

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MEETING MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 6, 2019

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## MEETING MINUTES City of Berkeley Economic Development Wednesday, November 6, 2019 6:00 P.M.

Council Chambers, 8425 Airport Road, St. Louis, MO 63134

Note: The agenda for this meeting was posted on the bulletin board at the City Hall complex, 8425 Airport Road and is in compliance with the Open Meetings Law.

Members Present: Laura Modrusic and John Sides

Staff present: Kimberly Smith- Drake, Economic Development Coordinator

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### CALL TO ORDER / DECLARATION OF QUORUM

With a no quorum established, Kimberly Smith-Drake called the meeting to order at 6:25 pm. It should be noted that meeting start time was delayed due to waiting for the other members' arrival. Also Councilwoman Mitchell, Councilwoman Green, Councilwoman Williams, and Councilwoman Anthony had not arrived. Kimberly Smith-Drake noted that the items on the agenda did not require any voting amongst the members, and will proceed with the meeting.

### MINUTES

Approval of October 1, 2019 Economic Development Regular Meeting Minutes.

Laura Modrusic made **MOTION** to approve the minutes. John Sides **SECOND** the motion. A voice vote was taken, and the minutes were unanimously approved with a voice vote 2; 0, Modrusic and Sides.

### PUBLIC COMMENT

None

### OLD BUSINESS

Kimberly Smith-Drake provided a status update on the Ordinances approving the Home Dollar Program and the Mow and Own Program. Both of these Ordinances are in process for final approval. The Home Dollar Program is bill 4737 and the Mow and Own bill is 4738 and should be resolved at the next City Council Meeting on November 18, 2019.

### NEW BUSINESS:

**Case No. ED 19-05** - A request to approve the purchase of post- third sale properties located in Berkeley from St. Louis County.

Kimberly Smith-Drake began discussing the list of properties attached in the staff report available through St. Louis County for post third sales. The properties listed will be used for the Dollar Home Program and the Mow and Own Program. There are other properties currently in inventory in the city of Berkeley. Those properties were not listed in the staff report. The list of properties provided by Kimberly Smith-Drake in the staff report represent both vacant lots and derelict homes. The city can purchase each one of those lots at an administrative cost of \$30.00. Kimberly Smith-Drake is requesting to get approval to purchase those properties. The total cost to purchase would be \$2,610.00 dollars for the 87 properties listed. This request has been discussed at the City Council meeting and is now needing the Economic Development agreement and approval. St. Louis County is enforcing the necessity for

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municipalities to provide a plan for the properties purchased. The properties purchased through St. Louis County must have a redevelopment plan. The Dollar Home Program and Mow and Own Program would be beneficial to the properties. Most of the properties listed the city has provided services such as property maintenance and keeping the properties clean to prevent illegal dumping. This opportunity will allow homeowners to purchase lots that are next door to their homes. Kimberly Smith-Drake will be reaching out to residents to consider purchasing lots near their home for more land use. Laura Modrusic stated that she will reach out to Berkeley families within the Ferguson Florissant School District to encourage families to pursue the benefits of the Dollar Home Program and Mow and Own Program. Kimberly Smith-Drake agreed this will be a good idea and once everything is finalized she will inform Laura Modrusic. The two will work together on marketing the programs starting locally with residents and business owners. The goal is to provide homeownership. The city will provide any funds but will offer helpful resources and be able to help guide first time homeowners in the city. Kimberly Smith-Drake stated that she has been reaching out to Midland Bank that helps with loans for resident to be able to qualify for homeownership. With the discussion coming to an end Case No ED 19-05- A request to approve the purchase of post third sales properties will be tabled due to lack of quorum.

