

Meeting Minutes
Economic Development Committee
Tuesday – November 24, 2009, 4:30 p.m., City Council Chambers

Members present: Morack, O’Connell, Schirpke and Dyreson.

Also present: Mayor Henke, Herminath, Hager, Laurie Shaw, Lee Rousseau, and Corky Van Handel.

1. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Morack at 4:30 pm. O’Connell/Schirpke to adopt the agenda. Carried 4-0.
2. The Committee welcomed the Executive Director of the New London Area Chamber of Commerce, Laurie Shaw. Laurie brought the Committee up to date on Chamber of Commerce activities. The Chamber Board of Directors recently conducted a strategic planning effort. The public was invited to participate in this undertaking. The question to be answered was, what does the Chamber membership see as our community’s needs? Without question the greatest need identified was “economic development.” This broad topic was further clarified regarding what plan of work the Chamber can conduct that they can control and therefore benefit the community. The answer to this question was to have the Chamber provide specific educational benefits for our business community. It was noted that given the number of staff and the budget that the Chamber has, implementing an educational undertaking for economic development was determined to be the best route to take. The Chamber has started this effort with an educational series on the use of the “social media” on the internet such as YouTube, Twitter, and LinkedIn.

It was noted that the function of the Chamber is more toward growing existing businesses rather than attracting new ones. They are not focused on attracting new businesses nor do they plan to conduct a gap analysis. The Chamber is an “area” chamber of commerce so their membership is not just from within the City. They estimate that roughly 50% of local businesses are members of the Chamber. Their membership stands at about 230. It was noted the Economic Development Committee needs to work with the Chamber as a valuable partner and assure that we stay in close communication. We don’t want to duplicate any economic development efforts. It was suggested that if the City wanted to circulate a business survey that the Chamber may be able to assist utilizing one of their mailings.

There may be a benefit to work together to identify the specific tasks a new business has to work thru and see how we both can assist that entrepreneur to achieve their goal of opening a new business. We need to help people look for the economic “gaps” in our local economy that can be filled. Help these folks get a business plan in place. Help them with their financing and assist them in locating here. All agreed that the appearance of our community plays a large roll in a business decision to locate in our community. All agreed that we need to partner together as best we can.

When Laurie was asked if there was anything the City can do to assist the chamber in their mission, she noted that most communities are jealous of how good a working relationship our Chamber has with the City. The City is very generous in assisting the Chamber. She said

that she cannot think of a case where she has had a request for help to the City that was not met. The Committee thanked Laurie for her time and efforts to help build our community and assured her that our cooperation will continue.

3. Administrator Hager next reviewed his memo regarding his recent economic development activities with the Committee. The EJ Metals project in the Northeast New London Business Center is moving along well. The city was able to provide all the required elements as called for in the development agreement, including a Certified Survey Map and a deed in 22 days. It was noted that we will be hosting the 2012 Farm Technology Days on the Handschke and Heideman farms near Bear Creek. The demolition of the former Simmons property is out to bid with award of the bid scheduled for the December 8th City Council meeting. The Revolving Loan Fund Committee met and approved a loan to Riverside Tool and Carbide. American Tire and Recycling Corporation is planning to locate a “tire transfer” facility in New London. The Waterfront Plan was approved by City Council and will be submitted to the state. The alley easement is still being circulated. The Canadian National railroad acquisition matter is still pending. The new auto parts store is in the process of getting their state plans approval for their location just south of Walgreens.
4. The Committee reviewed progress that was made in 2009 and started planning tasks for 2010. The Committee noted the following tasks accomplished in 2009: reviewed City web site, prepared former Wolf River Lumber property for development, retained a new sales firm to market and sell our industrial park land, met with the Tourism Commission, met with several business leaders, met with representatives of the state and County government, met with the Chamber of Commerce, CAP Services, Fox Valley Tech, New London High School marketing charter school, and the editor of the local paper. The Committee then reviewed the following work areas for 2010 and determined to prioritize this list at a future meeting: web site work, potential to work on a future development plan for the former Simmons property, potentially have a group meeting with our larger local employers, continue with our guest speakers, develop a local team to assist existing and new businesses, continue to network with various local and regional economic development groups, speak with our local and federal elected officials,
5. The Committee reviewed a book titled “Who’s Your City.” Going after the development of high knowledge, and higher paying jobs is important. We may be able to focus on the lumber industry as our important “cluster.” There may be more businesses that would locate here to be able to work more closely with our current lumber industries. It was observed that the appearance of your community is very important and that there may be an opportunity for the Committee to help make our City more attractive. There may be an opportunity to partner with our community service clubs to help accomplish some community beautification projects and perhaps have them “adopt a park” to help improve our City.
6. There being no further business to come before the Committee, O’Connell/Schirpke to adjourn. Passed 4-0. The meeting adjourned at 6:15 pm.

Kent Hager
City Administrator