options for the Lamont Subdivision, highlighting the difference in infrastructure costs between a 9 and 19 lot development. Federal grant funds, previously allocated to Starlite Project, may be reallocated to support this project. The site, partially developed nearly two decades ago, aligns with ongoing community housing needs. Michael Lamont presented a 19-lot concept plan and inquired whether the Council wished to proceed with engineering services to address drainage and site planning. The feasibility of reallocating funds was discussed noting multiple eligible projects remain, however any additional development will require a substantial staff commitment to managing the grant requirements. Motion by Alderperson Tepley to reallocate grant funding from the Starlite Project to the development of the Lamont Subdivision upon the expiration of the previously set deadline of August 30, 2025. Seconded by Alderperson Walters. Motion carried 8-0.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Initial Review of Council Rules Draft: Alderperson Karin Tepley on behalf of the Ad Hoc Committee presented the initial review of a draft of revised Council Rules. Tepley noted that the committee had dedicated significant time to reviewing and updating the rules and encouraged Council members to thoroughly review the draft packet and submit any suggested edits prior to adoption, as the finalized rules will govern future Council operations. Attorney Windle clarified that while recommendations have been made, the ultimate authority rests with the Council to determine the rules under which it will operate. The draft incorporates Robert's Rules of Order as a default procedural guide for any matters not explicitly addressed. Discussion included consideration of the placement of public comment on the agenda, with Tepley supporting an earlier position to promote public participation, and Ryan Cairns noting the need for flexibility depending on the meeting's agenda.

ADJOURNMENT: Motion by Alderperson Downs to adjourn. Seconded by Alderperson Tepley. Motion carried 8-0 at 9:16 PM.

Meeting minutes recorded by Clerk Keller