

**Community Development Authority of the City of Neenah
June 2, 2025 - 4:00 PM
Hauser Room, City Administration Building**

Present: Board Members: Tom Martin, Ald. Tami Erickson, Pete LeCompte, Grant Birtch, John Ahles, and Michelle Bauer. Also Present: Executive Director Kelly Nieforth, Deputy Director Brad Schmidt, Assistant Planner Carol Kasimor, Community Development Specialist Samantha Jefferson, Ald. Cari Lendrum, Ald. Bill Pollnow, Ald. Flo Bruno, and Frank Cuthbert (1533 Fallow Drive).

Approval of March 3, 2025 meeting minutes:

MSC Birtch/Ahles, the CDA to approve the meeting minutes of March 3, 2025. All voting aye.

Public Appearances: N/A

CDA Executive Director Introduction: New Community Development Director and Executive Director of the CDA Kelly Nieforth introduced herself. Her last role was Director of Community Development for the City of Oshkosh. She was also the Executive Director of the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Oshkosh, which functions very similarly to the CDA.

Election of Officers:

MSC Birtch/Erickson, the CDA to elect Tom Martin as Chairperson of the CDA. All voting aye.

MSC Birtch/Martin, the CDA to elect John Ahles as Vice-Chairperson of the CDA. All voting aye.

Approval of 2025 Community Development Block Grant Funding Plan:

Assistant Planner Kasimor reviewed the 2025 Community Development Block Grant Funding Plan.

MSC Martin/Erickson, the CDA to approve the 2025 Community Development Block Grant Plan. All voting aye.

Community Development Updates:

a) CDA Properties

Executive Director Nieforth began by discussing the several lots in the downtown area that are CDA owned due to environmental liability but are leased by the companies that have developed on them. Specifically, these sites can be defined starting at Solaris on the west side through to 201 West Wisconsin. City staff and the city's environmental consultants (Stantec) will begin pursuing a VPLE (Voluntary Party Liability Exemption) through the DNR for these properties. This would remove liability from the owners if the properties have tested for certain contaminants and they have been successfully capped. Lessees would then be able to obtain ownership and some of them have communicated their intention to do so if this became available. City staff, Stantec and the DNR have discussed this preliminarily.

She also gave an update on Arrowhead Park. Current ongoing projects include the installation of the west-side carriage road and parking lot. This will allow for additional trailhead parking. Staff continues to work with DNR and consultants on this extensive project and will keep CDA updated as it moves forward.

Members asked for a reminder of how this project is being funded. This has been funded by carry forwards but mostly ARPA money and it has continued to be a parks project. Staff continues to work with the DNR to find solutions for concerns when discussing potential development. Likely, future development will be completed with public/private partnerships.

Member Birtch asked about the potential of a restaurant on Arrowhead. He mentioned the significant resident input into the project. Executive Director Nieforth expressed that the availability of some type of concession amenity available to park users is desired, but staff is working to find a compromise with the DNR as this land must remain public and for public use.

Member Erickson asked about the continued work of the outside counsel that the city has hired to help with guidance with the DNR. Executive Director Nieforth confirmed that they were meeting with the attorney and the DNR regularly. One of the discussion points in the latest meeting dealt with public/private usage.

b) Donaldson Lot

Cranky Pat's patrons continue to park on the lot that previously held Donaldson's. The site is heavily contaminated. Cranky Pat's has expressed their willingness to invest in improving this parking lot for their use and thereby potentially install some green space on the S. Commercial Street side of their building. The property is still a piece of a case with the Department of Justice. Executive Director Nieforth does not have an expected timeline on when this will get resolved but staff is working to get agreements prepared so that when that case has been resolved, things can move forward.

c) Housing Study:

Council has adopted the Housing Study and staff is now in implementation mode. Staff considered the suggested strategies and placed a level of priority on each of these. One high priority is the assemblage of land. In particular, there are several CDA owned parcels on S. Commercial Street. Staff is starting to look at putting together a decent size parcel to then market for development.

A preliminary plat for Shattuck School Fields has been approved by Council. Thirty-one single-family parcels would make up this area between Reed and Elm. These parcels may be coming available before the end of summer. In the area south of Laudan, staff is working with the developer to construct a regional stormwater facility. Soccer fields/playgrounds, etc. may be put on the remaining area of the site.

The final plat for 2nd edition to freedom acres was also approved. The purchase of this land by the city was excellent foresight and positioned the city well for expansion on that side of the city. Staff is now looking to where the next subdivision could be developed.

Staff is also going to prioritize zoning changes to encourage more and different types of housing. Council approved some changes at their last meeting. They will be looking into what other communities are doing especially in the central city areas where lots are smaller. Staff will be examining several aspects of the zoning code to ensure that wherever you are in the city there are options to construct homes.

Further Implementation Steps:

Overall zoning code update
Review existing housing programs for improvements
Create new housing programs
Land banking opportunities – CDA may be involved.
Public/private partnerships for housing development

The ultimate goal is to ensure that there are housing opportunities for all people in all stages of life.

Ald. Erickson commented on the housing study consultant's presentation at the council meeting specifically regarding condos. Executive Director Nieforth says she does feel that a condo development is feasible. Typically, condo developments require future owners to purchase the condos before they are built. Finding the right developer and land can be a challenge as well as a potential high cost for ownership.

Member Birth asked about acquisitions in the Main Street parking lot area. All but three property acquisitions have been completed. Council has given approval for the acquisitions.

Member LeCompte inquired about the status of the parking ramp. Executive Director Nieforth said that staff will be conducting an internal parking analysis and will be communicating with companies about current and future needs.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 4:40 p.m. **MSC Birtch/Erickson. All voting aye.**

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Samantha Jefferson'.

Samantha Jefferson
Community Development Specialist