The Community Development Agency met on Wednesday, August 2nd at the Elmwood Community Center. The public was invited to attend. Elizabeth Chase, a representative from the Nebraska Main Street Network was in attendance. Nebraska Main Street Network partners with communities to help revitalize main street areas by connecting people, exchanging ideas, providing guidance, and working together with communities. Mz. Chase reported that the Midwest Farmers Cooperative offered to pay the $300 annual membership due for the Village of Elmwood. Going forward Mz. Chase will help facilitate the public meetings and will help Elmwood create a plan for revitalizing main street. Brook Aken from OPPD Economic Development and Jennifer Serkiz from Cass County Economic Development were also in attendance and will be involved with this project.

Chairperson Pat Wray reviewed a portion of the current redevelopment plan for Elmwood. This plan lays out the Community Goals and Policies that were identified as important in 2002. Many items in the plan are still relevant today. Some items could be checked off as completed or in progress such as a new housing development. This plan will need to be updated to include the current demography and a new survey will be conducted to identify current information about Elmwood and possible changes for the future.

The group discussed current positive and negative aspects of Elmwood and noted it was similar to the list from 2002. The general condition of the streets was a topic that was very concerning. Everyone agreed that B Street between 6th and D Street needs attention. It was also noted that some of the asphalt streets had weeds in the cracks and needed to be sprayed. There are also derelict properties that need to be improved. Positive aspects of Elmwood include the location between Omaha and Lincoln, the great school district, the new housing development, and a great strength is that people want to grow as a community.

Elmwood has several events in the fall that bring a lot of people to town. The Bubble Soccer Tournament in early September brings in people who play the game and many people who cheer for them. The Harvest Moon Hustle brings in 1300 runners for the 5k/10k plus their families and friends. The Market-to-Market Relay in late September makes Elmwood an exchange point for relay teams who begin the race in the Old Market in Omaha and race to the Haymarket in Lincoln. Thousands of people pass through Elmwood on that day. The Elmwood Holiday Extravaganza in November also is a big draw for people to come and experience the small town celebration. All of these events are an opportunity for Elmwood to showcase our town.

The next topic for the group was, “What are the issues facing the future development of Elmwood?” With increase in population it would be interesting to explore what it would take to have increased law enforcement services. Commercial and business development opportunities would serve the community and help with growth. Affordable housing in the form of apartments, duplexes, and single family homes are high in demand. A place for the elderly to transition into from their homes that is now too big such as an assisted living facility would give longtime residents a place to move to yet still remain a member of the community. This would allow them to continue being a member of lifelong churches or clubs and to be near their families.

Main street is always a concern because a vital main street shows the health of a community. Elmwood is far from being a community on a downward slide and main street should reflect that. Revitalization of main street could bring in new businesses and new opportunities. The first step in this process is to find out what people want to see in Elmwood and what businesses they would support. A survey will be

distributed to the residents of Elmwood and surrounding area. This will help with the planning phase for the Vision Group which will be forming soon. This group will aid in the future growth and planning for the Village of Elmwood. The future is bright for Elmwood and the citizens are clearly engaged and ready to move forward.