**Case No. ED 19-06-** Request to purchase Post-Third Sale Properties located in Berkeley from St. Louis County.

St. Louis County has asked the City of Berkeley to take over Washington Park Cemetery located at Natural Bridge and Brown Road. It should be noted the purchase of Washington Park has been approved by the City Council through Ordinance 4574 on October 7, 2019. Kimberly Smith-Drake noted that the cemetery has been in distress for a very long time and different non-profit organizations has executed effects to try gather volunteers to keep the cemetery maintained. Washington Park Cemetery will be a redevelopment opportunity for the city. St. Louis County has been getting several calls about Washington Park Cemetery so they contacted the city of Berkeley asking to take over ownership. The cemetery is an African American cemetery and is one of the first in the region with a lot of historic significant. Kimberly Smith –Drake stated that she has completed documentation and has made contact with St. Louis Count. She estimated that she should receive titles and deeds within the next 90 days. Moving forward Ms. Smith- Drake also noted that the amount of money owed on taxes will be wiped off because the city is now taking ownership. Also Kimberly Smith –Drake mentioned that the city’s Public Works Department has provided maintenance services and grass cutting. Along Natural Bridge it’s an eye sore with the grass flowing into the street. Overall the entire cemetery will be maintained.

There will be no new burials, the cemetery will be gated, it will be zoned as a park district, and also hoping to seek that the cemetery can be declared as a historic landmark. The St. Louis Health County Health Department will still have access to records and will continue to be the contact for burial information. The city’s goal is to redevelop the cemetery to make it pleasant for family members to visit their loved ones. John Sides also agreed that the cemetery has become an eye sore and is looking forward to seeing a change.

**Case No. ED 19-07-** A request to utilize Economic Development Funding to support the renovation of the old city hall and the fire department for a Community Youth Center.

Kimberly Smith-Drake began the discussion with stating that a group within the City Council has express great concern for the youth in the community. When the idea of the Community Center was brought to the board it lacked several opportunities for the youth in the community. The Council members were discussing to have a center that caters to the youth and provide different services and helpful resources for the younger residents. It should be noted that the Council members met with

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someone who is a specialist in the development of youth centers. That person is also affiliated with the new development youth center located in Ferguson, The Boys and Girls Club.

The potential location for a youth center will be the old city hall and fire department. The plan is to redesign and renovate so that there is no need for a new building construction. The potential building spaces is an easy access and is located off a main road.

Kimberly Smith- Drake informed the members that she has gotten a brownfield assessment and she is currently waiting on the report. With Case No. ED 19-07 A request to utilize Economic Development Funding to support the renovation of the old city hall and the fire department for a Community Youth Center coming to an end of discussion, it should be noted this case will be tabled until the next meeting.

Also the selection of a Chairperson and Co-Chair- person for the Economic Development board, Kimberly Smith-Drake noted that it's best for the board to make final decision once there are more members added to the committee.

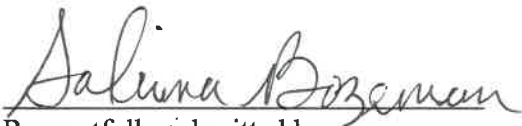
It should be noted that after the December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2019 Economic Development board meeting, Kimberly Smith-Drake will be out of the office until late February of next year 2020. The regular scheduled meeting will resume soon after Kimberly Smith-Drake's arrival.

### **CONCLUDED**

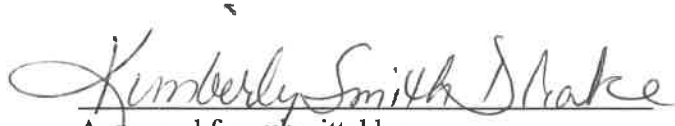
That the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Economic Development is held on **Wednesday, December 4, 2019 at 6:00 p.m.** and that consideration of the dates and times of future Committee meetings be deferred to this meeting.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Economic Development Coordinator Kimberly-Smith-Drake adjourned the meeting for a second time at 6:56 p.m. **MOTIONED**, Side **SECOND** Modrusic with a voice vote 2:0, Sides and Modrusic.



Respectfully submitted by:  
Sabrina Bozeman Public Works Secretary  
Recording Secretary



Approved for submittal by:  
Kimberly Smith- Drake, Economic Development  
Coordinator

These minutes are subject to the Economic Development approval at their next scheduled meeting.