

Meeting Minutes
Economic Development Committee
Tuesday – June 28, 2011 - 4:30 p.m. - City Council Chambers

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

Also present: Mayor Henke, Administrator Hager, Shannon Meyer, Jim Schlies, Laurie Shaw and Dave Schneider.

1. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Morack at 4:30 p.m. O’Connell/Steinhorst to adopt the agenda. Carried 5-0.

2. Shannon Meyer, President and CEO of the Fox Cities Chamber of Commerce and Jim Schlies, Vice President of Economic Development for the Fox Cities Chamber of Commerce were introduced. Shannon was recently hired at the Chamber of Commerce. She grew up in northern Wisconsin. Most recently she was the Chamber Director for Cedar Rapids, Iowa. For the past six months, she has been traveling around the area meeting people and introducing herself. She thanked the Committee for the invitation to attend this meeting. She noted that there were gaps in the economic development strategy for the Fox Cities. There are a lot of great people working on economic development but this is occurring in a splintered way. There is no comprehensive strategy in place. She has initiated a new private/public partnership to develop a new economic development strategy for the area. The Chamber has recently secured the services of Garner Economics, a national planning and consulting firm to develop a comprehensive economic development strategy for the Fox Cities area. Starting July 19th Garner Economics will be conducting a series of focus groups to initiate this planning effort. Invitations have recently gone out and both Mayor Henke and Chairman Morack will be participating. Our strengths and weaknesses will be identified along with specific ideas of where we should focus our resources. A final recommendation will be made and a specific type of organization will be identified to follow thru with a strategic economic development plan for the area. Mr. Schlies mentioned that it was just a few years ago when Kent approached the Fox Cities Economic Development Partnership and arranged for the City of New London to become a participant. Operating thru the Fox Cities Economic Development Partnership, the City was recently able to obtain financial assistance for EJ Metals thru the Outagamie County Revolving Loan fund program. This loan was coordinated with loans from both the City of New London and Waupaca County, a true cooperative effort to benefit the City’s economy. Chairman Morack observed that we have a large presence in the lumber industry and that it would be beneficial to focus on attracting similar lumber related industries to the area. Our strengths are also in agricultural businesses including cheese, plastics, and tourism. The City is very interested in being an active participant in the new area-wide economic development strategic planning effort. Mayor Henke informed Ms Meyer that we are more than willing to help be a part of the Fox Cities economic development efforts as we have a lot to offer. Shannon noted that they are up to the challenge to create a program that will work for everyone in the area. Her work in Cedar Rapids is similar to the Fox Cities as she worked in a public/private partnership with seven cities, three counties and about 50 to 60 private industries. They had developed a five-year,

\$6.2 million dollar development campaign. We need to get out of the mentality that we are competing against Oshkosh and Green Bay. We all need to work together. Mr. O’Connell observed that we appreciate open and honest dialogue with the Fox Cities. The City of New London wants to be an active partner with the Fox Cities area communities. We don’t want to just “tag along.” When Shannon was in Cedar Rapids, she was working on 27 different industry projects of which 13 were from foreign markets. The Fox Cities needs to develop a larger presence in the development of industry that is established by foreign countries as that is not happening now. The Committee thanked Shannon and Jim for their visit and their openness to our participation in the Fox Cities economic development efforts.

3. Dave Schneider from Schneider Signs visited with the Committee regarding the City billboard on Highway 45. Simplicity in a sign is key. You can only read 8 to 13 words on the average billboard. Several ideas were reviewed for the billboard including the work the students proposed for the sign. One side of the sign will have an “economic development” theme and the other will have a “tourism” theme. Laurie Shaw noted that she has available several digital pictures of the area that may be useful to incorporate into the new billboard. Mr. Schneider said that it costs approximately \$1,200 to \$1,500 per side for a vinyl sign with a charge of about \$600 to \$800 for labor to get the sign in place. So it would be about \$2,300 for a sign that will last about three years. It would be about \$6,900 for a painted sign that would last 9 years. The Committee liked the idea of the vinyl sign as the message on the sign will likely need to be changed more often than once every nine years. It was the consensus of the Committee to have Mr. Schneider work with Laurie on a picture that could be incorporated into the sign and to have an example brought back before the Committee at the July meeting.
4. Administrator Hager updated the Committee regarding his economic development activities over the course of the past month.
5. Chairman Morack informed the Committee of his attendance at a conference titled “Creative Financing for Business and Economic Development.” He noted how important it is to maintain a good relationship with our area development organizations that were represented at the meeting. Representatives from the following organizations were there: Greater Outagamie County Economic Development Committee, Outagamie County Office of the University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension, UW Oshkosh Small Business Development Center, East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, US Small Business Administration and CAP Services.
6. The meeting next month will be Tuesday, July 26th at 4:30. Dave Thiel, Executive Director of the Waupaca County Economic Development Corporation will be the speaker.
7. A motion was made to adjourn by O’Connell and seconded by Schirpke. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 5:54 pm.

Kent Hager
City Administrator