

EDA motion 5 JULY 2011

The Northfield City Charter [Sec. 3.1] states, "The council shall exercise the legislative power of the city and determine all matters of policy." Economic policy is an aspect of nearly every decision the City Council makes, and should not be separated from other mandated policy-making the Council engages in. When the Council approves a grant to the Northfield Historical Society to add accessible bathrooms to its building, it is supporting economic development. When the City Council deliberates on road assessments, it is engaging in economic development because good transportation infrastructure is a piece of economic development.

The City Council is now engaged in a debate over how economic development should occur, and what role the statutorily created Economic Development Authority (EDA) should play. I propose the following motion:

*Resolved, that the City Council set a date for a public hearing to repeal the enabling resolution of the Northfield Economic Development Authority (Resolution #90-187), pursuant to Minn. Stat. §469.093, Subd. 2: All modifications to the enabling resolution must be by written resolution and must be adopted after notice is given and a public hearing conducted as required for the original adoption of the enabling resolution.*

If the Council dissolves the EDA, nothing will prevent a business from seeking support to launch a new venture in Northfield. If the Council dissolves the EDA, ad hoc groups like the *Northfield Roundtable* and *Save Our Post Office* will still have the ability to discuss and envision the economic future of Northfield. The City will still be able to fund vibrant and successful organizations like the Northfield Downtown Development Corporation and Riverwalk Market Fair, as well as contract for services for a Convention and Visitors Bureau. The Arts and Cultural Commission as well as the Defeat of Jesse James Day Committee and other civic organizations will still have the right to petition for funds, as the Charter states [Sec 9.1], "The council may contribute city funds to any entity to promote the health, safety, and welfare of the city, if the gift does not have as its primary objective the benefit of a private interest."

A dissolution of the EDA affirms the Council's obligation and responsibility to residents of the city to develop *all matters of policy*. An economic development *advisory* board is the appropriate way to engage a broad cross section of community leaders in the essential matter of economic development. The City Charter expressly states [Sec. 3.2], "The council may establish boards or commissions to advise it with respect to any municipal function or activity, to investigate any subject of interest to the city, and to perform quasi-judicial functions." Working with an advisory board, the Council will have the flexibility to engage citizens while still fulfilling its mandated obligations.

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