

Community Development Authority of the City of Neenah
January 5, 2026 - 4:00 PM
Hauser Room, City Administration Building

Present: Board Members: Ald. Tami Erickson, Lee Hillstrom, Ald. Daniel Steiner, Grant Birtch, and John Ahles. Also Present: Executive Director Kelly Nieforth, Assistant Planner Carol Kasimor, Community Development Specialist Samantha Jefferson, Ald. Cari Lendrum, Ald. Flo Bruno, Ald. Bill Pollnow and resident Scott Beacher (1061 Green Acres Lane).

Approval of November 3, 2025 meeting minutes:

**MSC, Birtch/Hillstrom, the CDA to approve the meeting minutes of November 3, 2025.
Motion passed.**

Public Appearances: None.

2026 Goals:

During the November 2025 meeting, CDA members were asked to share what they would like the staff/the CDA to focus on moving forward. Director Nieforth noted that this feedback is valuable and provides a helpful starting point for establishing priorities. Member Birtch commented that while the CDA has traditionally played a role in facilitating acquisition and development, it is not often asked to help develop priorities or areas of focus and expressed appreciation for the opportunity to do so. He also emphasized that continued efforts to gather public input are critically important and should remain a component of future projects.

1. Downtown Development
 - a. Implementation of the Downtown Master Plan
 - b. 135 Millview Drive Development
 - c. Arrowhead Park

Director Nieforth began with Downtown Development. The Glatfelter project was noted as a significant project for the CDA, given the Authority's historic role in the redevelopment of downtown. Director Nieforth stated that overall, there is not a significant amount of vacancy downtown and that conditions are generally holding steady, though some opportunities for infill development remain.

Member Erickson commented on the former Di Renzo & Bomier building, and Director Nieforth noted that staff will be speaking with an interested developer this week. Regarding 135 Millview, Director Nieforth stated that the City is scheduled to close on the warehouse property in February. She also shared that the term sheet for the T. Wall development project has not yet been presented to committee or Council but will be forthcoming. Additionally, staff will be bringing a presentation to Council regarding implementation of the Arrowhead Park Master Plan in the near future.

Member Birtch discussed parking, noting that prior to COVID, downtown parking was at or near capacity. Given changes following COVID, the CDA expressed interest in staying informed about the current parking situation. Director Nieforth stated that staff is actively working on this issue and is talking with major downtown stakeholders to better understand the true parking conditions. Member Birtch also noted that it has become apparent that the Alta parking ramp requires significant attention and emphasized the need for reliable, factual information to guide future parking decisions. Member Ahles discussed issues related to the Alta ramp and asked whether the life of the ramp is standard, and whether sufficient questions had been asked during earlier planning stages. Member Erickson added that parking enforcement and its impacts should be included as part of the overall parking discussion. Director Nieforth confirmed that parking enforcement will be part of ongoing discussions.

Director Nieforth also noted that staff attends monthly BID Board meetings and meets quarterly with Future Neenah staff. Member Birtch commented that receiving updates from those discussions would be helpful for the CDA moving forward.

2. Corridor Planning

- a. Corridors off Interstate 41 Into City
- b. Doty Island
- c. S. Commercial Corridor Plan Implementation

Members discussed the importance of the corridors entering the City from Interstate 41, noting that these gateways play a key role in welcoming residents and visitors to the community.

Director Nieforth reported that staff has met with the City of Menasha Community Development staff to explore whether a joint planning effort for Doty Island would be appropriate. Ald. Pollnow provided an update on an intersection control evaluation study that is scheduled to be funded in 2026 and noted that the City of Menasha will also be contributing to the project. Director Nieforth commented that staff is hopeful the Theda townhome project will serve as a catalyst for additional development on Doty Island.

Member Hillstrom asked whether there has been developer interest following completion of the South Commercial Street construction project. Director Nieforth stated that staff has received inquiries. She also shared that the Eminent Development project is moving forward; an initial application for WHEDA tax credits has been submitted, and Eminent Development is awaiting notification on whether the project will be invited to submit a full application.

3. Cecil/S. Commercial Redevelopment
 - a. Redevelopment Opportunities
 - b. Façade Program Promotion

Member Birtch asked about the former Shattuck School development area and how the project may encourage additional retail activity along the South Commercial Street corridor, including discussion of what types of uses may be desired or appropriate. Director Nieforth noted that the development will include 31 single-family homes and mentioned that a potential market gap analysis could help identify needed services and retail opportunities in the area. Member Birtch also noted that the idea of establishing a Business Improvement District (BID) along South Commercial Street has been discussed and questioned its long-term sustainability. He commented that a BID could help provide direction and identity for the corridor. Director Nieforth responded that any BID effort would need to be grassroots-driven by the businesses on South Commercial Street and adjacent. She also stated that the South Commercial Street façade improvement program remains active.

