

Economic Development Committee
Tuesday, November 24, 2015 – 4:30 p.m. - City Council Chambers

Members present: Morack, O’Connell, Steinhorst, Shaw and Schirpke. Romberg and Tate excused. Bishop, Johnson, Asman absent.

Also present: Mayor Henke, Administrator Hager, Faucher, and Dr. Karen Altekruise.

1. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Morack at 4:30 p.m. O’Connell/Steinhorst to adopt the agenda. Carried unanimously.
2. Dr. Karen Altekruise, Director of the Entrepreneur Resource Center at the Northeast Wisconsin Technical College gave a very interesting program regarding the Entrepreneur Center and the importance of working with the millennial generation. Dr. Altekruise observed the following: We need to help develop the entrepreneurial spirit in our community and region. We need to be aware of what we have in place to support and encourage that entrepreneurial spirit. We all need to be willing to hear what you say and not just what we want to hear. We need to develop an appreciation of the spirit of the millennial age cohort.

Dr. Altekruise noted that our generation thinks in a linear manner, much like looking at an organizational chart. Millennials move all over the page at will. They are socially connected. It does not matter where they live. How do you attract and maintain the millennial population? They don’t have much money to spend. They typically are carrying a lot of debt so they can’t qualify for traditional financing. They are putting off marriage and home ownership. Having a broad rental housing stock is very important. In a lot of places, millennials are not getting drivers licenses. They are on the move, active and fit. They don’t smoke and they don’t drink that much. How does a community resonate with the millennial generation? Is our communities’ message relevant and compelling to attract and keep these people here? We need to ask and listen to our young people.

Economic development for a community is more dependent on having a quality labor force rather than just creating jobs. You have to have the people here. You have to have the community assets that people are attracted to. We need to ask and listen to our millennial generation. It was observed that perhaps we need to change our focus and be more concerned about our attractiveness to the millennial generation. It was suggested that perhaps Dr. Altekruise could facilitate a roundtable or focus group and that we cooperate with the school district to open up a dialogue with our local millennial generation to listen to them. We can discuss what we are doing right and what may be best to change in order to develop our community and be an attractive place to have the younger generation call home or come to in the future. It was the consensus of the group to follow through with this idea.

Dr. Altekruise was thanked for sharing her perspective with us. We will follow up with her in the near future about having her assist us with a plan to meet and listen to our millennial population.

3. At the October Economic Development Committee meeting it was suggested that Mark Hogan, the newly appointed Chief Executive Officer for the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation be congratulated and invited to visit New London. Administrator Hager composed a letter that the Mayor signed and sent to Mr. Hogan. Mr. Hogan's assistant replied that he would like to accept our invitation and gave us several dates to work with. It was agreed that the Economic Development Committee would have a special meeting to meet with Mr. Hogan on Monday, January 18th at 1:00 pm. Please mark your calendar.
4. The next regular Committee meeting is scheduled for December 29th. Given that the 29th is so close to the Christmas and New Year's holidays, it was the consensus of the Committee not to meet in December. Therefore, the next regular meeting will be January 26th.
5. There being no public comment, the meeting adjourned at 6:15 pm.

Kent Hager
City Administrator