

Grandview Hires New Economic Development Firm

by Paul Thompson • JC Advocate

The city of Grandview has found its replacement for departed Economic Development Director Alan Kenyon.

The decision became official on Tuesday, July 23, when the Board of Aldermen officially hired Zimmer Real Estate Services to a 12-month, \$119,000 contract to serve as the city's economic developer for the next year. The position had been vacant since Kenyon left the city on May 3, after six years in Grandview. Zimmer was ultimately chosen to fill the void after beating out nine other companies in a stringent application process.

The ordinance approving the agreement for economic development services was passed unanimously by the board during its regular session.

"We've got high hopes. Your presentation was good, and that's always a first start," said Ward 1 Alderman Leonard Jones to Zimmer representatives in attendance. "Needless to say, we're looking for the fruits of your labor."

The Board of Aldermen was formally introduced to Zimmer during a special work session held prior to the regular 7:00 p.m. meeting. Troy Nash, Zimmer's Director of Public Sector Consulting and a former Kansas City Councilman, explained what Zimmer can do for Grandview.

"We are not planners, and I think it's important to say that," said Nash. "This firm actually develops projects. We bring all these people together to cause economic development to occur."

Zimmer also brings with it a wealth of experience in the Kansas City area. The real estate firm has managed development on projects such as the Sprint Headquarters Campus, the College Basketball Experience at the Sprint Center, and most recently for the NNSA National Security Campus along 150 Highway. Given their list of accomplishments, Zimmer will hopefully provide an experienced team that has seen results before.

Nash said that while his team is experienced, they are nonetheless prepared to take direction from Grandview city officials.

"We're going to move under the authority of this body," said Nash to the Board of Aldermen. "We will listen first, create the expectations, and then we want to stretch those expectations."

While serving as the point people for Grandview's economic development for the next year, Nash said that Zimmer will take every step necessary to keep an open line of communication with the city.

"If the Mayor has to ever ask 'what's going on with economic development,' then we've failed," said Nash.

From the city's perspective, the Zimmer hire provides them with not only experience, but a concrete window with which to judge to firm's progress over the next year. Alderman Leonard Jones noted that the 12-month contract can serve as a sort of extended trial for Zimmer.

"It's twelve months, that's good," said Jones. "We can step back and see 'what did we accomplish in this time?'"

Mayor Steve Dennis acknowledged that 12 months is a tight window, and expressed his hope that Zimmer can focus on key areas where development is most needed, including Truman Corners and 150 Highway.

> see page 2

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