

Meeting Minutes
Economic Development Committee
Tuesday – May 25, 2010 - 4:30 p.m. - City Council Chambers

Members present: Morack, O’Connell, Romberg, Schirpke, Tate, and Steinhorst.

Also present: Mayor Henke, Herter, Hager, Lee Rousseau, Sandy Flease and Amy Pietsch.

1. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Morack at 4:30 p.m. O’Connell/Tate to adopt the agenda. Carried 6-0.
2. Sandy Flease from Century 21 addressed the Committee. She contacted Kent Nelson, President of Quick Start Incorporated. Sandy said that she had a good session with Mr. Nelson and reported that he would be willing to work with any local business that may need their expertise in business planning. Sandy made contact with Clintonville, Waupaca and Hortonville regarding the status of their industrial parks. Waupaca and Hortonville reported that things have been very slow the last two years. Clintonville has experienced several new additions to existing local manufacturers. Sandy reported that they are principally seeing activity where growth is occurring from existing commercial and industrial industries in their communities. The Committee reviewed a marketing flyer for an industrial park from Clark County, Wisconsin where they are focusing on agricultural technology. The local Economic Development Corporation has acquired substantial federal financial assistance and built the “Central Wisconsin Agribusiness Innovation Center.” This facility will foster agricultural education, training, research and development. It will have laboratory facilities and serve as a business incubator for bioenergy and agricultural entrepreneurs. Sandy will continue work on marketing our industrial park and report back to the Committee at a future date.
3. Amy Pietsch, Director of the Fox Valley Technical College, Venture Center addressed the Committee. Amy’s organization is there to help people start their business and to help existing business owners prosper and grow. They assist all kinds of business people from very small, micro-organizations to very large companies. The most current session from the Venture Center that will be offered in New London is a program titled “The Small Business Called You.” It will be held this summer on Wednesday, June 16th from 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm at the Washington Center and again this fall on Tuesday, August 17th. This is a free session that will help people determine how they can best be served by the various programs offered by The Venture Center. The Venture Center offers three major programs: The E-Seed program, the Pro-Seed program, and The Business Called You program. They have offered the E-Seed program since 2002 and have served almost 900 people that started nearly 200 local businesses. It has been proven by the E-Seed program that education and training makes the difference for a successful business. They are currently doing a study to see what the results are for the participants in the E-Seed program. Preliminarily, they estimate that the program participants have generated from 700-1,000 new jobs. They have had many “base hits” but they have also scored some “home runs” such as is the case with the success of the E-Seed participant that established the HuHot Mongolian Grill franchise here in Wisconsin. The E-Seed program is a 10-week course to help people create a business plan and learn about what real-life small business management requires.

This program will be conducted in New London at the Washington Center from September 14th thru November 16th of this year. It has been determined over time that there is a need for a more flexible educational program for existing businesses. A program for business owners that may not need a business plan, but rather could use assistance in taking their existing business to the next level. Therefore, The Venture Center started the Pro-Seed program that involves business education over the internet and one-on-one business coaching. This is a self-paced training opportunity with direct assistance of a business coach. The participants get together quarterly and network.

Amy answered several questions from the Committee. She noted that the best way to reach young entrepreneurs is thru social networks such as Facebook. She invited us to join in the many offerings that The Venture Center provides such as the Youth Entrepreneur Day. The Committee wished Amy and The Venture Center the best of luck and thanked Amy for her enthusiastic support of our regional economy.

4. Kent updated the Committee on his recent activities. Chairman Morack updated the Committee on the progress of Brooke Fitzgerald's efforts on our behalf as a student of the School of Enterprise Marketing. She continues to work on the business guide and she is still working on reviewing example business plans. The Chairman and Kent have an appointment to meet with Brooke later this week.
5. The Committee reviewed with Kent the draft for the Request for Proposals he prepared for the City downtown riverfront property. After a few amendments to the document, it was agreed to send out the RFP to the entire mailing list of approximately 200. A deadline for submission of proposals was set for September.
6. A list was included in the agenda packet of businesses that were identified as not being represented in the local economy thru the "Gap Analysis" that was conducted by Brooke Fitzgerald. Each Committee member was asked to review this rather long list and select four or five businesses that each member believes may be successful in our local communities' economy. The Committee will review these selected businesses at the next meeting and choose a group of them to suggest to the Enterprise School of Marketing class for work on preparation of a business plan.
7. At the next meeting the Committee will continue to review the business steps and assistance items that are available.
8. Kelly Simonsen, the Community Relations Coordinator for Wisconsin Public Power, Inc. was suggested as a future guest speaker. Chairman Morack will contact her and invite her to a future meeting.
9. There being no further business to come before the Committee, O'Connell/Tate to adjourn. Passed 6-0. The meeting adjourned at 6:20 pm.

Kent Hager
City Administrator