4. Industrial Park Growth
 - a. Identify Potential Growth Areas
 - b. Inventory Existing City-Owned Property

Director Nieforth reported that there continues to be significant growth in the industrial park area, noting that while this is a positive situation, it has resulted in a limited number of available parcels. She stated that RGL is expected to begin its second phase of development soon and that the Dixie Road properties are nearing full occupancy. Director Nieforth also noted that while there are vacant wetland areas within the industrial park, development of those sites can be costly and complex.

Member Birtch asked about the former junkyard property and whether there has been developer interest. Director Nieforth stated that while there is nothing concrete at this time, staff has received several inquiries and continues to prepare the site for future development, noting that there are contamination issues that are being addressed. Member Erickson asked how staff assists with marketing vacant buildings, and Director Nieforth explained that staff shares information on available properties with interested parties as inquiries are received.

Member Birtch also asked about development opportunities near the new high school. Director Nieforth explained that the surrounding properties are located within the

Village of Fox Crossing and the Town of Neenah and that a boundary agreement is in place, limiting expansion in that direction. She noted that the City's primary expansion areas are to the south and southwest. Member Ahles asked when the boundary agreement with the Town will expire, and Director Nieforth indicated she would look into that and provide an update.

5. Doty Island Redevelopment
 - a. Redevelopment Plan
 - b. Corridor Plan

Doty Island Redevelopment was discussed under Corridor Planning.

6. Housing
 - a. Housing Plan Implementation
 - i. Identify growth areas
 - ii. Encourage infill development
 - iii. Zoning Code update
 - iv. Rehabilitation programs

Director Nieforth stated that boundary agreements contribute to limitations on housing growth. Also, we are restricted by water in certain areas. It was noted that the area now known as Freedom Acres was annexed from the Town of Vinland.

At this time, one of the City's primary focuses is on infill development. The Plan Commission has completed an infill inventory and is discussing potential Zoning Code changes to make development on infill lots more feasible. Member Steiner, who also serves on the Plan Commission, shared that the Commission is reviewing recommendations from the Housing Study as well as recent state-level changes to determine what may be appropriate at the municipal level.

Requests for Proposals (RFPs) for a Zoning Code rewrite will be issued soon. This effort was described as a significant undertaking, and Director Nieforth stated that updates will be provided to the CDA as the project progresses.

Member Erickson asked about the difficulty of annexing property. Director Nieforth responded that it depends on the property's location and how it is affected by existing boundary agreements. The annexation process must be initiated by the property owner. Potential amendments to boundary agreements could also be explored.

Member Erickson also inquired about the status of the Bridgwood development. Director Nieforth reported that the development is approximately one-third complete, with the developer exploring the next phase and seeking required state approvals.

Director Nieforth provided an overview of the city's housing assistance programs. The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program serves income-qualified individuals to assist with home improvement projects. The Houses Into Homes program is available to households that may exceed CDBG income limits. The Houses Into Homes program includes two subprograms: a grant program and a loan program. Eligible projects include both curb appeal and interior improvements. Director Nieforth noted that projects completed through the program have resulted in increased assessed values. Due to the program's success, certain program terms were modified to ensure funds are reinvested more quickly and to support the long-term sustainability of the program.

Member Hillstrom asked whether Winnebago County recently approved a revolving loan program. Director Nieforth confirmed that it was approved, noting that limited information is available at this time.

Executive Director's Report:

Much of the information included in the Executive Director's report was discussed earlier in the meeting under the 2026 Goals section. Director Nieforth did note the planned RGL expansion, which is expected to begin during the current fiscal year. The expansion will add approximately 220,000 square feet. Director Nieforth also reported that Gunderson has received zoning approval, with construction anticipated to be completed within the year.

Member Birtch asked Director Nieforth to explain the purpose of a Voluntary Party Liability Exemption (VPLE) for properties that obtain one. Director Nieforth explained that the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) allows a property owner to apply for a VPLE after completing required cleanup activities associated with an approved brownfield remediation plan. A VPLE provides liability protection for the contaminants that were tested for and addressed, helping to mitigate risk for new property owners.

Member Ahles asked about the status of the Edgewater Door project. Director Nieforth stated that staff expects to meet with representatives in the coming weeks.

Member Erickson inquired about the former Burger King site, now known as the Keesler site. Director Nieforth confirmed that no proposed projects for the site have been brought forward at this time.

Members mentioned the car wash site on South Commercial Street that is currently for sale and adjacent to a city-owned property. Staff will review this site.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 4:50 p.m. **MSC Hillstrom/Birtch. All voting aye.**

Respectfully Submitted,

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

Samantha Jefferson
Community Development Specialist