

Meeting Minutes
Economic Development Committee
Tuesday – September 28, 2010 - 4:30 p.m. - City Council Chambers

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

Also present: Mayor Henke, Herter, Besaw, Barrington, Hager, Sandy Flease, Bobbi Miller, Bill Fitzpatrick and Lee Rousseau.

1. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Morack at 4:30 p.m. O’Connell/Steinhorst to adopt the agenda. Carried 7-0.

2. Bobbi Miller was introduced. Bobbi is the Business Services Manager for the Workforce Development Board out of Neenah. The Workforce Development Board serves a seven county area in northeast Wisconsin. Bobbi had prepared a statistical analysis of the “Economic Base” for the New London area utilizing a private statistical service called EMSI. EMSI utilizes over 90 data sources to compile data throughout the United States. In our case the data is reported based on our Zip Code area. Bobbi reported that the data is very useful to utilize to monitor your local economy. The data has been used to determine the effect on local economies of the addition of jobs as well as to predict what would happen to the local economy if jobs were lost. As an example, during the recent economic threat of the loss of Mercury Marine in Fond du Lac, the Workforce Development Board utilized the EMSI data to interpret what would likely happen to the Fond du Lac area economy if these jobs were lost. The EMSI data is flexible enough that it can be manipulated a number of ways. The report regarding New London shows that 44% of our jobs are manufacturing related and these jobs account for 50% of our communities’ earnings. She noted that services represent 11% of our jobs but given the typical service wage, represents only 8% of earnings. Residents “outside income” is also an important segment of our local economy. The top sources for earnings in our area are manufacturing, healthcare, retail trade, government, and construction in that order. Bobbi said that utilizing the EMSI data, she can prepare a “gap analysis” for us. The Committee requested that she prepare such a report for the Committee to review. Bobbi finished her presentation stating that the Workforce Development Board can create customized training opportunities for local industry. The Development Board welcomes and seeks out local input to better serve the region. The Committee thanked Bobbi for her informative presentation.

3. An update regarding the North East New London Business Center from Sandy Flease of Century 21 Realty was next on the agenda. Sandy reported that she has had a couple more inquiries for information regarding the North East New London Business Center. She reports that every contact she gets receives a follow-up from her. The commercial market is very quiet now. There is still a lot of uncertainty out there. There are more foreclosures and “short sales.” It is estimated that it could be six to ten years for our economy to get back to where it was prior to the recession. There will be slow improvements in the economy, but it will take a long time to get back to where we were. There are a lot of homes selling as people are moving up and other people are making investments for the future. The Committee thanked Sandy for her report.

4. School Superintendent, Bill Fitzpatrick was next on the agenda. The Committee suggested last month that perhaps it would be appropriate to invite the Schools to participate in a contest to create a new city billboard as the City billboard out on Highway 45 is over ten years old and needs to be updated. The billboard could focus on advertising for tourism and/or attracting business to the City. The thought being that the students are very creative and we are all sure they could come up with some interesting ideas. Bill suggested that there would be two approaches to follow: open the contest up to everyone or perhaps to deal with it as a business venture with a competition to create the best new billboard idea. One of the thoughts for this project is to create some ownership for our local kids and young adults. It was suggested that the project start next semester. Bill volunteered to put together some suggested guidelines for the project and bring it back to the Committee for further consideration.
5. Superintendent Fitzpatrick next addressed how the school district is working to cooperatively address some of the goals as outlined in the City of New London Strategic plan, titled EnVision New London. He identified several school undertakings including the focus on career development that starts in the fifth grade and includes the career advancement programming in high school. He explained that all students have to develop a student portfolio and they also have to be evaluated based on their presentation of their portfolio by a group of local residents and business people. Students develop effective communication techniques, and become self-directed planners for their future. They are focusing on making sure students have a plan for their future and that they are successful after they leave high school. It was noted by the Committee that it is very important for the City to maintain communication with our School District and that it would be beneficial to periodically have similar meetings such as this. The Committee thanked Superintendent Fitzpatrick for visiting and sharing his thoughts regarding one of our most important community assets, that being our children.
6. Kent next provided his monthly update to the Committee. He noted that he made contact with six local businesses last month. Chairman Morack noted that the initiative Kent is undertaking at the suggestion of the Forward New London group regarding the establishment of a canoe/kayak business is just the type of initiative that the Committee calls for and the community needs. The Committee reviewed the memo Kent had prepared regarding the Dutch Boyz development being proposed for the Village of Little Chute. The project involved a partnership between a group of private developers and the City. The City committed \$500,000 of funding from a Tax Increment Finance District to assist this \$4 million dollar private development proposal. The project is controversial and at this time, it is still in the planning stages.
7. Chairman Morack reported that he has been back in touch with Missy Porath at the High School to continue our relationship with her class. We won't know about future work on projects for the City until next month as it is too early in the school year.
8. Kent reported to the Committee that of the 180 Request For Proposals that were sent out for development of the City downtown river front property, he only received one phone call.

The RFP's were sent out to developers in the immediate three state area. No formal replies to the RFP were received by the deadline of September 28th. It was the consensus of the Committee that we will wait for the national economy to improve and seek out development of the City river front property in the future. It was also agreed to have a new "for sale" sign prepared for the property. Mayor Henke will work on a design.

9. The Committee reviewed the 2010 Economic Development Budget with Kent. A motion was made by Romberg, seconded by Steinhorst to recommend to the City Treasurer that the 2011 budget reflect the 2010 budget. Motion passed, 6-1, O'Connell against.
10. An invitation to attend the next Committee meeting will be made to Bob O'Donnell, Director of the Small Business Development Center from the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh College of Business.
11. The Chairman asked for any public comment, there being none a motion was made to adjourn by O'Connell and seconded by Tate. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 6:12 pm.

Kent Hager
City Administrator