

MONROE COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, COMMERCE & TOURISM COMMITTEE
MONTHLY MEETING – 5-9-19 – Sparta City Council Chambers

Present:

Committee Board Members (CB): Nodji Van Wychen, Mark Halverson, Dean Peterson

Citizen Members (CM): Kevin Ravenscroft – Timberwood Bank

Advisory Members (AM): Tonya Townsell – Ft. McCoy (AM); Tina Osterberg – County Administrator (AM)

Economic Development & Tourism Coordinator: Steve Peterson

Absent: Tina Thompson – Tomah Chamber of Commerce (AM); Jarrod Roll – Local History Room (AM), John Hendricks – Sparta Chamber of Commerce (AM)

Special Guests: Todd Fahning, Mark Sund – Co City of Sparta Administrators

The meeting was posted in accordance with the open meeting law. Meeting was called to order at 9:00am by Chair Nodji Van Wychen. Rollcall was taken.

Special Guests – T. Fahning & M. Sund informed the Committee on all the economic development work currently happening in Sparta. The new South Pointe Business Park is off to a very good start with new construction of the Sparta Family Dental Center building, the AMS Micromedical building and the start of the new Martin Warehousing facility. Fahning also said the new Brooks Equipment location will be built featuring heavy equipment and very visible to Interstate 90. Fahning said the 2nd phase of infrastructure is almost completed. He said that they have begun to use new avenues for marketing and have placed an ad in the Milwaukee Brewers Yearbook publication. Fahning said that housing issues are a big concern, especially when it comes to single family homes. He said that Sparta is becoming a bit more of a bedroom community for the LaCrosse market which he said that older homes are being bought and upgraded. M. Sund said that 2 TIDs will be closing very soon which included the East Side Business Park and the Century Foods International headquarters site. Fahning said that there are a few small acres available in the East Side Business Park which they hope to sell off before the TID is closed.

Welcome – the Committee welcomed Tina Osterberg as the new County Administrator, and this was her first week on the job.

Next Month's Meeting – Thursday, June 13th – 9:00am – Kendall Community Center. S. Peterson will make the arrangements.

Minutes – Motion by M. Halverson to approve the minutes. Second by D. Peterson. Motion carried.

Financial/Invoices – S. Peterson said there were no invoices to be approved.

Monroe County Economic Development Corporation update – S. Peterson reported that the concept will not be happening. T. Osterberg agreed as there isn't support from Sparta or Tomah at this time and it's too big of a financial task to think that the Villages could financially support. There was talk about the private sector funding it, but the committee felt that it would be a big uphill task to have that happen. The Committee urged the County to look at continuing to fund the E.D. Coordinator's position even if the corporation idea was not an option currently.

EDCT Committee 2020 Plans – no special plans at this point. S. Peterson suggested that the Committee needs to work closer with any community in the County on their marketing efforts and see if there are opportunities to partner on marketing investments.

County Parks Brochure – no report.

Campground Brochure – S. Peterson said that in the late 90's a brochure was printed, and he was told by J. Hendricks that they had run out of the brochure at the Sparta Chamber. Peterson said the Committee should consider a reprint with updated information since camping is so popular. It will be discussed further at next month's meeting.

GO MONROE COUNTY Activities Guide – the Committee felt a new RFP was needed to be created along with the guidelines of how it should be distributed. S. Peterson and T. Osterberg were going to look in the past minutes/files for a copy of the past RFP and have it discussed at the next meeting.

County Administrator's Report – T. Osterberg reported that it was her 4th day on the job and she was working on the transition from CFO to Administrator. Osterberg suggested that S. Peterson present to the County Board in July about all he's been working on and plant the seed to get the Board to look at funding this position next year and in the future.

