

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

Members present: Morack, Tate, Romberg, Schirpke and Steingraber.

Also present: Henke, Hager, Laurie Shaw and Bill Schmidt.

1. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Morack. Romberg/Tate to adopt the agenda. Carried 5-0.

2. The Committee invited representatives from two groups to come before the Committee and have an educational discussion about what each group is doing. First to address the Committee was Dave Thiel, Director of the Waupaca County Economic Development Corporation. Dave started with a brief history of his organization also known as the WCEDC. The group was started in 1985. Dave is the third director since that time. The WCEDC focuses on growing the tax base thru advancements in county manufacturing and agriculture and not so much on the tourism segment of the economy. The WCEDC does not focus on recruiting new manufacturing businesses to the County. The organization simply does not have a marketing budget to be successful in that very competitive field. Rather history has shown that at least 80% to 95% of economic growth in the manufacturing sector comes from within. The WCEDC concentrates its efforts here. Since we have a small marketing budget locally, the WCEDC focuses on working regionally to better the County economy. Dave is active in the New North group and also on the Board of Directors of the Fox Valley Workforce Development Board. A goal for the WCEDC this year is to get a business retention effort up and going. Utilizing a computer programmed survey, Dave would like to visit the larger local manufacturers along with the City Administrators of the respective Cities and Villages in the County and administer the retention survey as a starting point for the project.

The WCEDC web site was reviewed along with the list of Board members. City Administrator Hager is on the WCEDC Board to represent the City. It was noted that the County has a Revolving Loan Fund program just like the City. The County is a willing partner to work with the City on RLF projects. Given state restrictions on future capitalization of this state funded program, the County is the only entity that will get additional state funding in the future to recapitalize their RLF.

The WCEDC is also working on what is now known as the Hometown Program to try and help local communities improve their retail economy. The City of New London was the first community in the county to participate in the program that is now being implemented county-wide.

The Forward New London group has been active now for about three years or more. This group has been successful with establishment of the Wolf River Marketplace, the mural projects, and cross marketing among other accomplishments. Another group called Grow New London has been formed as part of this effort with the purpose of getting the various community improvement entities together in order to obtain a better focus on where the community is heading. There are a lot of organizations in the City that are trying to make our community better. We need to get them to see if they can help one another and at a minimum, not get in each others way. The current Grow New London group is composed of the following: the Shamrock Club, the High School Marketing Charter School, Forward New London, Mosquito Hill, the City, Jaycees, Tourism Commission, Chamber of Commerce, the Ministerial Alliance and the Art league. Eventually, all County Communities will hopefully be working together as well to improve ourselves as a partnership.

The Committee thanked Dave for the work the Waupaca County Economic Development Corporation does for New London and for the various communities in the County

3. Laurie Shaw and Bill Schmidt next addressed the Committee on behalf of the New London Tourism Commission. The purpose of the Tourism Commission is to put "heads in beds." A room tax is in place to collect funds to do this and the Tourism Commission is responsible for seeing that this is done. The Tourism Commission is appointed by the Mayor. The view of the Commission is that they will assist anyone who can bring people to the City. If people do not get here, they will never stay here. They want to get people here with the hope that they stay and come back more often. The Commission places ads in various publications to promote our area and also supplies funding for various events. One of the more recent local activities was the power parachute event. The Committee follows up regarding their financial support with a survey that helps determine where the visitors to the event stayed.

A question was asked, "Why come to New London?" What is our brand? What do people think about us? It was noted that it is hard to promote yourself if you don't know what you are. What do people think of us and how do we deliver on that. The Tourism Commission is working on answering these questions by doing research on "branding" our community.

The Tourism Commission is trying hard to be good stewards of the room tax funds. A question was asked if the Tourism Commission will try and bring in a new business to the community. No they will not. That is too far a stretch from the statutory responsibility of the Commission to utilize

room tax revenue to put "heads in beds." The Commission can help promote a tourism related business, and can partner with the Chamber and the City to help a business get established.

A question was asked of the Committee from the Commission representatives about the City collecting from delinquent payers of the room tax. It was the consensus of the Committee that the City should do everything in its power to collect the tax and directed staff to do so. Staff will research the matter, talk to the City Attorney and further discuss this matter with the Finance and Personnel Committee as collection efforts can include closing a business down.

The Committee thanked Bill and Laurie for the work the Tourism Commission does for New London.

4. Administrator Hager reviewed the most recent minutes from some of the various groups that he attends representing the City. These groups include Forward New London, the Fox Cities Economic Development Partnership Board of Directors meeting, and the Waupaca County Economic Development Corporation Board of Directors meeting. Hager noted that he made four industry visits in June including the following: New London Engineering, Pallet One, Stalker Flooring and a neighboring industry.
5. The status of the North East New London Business Center was reviewed. The current listing contract with Bomier Properties will have been in place for two years and will be ending on October 17, 2009. Various options were discussed regarding how to proceed with renewing this listing. It was suggested that we may want to inquire with a local real estate firm to review the options that we may have. This matter will be further discussed at the July Committee meeting.
6. The Northeast New London Business Center covenants were also discussed. It was noted that the covenants were adopted on May 2, 2000 and do not apply to land that generally lies in the northeast quadrant of the industrial park. Among other things, the covenants require that a minimum of 50% of the exterior building walls of a new building be constructed of masonry materials such as stone, brick, decorative block, or glass. They also require that there is not to be any outside storage of materials, machinery, or equipment. It was noted that these restrictions have not presented a problem in the past. The Committee will be reviewing what other covenants are in place in surrounding communities. The Committee also noted that no modifications can be made to the covenants until there has been at least five lots sold. Then 80% of the owners have to vote in favor of the change.

7. The Committee directed staff to research and try and place a sign as close to Highway 45 as possible to advertise the North East New London Business Center.
8. A March 2009 article from *The Post Crescent* was reviewed by the Committee regarding area industrial parks. Included in the article was a reference to the fact that Piping Systems located a new plant in Hortonville. The City of New London was the original community for this company's location and in fact helped them get started with the original City Revolving Loan Fund program loan. The company had been offered free land in our industrial park for at least nine years but chose to locate their new facility in Hortonville without contacting us. Apparently there was a division in the original company that left Enerpipe here in New London and the Piping Systems group chose not to locate in the same community.

In the same newspaper article, it was noted that Simmons Juvenile Furniture, which originally was located in New London, acquired a building in Hortonville. When Simmons left New London they moved their production to China and left a small design team that moved to the Greenville area. It is this design team that is now occupying the property in Hortonville that they apparently acquired out of foreclosure.

9. The Committee held a general discussion about communicating what the City does for our community in order to better inform the public. Given changes in the newspaper and radio coverage of City Committee meetings, the word is not getting out about what the City is doing. Several options were discussed. Not only do the citizens deserve to be better informed of City activities, but the City needs the community's feedback. This item will be discussed further at a future meeting.
10. Next month the Committee has two scheduled speakers for the agenda. They are Mike Hendrick, representing the Greater Outagamie County Economic Development Corporation and Steve Dreger, Key Account Manager for Fox Valley Technical College. The Committee also will review the covenants from surrounding communities industrial parks and possibly review options with a local real estate agent regarding listing of the North East new London Business Center.
11. There being no further business to come before the Committee, Tate/Romberg to adjourn. Passed 5-0. The meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Kent Hager, City Administrator