



**Meeting of the Housing and
Redevelopment Authority
Held at the Elk River City Hall
Monday, May 5, 2025**

Members Present: Commissioner Dennis Chuba, Commissioner Nate Ovall, Commissioner Lynn Caswell, Commissioner Mel Beaudry, Mayor John Dietz

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Economic Development Director Brent O'Neil, Economic Development Specialist Joshua Mollan, and Recording Secretary Jennifer Green

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, the meeting was called to order at 5:30 P.M.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

3. CONSIDER AGENDA

Commissioner Dietz asked to add a discussion topic during 6.4 to discuss the downtown small area plan and the HRA's role in it.

Moved by Commissioner Caswell and seconded by Commissioner Dietz to approve the agenda with the addition noted above. Motion carried 5-0.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

Moved by Commissioner Ovall and seconded by Commissioner Beaudry to approve the following consent items as outlined in their respective staff reports. Motion Carried 5-0.

4.1 Draft HRA Minutes - April 7, 2025

4.2 Check Register

4.3 Balance Sheet

4.4 Revenue/Expenditure Report

5. OPEN FORUM

No one appeared for open forum.

6. GENERAL BUSINESS

6.1 Furniture Placement at 724 Main Street

Mr. Mollan presented the staff report.

Moved by Commissioner Dietz and seconded by Commissioner Beaudry to approve the Memorandum of Understanding as outlined in the staff report allowing placement of outdoor furniture at 724 Main Street by the Downtown Elk River Business Association (DERBA) for public use. Motion carried 5-0.

6.2 Consider Elk River Garden Gem Awards

Mr. Mollan presented the staff report.

Commissioner Caswell asked if this program worked on nominations.

Mr. Mollan stated it would, along with self-applications.

Chair Chuba asked if the award covered all city properties and who would be judges.

Mr. Mollan stated it would be all city properties would be eligible, and judges would include members of the Beautification and Public Art Committee and some members of the Sherburne County Master Gardners group would also assist.

Commissioner Beaudry asked what the annual expense of the program would cover, and how people are nominated.

Mr. Mollan explained what the budget funds would cover and that community members can nominate someone as well as self-nominations. He stated the landscaping and gardens should be visible to the public.

Moved by Commissioner Dietz and seconded by Commissioner Beaudry to approve the creation of Elk River Garden Gem Awards, a new landscape and garden recognition program, in partnership with the Economic Development Authority as outlined in the staff report. Motion carried 5-0.

6.3 Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program Update

Mr. Mollan presented the staff report.

Commissioner Dietz asked if the Housing and Redevelopment Authority could be referenced in the newspaper advertisement. The consensus of the HRA was to reference the Housing and Redevelopment Authority on future advertisements.

6.4 General Updates

Mr. O'Neil presented the staff report and highlighted the following items:

- Downtown flower baskets have been placed.
- A member from Habitat for Humanity will present at next month's HRA meeting.

- Can the HRA provide feedback if there was interest in stacking the HRA and EDA meetings on the same evening each month? Potential earlier start time to accommodate both meetings. Work sessions could potentially run longer and would have to work with the city council meeting start time by beginning earlier. Mr. O'Neil asked if the HRA would provide feedback at a future meeting. Commissioner Ovall preferred having the meetings distinct and separate.

-The draft Downtown Small Area Plan was released, and an open house gathered input with the Planning Commission also reviewing. The plan will then be reviewed with the steering committee to discuss the feedback gathered and next steps. After that meeting, the Planning Commission and City Council will review for possible adoption.

Commissioner Dietz asked if the HRA would be asked for funds to be used towards the improvements outlined in the downtown plan, since the HRA is looking to fund future projects. He expressed concerns about where the funds would come from to fulfill the plan. He explained he wanted to use HRA funds to continue acquiring and converting the properties after the railroad tracks along Main Street to Highway 169 into commercial properties. He expressed concerns with parts of the plan dictating what would go on in particular areas and how that would be guided.

Mr. O'Neil stated the HRA would be an appropriate entity to take the lead on acquiring properties for redevelopment. He felt one big driver of this plan was the notion of Main Street and Jackson requiring some modifications to the infrastructure, and this plan was a precursor to guide development when it occurred. The parking lots will also need reconstruction and the plan helps determine if some redevelopment should go there. It can also be a vision to the redevelopment community to show what the city hopes will go there, but it also opens the door for the level of public participation that should guide it. The HRA seems to be the most natural entity to help with the financial lead. He didn't feel the plan was directing who or how to spend improvement funds, but rather provide an idea of possible additions with both the city and other outside entities assisting with funding.

Commissioner Caswell stated he was the HRA representative on the steering committee and noted the street improvements would need to be done soon, and felt the area north of the railroad had some possibilities that the HRA could help redevelop by obtaining those properties.

Commissioner Ovall explained how the HRA could be more proactive and assertive in driving property acquisition, but that would change the current direction of this commission. He stated budgeting decisions would need to be modified if that were the case.

Mr. O'Neil stated there were fewer negative comments at the open house than the online comments, with a more constructive balance and feedback. The main concerns heard were the timing, staging and impact of the street and parking lot improvements and the impact on the businesses and traffic when those areas were closed for reconstruction. A second concern was the long-term impact on parking spaces being lost.

Chair Chuba asked what the objection to parallel parking was.

Commissioner Dietz stated if the sidewalks were widened, there would be a loss of some parking spaces.

Chair Chuba brought up concerns about the cost of the highway realignment and where those funds would come from.

The HRA discussed other pieces of the proposed plan and the long-term vision this plan can provide.

Commissioner Caswell stated one of his concerns was the width of Main Street and Jackson if the sidewalks are widened.

Commissioner Dietz felt the open house was well attended but would have liked larger exhibits.

Commissioner Ovall commented about the challenges with the city getting involved in this type of redevelopment.

The HRA discussed whether the sidewalks will be reconfigured when the roadway is resurfaced, and the public works director will review the plan and provide feedback.

7. MOTION TO ADJOURN REGULAR MEETING

Moved by Commissioner Caswell and seconded by Commissioner Beaudry to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried 5-0.

The meeting adjourned at 6:10 P.M.

Minutes prepared by Jennifer Green.



Denny Chuba, Chair



Tina Allard, City Clerk