

New London Economic Development Committee Minutes

Tuesday, September 28th, 2021

Members present: Chairman Dorsey, Bishop, Kopitzke (via zoom), Lathrop, Olson, Thompson (via Zoom)
Wolf, Zaug

Excused: Faucher

Others present: Mayor Mark Herter, Tim Roberts, Bob Besaw, City Administrator Chad Hoerth, Mike Barrington, Adam Prill, Ann Hunt, Jeff Handschke, Christine Cross

1. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Dorsey at 4:30pm. Zaug/Bishop approved the agenda. Carried by all.
2. The August 31st, 2021 minutes were reviewed and approved by Zaug/Wolf. Carried by all.
3. Hoerth provided a quick report on the city's planning efforts thus far for the 2024 Downtown Reconstruction project. An open house was held on July 14th where city staff, engineers and individuals on the Downtown Public Involvement Planning subcommittee provided information on the project and collected input from attendees and business owners on how they would like to see the downtown after the project. Takeaways from the surveys included:
 - a. Incorporate a vintage themed over a modern looking downtown (86% of votes)
 - b. Focus on adding trees (82% of votes)
 - c. Use moveable planters for trees and flowers vs. inground planters (73% of votes)
 - d. Add color to crosswalks and streets/sidewalks (97% of votes)
 - e. Encourage outdoor seating (92% of votes)
 - f. Narrow the road width to increase the sidewalk width (58% of votes)

Hoerth will keep the committee up to date on planning efforts as they progress.

4. The State of Wisconsin released a Badger Bounceback Grant specifically for Movie Theaters and Event venues. Hoerth reached out to the owner of The Grand Theatre to notify him of the grant and inquire if he had plans on reopening the theater. The owner stated that parts have recently come in that were damaged due to some recent vandalism and once those parts are installed he hopes to hire and train staff to reopen the movie theater.
5. Museum Director Christine Cross provided a report on her attendance and presentation at the "Saving Wisconsin Historic Theatres" workshop on September 17th and 18th sponsored by the Wisconsin Trust for Historic Preservation. The workshop highlighted several Wisconsin Theaters and highlighted their challenges and success stories. Cross provided some history of the New London Grand and reported that students from UW-Milwaukee came and completed digital scans of the interior and exterior of The Grand. This was for a school project to show the technology available for recording the details of historic buildings and façade. Cross also provided information and case studies on how the workshop highlighted these historic theaters as economic drivers for their communities.

6. Chamber Director's Business Report:
 - a. Anytime Fitness at 1111 N Shawano Street has purchased the entire building from Star Communications and plans on expanding their business. Star Communications has relocated their operations to 106 Northridge Drive.
 - b. MJ's Treasures located at 106 W North Water St. is looking for someone to purchase her retail business or share lease space with her. Michelle Malliet currently owns both Malliet Travel and MJ's Treasures under the same roof and her traveling business requires her to be out of town too often to run the retail store.
 - c. Festival Foods is being purchased by the Skogen family. New London had the only independently owned Festival Foods in the state with the rest owned by the Skogen family. The transaction is effective on October 15th.
 - d. Kopitzke was invited to visit the former Buyer's Guide building at 416 W North Water St. Leased by Innovative Industrial Staffing. They supply personnel resources consisting of supervisors, millwrights / mechanics and non-destructive testing technicians for customers based in the pulp and paper industry. Staff there also handles day-to-day office operations for G-Force Trailers, a trailer manufacturer located in Manawa. They are almost completed with the entire interior renovation and are planning to start the exterior very soon.

7. City Administrator's Report:
 - a. The city received 23 applications for the video producer position. Staff have ranked and are interviewing the top candidates on October 7th.
 - b. Hoerth recently attended a "Main Street First Impressions" workshop in Weyauwega sponsored by the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation. The program is designed to collaborate and provide feedback for enhancing a downtown's façade from professionals around the state.

8. The committee reviewed speakers and agenda items for future meetings.

9. Public Input: None

10. The next committee meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 26th, 2021 at 4:30pm.

11. Bishop/Zaug moved to adjourn at 5:08 pm. Carried by all.

Chad Hoerth
City Administrator