MONROE COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR REPORT

PROSPECTS

Phase 1 – initial contact

1. truck bed manufacturer – Sparta/Tomah
2. natural vitamin/supplement distribution – Tomah
3. fishing equipment/guide superstore – Monroe County
4. Ice fishing vehicle manufacturer – Monroe County
5. insect organic fertilizer plant – Monroe County
6. Foreign employment service – Monroe County
7. medical software company – Tomah
8. metal coating fabrication – Monroe County
9. forklift/truck bed manufacturer – Monroe County

Phase 2 – narrowing down potential locations and/or site visits

1. garbage truck manufacturer – Tomah/Sparta
2. transfer/distribution center – Tomah
3. food processing plant – Sparta
4. mosaic tile manufacturer – Sparta/Tomah/Cashton
5. coffee additive company – Cashton
6. hydroponics plant – Cashton
7. distribution center – Tomah

Phase 3 – in the finals

1. Industrial Hemp CBD Oil Processing – Kendall
2. Hotel & restaurant – Tomah
3. Organic compost company – Cashton/other rural areas

4. Grocery food outlet pods – Kendall/Wilton/Norwalk
5. Corn board processing plant – Sparta/Tomah/Kendall
6. Biomass plant – Oakdale
7. Franchise Retail store – Tomah (dealing with broker and name of company is a secret yet)

IN THE WORKS

Community Venture Network – Twin Cities – Met one-on-one with 12 prospects on 4/12 that have been vetted and are looking at starting, expanding or relocating their business. Up to 6 of them are doing follow-ups with me over the next few weeks.

GROW TOMAH digital campaign – working with the City of Tomah, Tomah Chamber, Forward Tomah, owners of business park land, realtors and commercial property owners on a joint digital campaign to market the City of Tomah. With the success with Sparta’s South Pointe Business Park as a state-certified site, I feel that Tomah needs to build a stronger presence with their marketing efforts, especially digitally. This campaign will hopefully be launched by the end of May or early June.

Cashton Day Care – Cashton – open house was held the first weekend in May and are ready to open their doors.

Gen 3 building – Tomah –Murray’s on Main is doing well and the rest of the building project will be completed soon, including apartments, professional offices and retail on the main floor.

South Pointe Business Park – Sparta – Dental clinic building is close to completion. The AMS Micromedical building is on schedule and taking shape. A new Martin Warehousing building has been started and they expect to move into that facility by July.

Tomah Healthcare campus – hospital & clinic construction is progressing very well, and the time frames of opening are still on track. We are seeing more interest peaking with the land across the street from these developments.

Connect Community – The premise for this program this year is to work closely with Norwalk, Wilton & Kendall pertaining to the repairing and fully opening of the Elroy-Sparta Bike Trail.

MEETINGS

- WDAC Board Meeting – Appleton
- WI Rural Partners Summit – Rice Lake
- 7 Rivers Alliance Board – Caledonia
- Childcare Summit – La Crosse
- Conference calls – agencies/utilities for proposed projects in the County.
- WEDA Board Meeting – Madison
- WI Dept of Tourism Showcase meeting – La Crosse
- WEDC meeting – Madison – prospect meeting

REPORTS:

Fort McCoy – T. Townsell reported that there have been partnership meetings, looking at services being offered at Ft. McCoy that duplicate efforts with area municipalities. Ft. McCoy is looking at possibly partnering with them on needs that can save both entities money. Townsell invited the Committee to the annual Open House on Sat., May 18th along with the Commemorative Area opening in June through September. Townsell talked about the economic impact report, housing issues and the construction issues with the Main Gate and the gas line installation. Townsell also reported that Ft. McCoy will be receiving recognition from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife department.

Sparta Chamber of Commerce – no report.

Tomah Chamber & Visitors Center – no report.

7 Rivers Alliance – S. Peterson reported that along with the latest edition of the 7 Rivers Alliance magazine, that in the fall, at the State of the Region breakfast in LaCrosse, the head of the Federal Reserve in the Twin Cities will be speaking and also meeting with local financial institutions.

Hidden Valleys – S. Peterson reported that the board is continuing their efforts to do more digital marketing in 2020 as a compliment to their magazine.

ITBEC – N. Van Wychen reported that they are working on a brand campaign and are partnering with Hidden Valleys on a digital campaign.

Local History Room – no report.

Upcoming Events/Activities around the County – Deke Slayton Museum Anniversary Open House which will also be held on the Courthouse courtyard.

Agenda Items for next month:

- County Parks Brochure
- County Campground Brochure
- Go Monroe County Activities Guide RFP discussion

Motion by D. Peterson to adjourn. 2nd by M. Halverson. Meeting adjourned at 10:43am.

Submitted by:



Steve Peterson