

Meeting Minutes
Economic Development Committee
Tuesday, January 29, 2013 - 4:30 p.m. - City Council Chambers

Members present: Morack, O'Connell, Romberg, Schirpke, Dyreson, and Steinhorst. Shaw and Tate excused.

Also present: Administrator Hager, Dave Thiel, Sue and Al Schmieden, Bert Lehman, Rita Thiel, and Laurie Schneider (5:10 pm).

1. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Morack at 4:30 p.m. O'Connell/Steinhorst to adopt the agenda. Carried 6-0. It was noted that the Revolving Loan Fund, Loan Review Committee had been invited to attend this meeting to participate in the discussions about regionalization of the Revolving Loan Fund Program.
2. Sandy DuFrane visited briefly with the Committee. She noted that there had been no recent interest in the North East New London Business Center. She also observed that commercial/industrial expansions of existing businesses appears to be going strong.
3. Chairman Morack welcomed Sue and Al Schmieden from Quilting Connection; Sue gave a brief history of their business. They started Quilting Connection in 1999 in Elkhorn, Wisconsin. They sell twelve and fourteen foot long quilting machines. They sell two models, one of which is the number one selling machine in the United States. Their business is the largest distributor of these two models of machines in the Midwest. They do sales and service on the machines all over the area. They also rent machines and provide training. Their main machine supplier asked that they open another shop somewhere in the Appleton/Green Bay area. Sue noted that both she and her husband Al are small town folks and neither Appleton nor Green Bay appealed to them. They found the building that they purchased here in New London via the internet. The building is very similar to their shop in Elkhorn. They will be working on their building here in New London some more and will be completing the remodeling of the upstairs. They are also considering some unique and attractive signage for the side of the building. She noted that everyone here has been very helpful with the establishment of their new business. Sue thanked the Chamber of Commerce and the City staff for their kind assistance. When asked if there was a business that could expand or locate here that would complement their business, she noted that it would be beneficial to have a fabric shop near by. When asked if there was anything the City can do to assist them with their business, Sue noted that they have been quite pleased at how easy it was to open their shop and that they have had a very uncomplicated experience opening their business. She and Al feel very welcome in the City of New London. The Committee thanked them for choosing the City to open their new business location and wished them many years of success.
4. Dave Thiel, Executive Director of the Waupaca County Economic Development Corporation updated the Committee on the State proposal to regionalize the Revolving Loan Fund program. The region will consist of the counties and governments that are willing to participate within the East Central Regional Planning Commission boundaries. The Governing Board will be composed of the participating County Chief Executive Officers. The Board will oversee the region and establish policies, procedures and

bylaws. There will then be a Revolving Loan Fund Committee composed of a representative from each county and an individual representing participating political entity within that County. This committee will only consider loan applications from applicants requesting funding of \$200,000 or more. Then there will be a Loan Review Committee in each of the participating Counties. This Committee will be composed of members appointed by the County Economic Development Corporation or the County Board. This local County Committee will consider loan requests from applicants asking for less than \$200,000. Regionalizing the RLF program will allow for loan funds that are re-paid to become “de-federalized.” This will allow for the money to be utilized in a number of different ways. It is anticipated that the money will largely be utilized for traditional loans. But when de-federalized the money can also be used for façade and interior business improvements, incubator type efforts, micro loans, technology loans, and possible venture funds. Regionalization will also allow for consolidation of fund balances from all local governments and offer all participating governments the opportunity to pull funds from this expanded pool of funds. Next month the Committee working on this regionalization effort will be meeting and it is hoped that at that time, they will be finalizing the “Policies and Procedures” manual for the region. Once the regional manual is finalized, the City will further consider a resolution to join in the regional effort. No action was taken at this time.

5. Dave next addressed the State regionalization of the Community Development Block Grant Housing program. It use to be that the CDBG Housing grant program was administered via competitive grant applications from all governments with less than 50,000 population in the state. This competitive process was held once a year. This was called the Small Cities CDBG Housing program. The City of New London had been an applicant for this program many times, and over the course of about 15 years, received two grant awards. Regionalizing the program will make all governments in the region eligible for funding without having to apply competitively. It was noted that it is likely that fewer funds will be allocated to each government in the region but overall, at least some money will accrue to each government entity. There will be seven different regions in the state. The state wants to have one county in each region take the lead. Waupaca County volunteered to take the lead and the Waupaca County Economic Development Corporation will be administering the program for our region. This program is currently in the development stage and is expected to start late this April. The Committee thanked Dave for his informative presentation and noted that we look forward to participating in the Housing grant program in the future.
6. Administrator Hager reviewed his monthly report to the Committee.
7. Chairman Morack informed the Committee that at the next meeting Todd Hutchison will be present to continue our discussions with him about the development of the City river front property. Brian Kurszewski, Tech Ed teacher at the High School has been invited to visit the March 26th meeting of the Committee to talk about the Youth Apprentice program.
8. O’Connell/Schirpke to adjourn. Carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 5:40p.m.

Kent Hager
City Administrator