

**MONROE COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, COMMERCE & TOURISM COMMITTEE
MONTHLY MEETING – 7-11-19 – Gana-A’Yoo Limited Company – 112 N. Water St., Sparta**

PRESENT:

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

Citizen Members (CM): Kevin Ravenscroft – Timberwood Bank

Advisory Members (AM): Tonya Townsell – Ft. McCoy; Jarrod Roll – Local History Room; John Hendricks – Sparta Chamber of Commerce

Economic Development & Tourism Coordinator: Steve Peterson

Absent: Tina Thompson – Tomah Chamber of Commerce (AM); Tina Osterberg – County Administrator (AM)

The meeting was posted in accordance with the open meeting law. Meeting was called to order at 9:03am by Chair Nodji Van Wychen. Roll call was taken.

Next Month’s Meeting – Thursday, August 15th – 9:00am – Sparta. Meeting will be 1 week later than normal schedule due to 2 County Board Supervisors who could not make the August 8th date. S. Peterson will coordinate with the County on having the meeting location either at the County Board Room or in the meeting room at the County Administration building. The Committee wanted to meet where County Administrator Tina Osterberg could attend.

Welcome – The Staff at Gana-A’You Limited Company welcomed the Committee to their business. They informed the Committee on all the global work the company is involved with under the leadership of Reinhard Mueller. They are very active with government contracts in many different fields of work across the United States and world-wide. The Committee did not know anything about this company, and many commented that locating our monthly EDCT meetings around the County, we find these kinds of businesses as hosts and how beneficial it is to learn about the wide range of companies we have.

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

Financial/Invoices – S. Peterson submitted the invoice of \$1,000 to Map-N-Tour for updates on the 3D Mapping system for the County EDCT web site. The Committee voted last month to allow up to \$1,000 remaining in the marketing/promotions line item of the E.D. budget for this project. J. Roll reported that 1,000 new County Parks Brochures were printed by Evans Printing and the total cost was \$415. The Committee had already approved funding up to \$500 for the project in early 2019.

Appointment of Vacant Citizen Members – The Committee tabled any discussion on this item until there are clearer terms on the future of this Committee in 2020.

EDCT Committee 2020 Plans – The Committee felt the #1 priority was to meet with County Administrator Tina Osterberg at the August meeting to discuss getting the E.D. Coordinator’s contract into the 2020 budget. It was further discussed that an increase in that contract should be made since the it has never been increased in the 6+ years of the contract. A clearer role of the Committee for 2020 will also be discussed.

County Parks Brochure – J. Roll handed out the newly printed County Parks brochure to Committee members and the brochures will be distributed throughout the County and the Parks system.

County Campground Brochure – S. Peterson & J. Hendricks found copies of the County Campground brochure and it was discussed by the Committee to do a new updated version soon. Peterson explained that the brochure was very outdated, but the grid layout was valuable as it showed all the amenities available at each campground, public or private in the County. Peterson will work with the Sparta & Tomah Chambers to get the most current information. A proof will be presented at the August meeting along with price breakdowns.

County ATV Trail Map – S. Peterson presented the Committee the latest ATV/UTV Route Map for Monroe, Juneau, Jackson, Sauk, Crawford, Richland, Vernon and Wood Counties. The publication is very similar to a plat book format. Peterson said they are being sold for \$5.00 at various businesses who bought ads in the mapping guide. The Committee will look at that current map book and see if there is the potential for just a Monroe County version in the future in an easier to read brochure form.

GO MONROE COUNTY Activities Guide RFP – the Committee was still in search of an RFP that was used in the past. If one could not be found, a new RFP would be created outlining all the responsibilities of the business who gets the Activities Guide contract. S. Peterson pointed out that it's not truly an RFP because we are not creating the graphics/layout/proof of the magazine and getting the best bid for printing it. Instead we are just approving a company to go out and sell ads, print the magazine and all the expenses and income are with that company. The Committee recommended that Greg Evans from Evans Printing be at the August EDCT Committee meeting to discuss the 2020 magazine project and lay out all the guidelines involved with doing it.

