

Redevelopment Authority (RDA)

To: RDA Board

From: Mason T. Becker, RDA Executive Director

Date: 12-18-24

Subject: Development Update

Dear RDA Board members,

I am providing this memo as a short update on various developments within the City of Watertown.

Residential:

Intrepid Investments: The City recently approved and signed a Pre-Development Agreement with Intrepid Investments for two sites: 111 S Water St and a portion of the N First St parking lot. There is further detail about this in your agenda packet. These sites were both identified as catalytic redevelopment sites in the Rock River District Vision plan we have been working on with RINKA and Kapur.

Loos Homes is moving forward with Edge Field, a new subdivision located just south of Hepp Heights and west of Milford St/Hwy A. As part of the planning for this subdivision, a new public park will be created within the existing Hepp Heights. Parks, Rec, & Forestry Director Kristine Butteris and other key staff were consulted on this matter. Loos plans to break ground at Edge Field this spring. At Plan Commission, it was determined that River Road should be extended across Milford St to provide another point of access for this subdivision.

Bielinski has been moving through the platting process for The Enclave, a new subdivision within Hunter Oaks on the west side of the City and south of Clausen Quality Chocolates. These new single-family homes will be on smaller lots, each home around 1,500 sq ft to be offered at a more attainable price point. Work has already begun on the first four lots. Belmont Drive will be fully constructed as part of this process (the developer previously planned to vacate the undeveloped portion of Belmont, but plans changed due to wetlands discovered on the western portion of the development).

Rock River Ridge/Lumin Terrace: The development agreement for Lumin Terrace, consisting of 92 new apartment units, was completed recently. Site work is well underway for the entire development, which is located just south of the new Tom and Mary Schultz Family YMCA (also currently under construction). Take the time to drive by if you haven't...there is a massive amount of dirt being moved right now! As a reminder, Rock River Ridge will include a mix of

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single-family homes constructed by Harbor Homes, and White Oak Builders will be constructing nine twin-home builds (18 units total).

Commercial:

Downtown Activity: I continue to speak to and work with downtown property owners regarding future plans for their businesses. The building that was formerly home to Watertown Siding recently was sold, and a new business, Rafah Bowls, will be located on the first floor. The RDA recently awarded a Beltz Foundation Grant to this project.

Sassy Sweets is also currently under construction, located in the former location of Elegant Arrangements. This business was another Beltz Grant recipient.

Church Street Corridor: A large amount of activity has been happening here lately. I was recently informed that another restaurant brand will be locating in the space that KFC recently vacated (more details forthcoming). I have also been working with someone representing another national QSR (quick service restaurant) looking at a new construction infill project along this corridor. The search for an appropriate site took a long time for this project, but I think residents will be pleased when they learn more.

A Nicaraguan grocery store and market is also coming to the former Pizza Hut location (located next to Sake House). City staff are currently assisting them with the permitting process for this new business. You may have noticed the new flags they have hanging outside the windows for the time being already.

Industrial: Watertown currently has somewhat limited options for industrial/manufacturing growth at this time. This is a challenge. Further challenging is our lack of currently vacant existing industrial space. Many companies are looking for available existing space first, due to high construction costs and interest rates.

Hwy A: This year, the City paid for various services to get 63 acres of City-owned land, located along Hwy A/Milford St ready for future development. Phase I and II ESAs (environmental site assessment) and a Phase I Archeological studies were all completed, with no concerning items found. A certified survey map (CSM) was also completed to separate the buildable portion of the property from a larger piece that will be retained by the City for wetlands/conservation. I will be working with Thrive ED to get this land ready for marketing. We anticipate bringing forward options at a future Plan Commission meeting. We had a productive discussion with the Plan Commission about this site in November.

Last week I was able to attend the BioForward end of year celebration with Deb Reinbold from Thrive ED. This was a great opportunity to network with people involved in the biotech industry in our state. Wisconsin was recently designated as a Tech Hub, and federal investment in this sector should be continuing for the foreseeable future. I can share that there was much buzz about Jefferson County at this event.



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Nearby Jefferson continues to enjoy industrial growth in their FaB (food and beverage) park. The Jefferson County Board of Supervisors last week approved a potential sale of land to a Finnish company, Onego Bio. This continued investment and job growth in Jefferson County is a positive that communities such as Watertown can build upon.

Dodge County also just announced a new grant program designed to promote housing development in Dodge County. I will be attending a session in January to learn more about this new program, which is being funded by a portion of the county's sales tax.

Please let me know if you have any additional questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Mason T. Becker".

Mason T. Becker
RDA Executive Director