



City of Walnut Grove Downtown Development Authority
Minutes of the
April 11, 2023, Work Session
Church of the Grove

Directors Present:

Russ Butcher
Billy Coleman
Sarah Tuchscherer
Rachel Davis

Guests Present:

Ellen Brennan
Maxine McClanahan

Directors Absent:

Erica Miles
Desi Borgh

- I. CALL TO ORDER - Russ Butcher called the meeting to order.
- II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
- III. INVOCATION
- IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Billy Coleman made a motion to approve the agenda. Rachel Davis seconded.

All in favor.

All directors introduced themselves.

- V. OLD BUSINESS

1. Marketing and Website

- Sarah announced that we are working with high school students that are involved in computer science. We would like to work with students to build a website and help the students gain experience at the same time. Billy announced that the barn could serve as a work base learning location once

it is complete. There will be cameras and key cards so we can look over the students virtually. Billy said he will have administration staff there as well. Sarah mentioned she is trying to find some donations for computers for the students. Sarah mentioned Microsoft 365, teams, SharePoint that will help with communication amongst the directors. Sarah is asking for \$500 for marketing and website. And for the DDA to vote on ordering a credit card at the next meeting.

2. Continuing Education

- Billy asked what is mandatory and Rachel stated only the required 8 hours of Continuing Education that everyone has completed.
- Billy mentioned as a business owner continuing education isn't feasible at this time. Rachel noted that she wanted to take the newly elected officials course. She also stated that the city will reimburse us up to a certain amount on any CE we want to take.
- Sarah stated Georgia City has a lot of information and so does GMA.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

1. Land Acquisition Procedures

- Rachel stated that we need to be certain that when we discuss parcels of land we do so in an Executive Session.
- Billy stated that he has selected several properties, but we don't have the money in the bank to purchase the properties so therefore we would need to do a joint venture with a landowner and work with planning and zoning to get a project accomplished.

2. Tax Allocation District Information and Procedures

- Rachel let everyone know the way a tax allocation district would work and what it is. It incentivizes developers to come to our city. She said she believes it would help the city to meet long term goals and have a halo effect. We could use the funds to buy land and improve land. It doesn't increase property taxes. It would give us some money and power. The landowner wants to sell each piece of property for as much as they can. The TAD would allow us to group all the land together and sell it as one piece. Billy said that has been the plan for 25 years and there's been no coming together. Rachel stated that if we had the money, we could make this happen. Walnut Grove has never been granted authority from the legislature to issue a TAD.
- Billy stated it is way out of his league. He said it sounds very complicated, he is willing to listen, but he cannot get on board with anything that circumvents a property owner. Rachel agreed and stated that is not the intent of a TAD. Russ stated that at some point we are going to have to start with something. Billy thinks the joint venture is the only way to move forward and we need to find the smallest piece of property with a property owner who really wants to see something happen in the city. Billy said we have come a long way since 2018 but the last 3 years have been very slow with window shopping and tire kicking. Rachel asked if Billy would like to spearhead a property owner meeting. Billy stated that he wouldn't be a good person to spearhead the meeting as a business owner and private developer. People will get the wrong idea. Rachel stated he is the resident expert. Billy would like another work session scheduled immediately and all property owners need to be invited to meet with the DDA. We need to know who is willing to play ball and figure out infrastructure to that property and how to procure any needed easements.

VII. Audience Comments:

- Maxine McClanahan stated that she was a part of the DDA and use to do the DDA website and Facebook page. She still has copies of documents from that time and is willing to help the students with the website. She stated that she is an admin for the Facebook group "Citizens of Walnut Grove". She thinks that it is a good idea that when we invite the public to let them know how they will be able to interact because a lot of people do not show up at the meetings; they think they won't be able to talk. Billy and Rachel talked about the property owner meeting should be scheduled from 6-8 so the time is convenient for the property owners.
- Ellen Brannan stated she has been a lifelong resident and property owner. She wants to address a question about the property owner meeting. Is that going to be strictly for property owners? Billy stated the meeting will be open to the public, but the land committee can talk to the property owners alone. She stated the original core of Walnut Grove is at today's meeting. She doesn't understand what they are talking about by Land Acquisition. Members of the DDA assured her that they are not trying to take her land and if they were to purchase it would be an agreed upon fair market value amount. Mrs. Brannan stated that this was a very productive meeting.
- Multiple landowners stated they have met with 3rd party associated companies regarding the round bout.

VIII. DDA Comments:

- Billy stated that we are going to be adding a lot of people and cars and in developing cities families are starting to walk and bicycle. He stated that we

need to make it a minimum of 2 stories and a max of 3 stories. He thinks there's some solutions to be had on the sewer, traffic, and local landowners. No one gets everything they want.

- Sarah stated we will be setting up a survey on the website once it is completed.
- Rachel stated there are a lot of things that need to be looked at including sewer and effects on the schools.
- Russ stated that the meeting was very productive.

IX. ADJOURN

- Billy made a motion to adjourn. Rachel Seconded.