County Administrator's Report – no report

Monroe County Economic Development & Tourism Coordinator Report

PROSPECTS

Phase 1 – initial contact

1. natural vitamin/supplement distribution – Tomah
2. fishing equipment/guide superstore – Monroe County
3. Ice fishing vehicle manufacturer – Monroe County
4. insect organic fertilizer plant – Monroe County
5. Foreign employment service – Monroe County
6. medical software company – Tomah
7. metal coating fabrication – Monroe County
8. meat processing facility – 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. Coffee additive company – Cashton
5. Hydroponics plant – Cashton

6. Distribution center – Tomah
7. Food flavoring coating plant – Monroe County
8. Hotel – Sparta (dependent on 2nd phase feasibility study)

Phase 3 – in the finals

1. Industrial Hemp CBD Oil Processing – Kendall
2. Hotel – Tomah
3. Restaurant/Bar & Grill - Tomah
4. Organic compost company – Cashton/other rural areas
5. Grocery food outlet pods – Kendall/Wilton/Norwalk
6. Corn Board processing plant – Sparta/Tomah/Kendall
7. Franchise Retail store – Tomah (dealing with broker and name of company is a secret yet)

IN THE WORKS

Community Venture Network – Site meetings with 2 prospects in late June. Both had 2 days of meetings and site tours of areas around the County.

Dollar General – working with a potential site in Kendall. Involves possibly working out an agreement with the DNR on some of the right of way land adjacent to the bike trail through the community.

Elroy-Sparta Bike Trail – working with the DNR on getting updates and time frames for the repair schedule. Bike trail now open from Tunnel 1 to Kendall. The Kendall Depot, the official headquarters of the trail has been closed for 2 years now and am working with forming an agreement between the DNR and the Village of Kendall and have the Village run the Depot during the bike trail season. This closure is having a significant negative impact on the businesses along the trail. They have been without the trail now since late August 2019 and I'm afraid some may not stay in business if they don't get the trail open soon.

GROW TOMAH digital campaign – Digital web site & mapping has been put on hold for foreseeable future. Tomah Chamber turned down funding the project and will review it again in 2020. Other funding sources didn't come through either. Unknown if campaign will be finished in 2020.

Gen 3 building – Tomah – the housing & professional offices are now open. Great addition to Tomah & the County.

South Pointe Business Park – Sparta – Dental clinic building is very 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 mid-summer. Working with 2 other prospects that are looking at potential expansions in Wisconsin, specifically at South Pointe.

Tomah Associates land – the parcel of land across from the hospital & clinic construction projects is showing activity. Working with some development companies who may join in the developing of that area.

Struggling Sparta company – working with management to save this company. A company from Ohio is interested in the business and keeping it in Sparta, but far from a done deal.

MEETINGS

- SW-ITBEC Meeting - Sparta
- WI Downtown Action Council Board Meeting – Green Bay
- Hidden Valleys Board meeting – Richland Center
- Village of Kendall Board Closed Session
- WI Rural Partners Board meeting – Rice Lake
- WI Partners Association – meeting with Executive Director – Cashton
- WI DWD Annual WITS Ideas Exchange Forum – La Crosse

- Federal Reserve meeting – Madison
- Downtown Pop Up Show Program – meeting – Cashton
- 14 – Bio-Sunn conference calls regarding the project in Monroe County
- Business in Focus Magazine – article follow up meeting
- WI Cranberry Discovery Center – Warrens – marketing strategic planning session
- WI Dept of Tourism Showcase meeting – La Crosse
- WEDC meeting – Madison – prospect meeting

S. Peterson updated the Committee on the Kendall project and that a formal announcement will be coming as soon as the end of July. Peterson also reported that the Village of Kendall Board is in negotiations with the WI Dept. of Natural Resources on reopening the Kendall Depot as the official headquarters of the Elroy-Sparta Bike Trail. The trail repairs also are continuing slowly, and it has caused much financial hardship on the businesses who depend on the bike trail each year. Peterson was glad to see the County look at any potential grant programs they could apply for to help aid the costs of fixing the trail. The WI DNR has informed the County and other communities that the funding is there, regardless of the Governor's recent veto of \$100,000 in the budget, but it's taking time to get engineer work and bids completed.

Peterson reported that many financial institutions in Tomah are changing names and 2 new financial institutions will be building in Tomah. F&M Bank will become CCF. Partnership Bank will become Bank First. 1st Community Credit Union and Union Bank will be building new businesses in Tomah.

REPORTS:

SW-ITBEC – S. Peterson & N. Van Wychen reported that SW-ITBEC will be having their summer meetings each month traveling around the member Counties. Van Wychen stated that Vernon County has dropped out as a member County. Peterson stated that all non-member Counties have been invited to join SW-ITBEC by attending meetings for free the rest of 2019, hoping to recruit them to put a membership in their 2020 budgets.

Local History Room – J. Roll reported that 3 bus tours stopped for tours last month. The Wegner Grotto has seen some restoration projects along with increased visitors to the area as well. Roll said that the LHR has increased its presence on Facebook and has seen over 2,200 likes and they try to put new photos/material on their page each week. The Art Outdoors at the Wegner Grotto County Park will be on Saturday, August 24th from 9am – 3pm. Roll reported that daily visits by tourists is around 30-40 per day. Roll announced that the LHR was receiving a national award for the A-Z display. The American Appreciation of State & Local History Award will be presented in Philadelphia in August and Roll plans to attend the award ceremony.

Fort McCoy – T. Townsell reported that there will be a Butterfly Exposition on the base on July 27th. The extended regular hours for the Commemorative area at Ft. McCoy. June 7, 21; July 2, 26; August 9, 23; Sept. 6, 20 – 12:00pm – 4:00pm. June 15; July 20; August 17; Sept. 3 – 9:00am – 3:00pm has been a success with good traffic so far. Townsell said the Community Partnership Program has a successful meeting and great progress is happening with future partnering with area communities on services. Townsell said that Ft. McCoy will be receiving a national award from the US Fish & Wildlife Service - the U.S. Service Military Conservation Partner Branch Award. Townsell reported that a phone app for Ft. McCoy is being worked on. The Community Appreciation Night will be on August 22nd. A YouTube video – Welcome to Ft. McCoy has been produced and is online. Townsell reported that the construction projects

continue with the Main Gate and the Gate 20 Convoy Gate with projected finishes in early December.

Sparta Chamber of Commerce – J. Hendricks reported that they are now at full staff at the Chamber with 3 full time and 3 part time positions. Hendricks shows the Committee the proof of the bike mural paintings that will be done on sides of buildings in downtown Sparta. The Chamber has invested a lot into recruiting motorcoach tours and has a reception program set up with Best Western in Sparta when the tour arrives at the hotel welcoming them to Sparta. Hendricks reported he will be attending the Wisconsin Area Convention & Visitors Bureau meeting in La Crosse the week of July 15th. Other upcoming events in Sparta include a Ride Across Wisconsin bike ride traveling through Sparta and Warrens. A Community Bike Ride downtown in Sparta for residents to ride a 1K trail around the City. Hendricks said the Sparta Chamber will be at the WI State Fair working the WI Dept. of Tourism booth at the fair. There is a ribbon cutting for Keps' new location in downtown Sparta as part of their business expansion.

Tomah Chamber & Visitors Center – no report.

7 Rivers Alliance – S. Peterson reported that housing and childcare continue to be a strong focus of the organization. With the recent publication of the LaCrosse/Monroe County housing study, that information will be critical for future housing game plans.

Hidden Valleys – S. Peterson reported that he will represent Monroe County on the Board since he attends anyway as his company, Top Dog Marketing, is contracted for marketing and web site work for the group. He said that progress continues with the new Story Road phone app project and that the HV sales team are being trained on selling that feature along with their magazine ad sales.

Upcoming Events/Activities around the County – The Deke Slayton Museum 20th Anniversary Open House was held on the Courthouse courtyard on June 15th and was a tremendous success with over 2,000 people attending. J. Roll said they had over 1,700 people visit the LHR that day. K. Ravenscroft reminded the Committee about the Thursday Night Music Series in Tomah and that the 4th of July kick off concert was a big success and they hope that the week series continues to draw people.

Agenda Items for next month:

- EDCT Committee 2020 Plans
- Go Monroe County Activities Guide RFP discussion
- County Campground Brochure

Motion by D. Peterson to adjourn. 2nd by M. Halverson. Meeting adjourned at 10:49am.

Submitted by:



Steve Peterson