

MONROE COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, COMMERCE & TOURISM COMMITTEE
MONTHLY MEETING – 3-8-18 – Monroe County Board Room – Sparta

The meeting was posted in accordance with the open meeting law. Meeting was called to order at 9:04am by Chair Sharon Folcey. Roll-call was taken.

Present:

Committee Board Members: Sharon Folcey, Dean Peterson, Nodji Van Wychen

Citizen Members: Mary Jo Hill, Paul Harms, Kelly Murray

Advisory Members: Jim Bialecki – Monroe County Administrator, John Hendricks – Sparta Area Chamber of Commerce, Tina Thompson – Tomah Chamber & Visitors Center

Economic Development & Tourism Coordinator: Steve Peterson

Absent: (AM), Jarrod Roll – Monroe County Local History Room; **Tonya Townsell – Ft. McCoy (CM)** Dennis Berg, Pete Reichardt, Bernadine Arena

Special Guest: Teresa Fitzgerald – Ft. McCoy

Media: Nicole Vik – Monroe County Herald

County Update – J. Bialecki reported that the Rolling Hills process is continuing but no study has been approved yet. He said that a special Task Force, which includes S. Peterson, Bob Micheel and Allison Elliott, has been formed to perform due diligence on the future options for the County Farm land on Highway B. The group would look at many options over the next weeks & months, and report back to the County Board on possible projects/solutions pertaining to that County land.

Minutes – Motion by N. Van Wychen to approve the minutes of the February 8th, 2018 meeting. 2nd by M.J. Hill. Motion carried.

Financial Report & Invoices – S. Folcey updated the Committee on the current 2018 budget with the condensed version that was easier for the Committee to follow. S. Peterson told the Committee that the annual dues for the Community Venture Network were due and the total amount would be split evenly again with the Cities of Sparta & Tomah. Peterson explained how important this membership is in recruiting companies to our County. He said that with the current business climate in Minnesota with low tax credits, higher proposed minimum wages, Wisconsin is looking very attractive to Minnesota companies to relocate or expand. The 1/3rd investment is \$1,417.00 and is in the 2018 budget. Motion by D. Peterson to pay the 1/3rd membership dues to CVN. 2nd by N. Van Wychen. Motion carried.

Monroe County Economic Development Conference wrap-up – S. Peterson reported that 323 people registered for the Conference. 83 attendees filled out the online surveys. Peterson handed out a summary of the surveys and went through the highlighted areas of the answers. Topics that were addressed:

- Marketplace space issues – overcrowded & tight space.
- Dine Around – short on food as 2 major businesses were no-shows
- A/V Sound issues – poor sound and equipment. Working with Three Bears Resort on those issues and P. Harms said they are in the process of upgrading their entire A/V system very soon.
- 53 no shows for attendees who were registered. Much higher than in past years.

- Struggling with comments from attendees that want all the sessions while others want more networking times and a shorter conference.
- Business Spotlights were the most popular with the Top 3 highest rated sessions being AMS Micromedical, FAST Corporation and McPherson Guitars.
- The meet & greets with Governor Walker with some of the prospective businesses looking at Monroe County for location were very productive and progress has already been seen on a few fronts through the contacts with the State agencies.

Peterson said that upgrades for next year's conference have already begun with possibly moving Marketplace back downstairs and having roundtable topics in the Dining Room area. He said that he would periodically report back to the Committee on new ideas and format updates. The Committee commended Peterson on managing another very success E.D. Conference. The dates for next year's Conference are Feb. 27-28, 2019 at Three Bears Resort in Warrens.

Monroe County Economic Development & Tourism Coordinator Report

- Attending the Governor's Conference on Tourism on 3/11-13 in Appleton
- Attending the WI Rural Partners Board Meeting on 3/14 in Baraboo
- Attending the Monroe County Job Initiatives Roundtable on 3/15
- S. Peterson Invited Committee members to attend the WI Rural Partners Summit on 4/18-19 at the Clarion Hotel & Convention Center in Baraboo. Peterson handed out event brochures.
- Prospect visits to the area on 3/15-16.
- Prospect Conference Calls on 3/9, 3/14, 3/15
- In April, the Connect Community Village Task Force will begin meeting again
- Progress on a possible renovation project/prospect expansion in the Cashton Feed Mill & Tobacco Warehouse area.
- Working with Alliant Energy on some projects including adding their service areas to the County Map-N-Tour mapping system. Working with Xcel Energy on the same mapping feature and will be adding LYNXX's gigabit service on the maps too.

Upcoming Projects

- S. Peterson reported that now that the \$28,650 JEM Grant is official from the State Dept. of Tourism, the work on VINO FEST will be beginning very soon. More details to come.

REPORTS:

Sparta Chamber of Commerce – J. Hendricks reported:

- Attending the Milwaukee Sports Show this weekend
- Sparta & Tomah Chambers are collaborating with the Monroe County Job Initiative on a roundtable meeting on 3/15.
- 3/16 – hosting a presentation "All About Pop Up Shops" at 9am at Park Bank – Sparta. Nora Roughen-Schmidt, Executive Director – Viroqua Chamber Main Street will be presenting.
- Working with Road Runner magazine on a biking/motorcycle trail aerial map
- Hosting a "Credit Score" lunch on Thursday, 3/15 at Century Foods International

Tomah Chamber of Commerce – T. Thompson reported:

- Currently doing “door-to-door” visits with all the Chamber members. It’s going very well and getting great feedback from members. These visits will continue for months until everyone is visited.
- Working on a Job Fair in April – high school students during the day and residents in the evening.
- Had 350 attend the Annual Banquet. Many well-deserved award winners.
- Mayoral Elections are coming up
- Downtown plan has been completed and already seeing activity by downtown businesses who are looking at potential projects to apply for funding for.
- Groundwork construction has begun on the old Tee Pee Supper Club grounds.

7 Rivers Alliance – no report. The Committee recommended that S. Peterson invite 7 Rivers Alliance Executive Director Chris Hardie to our next month’s meeting.

SW-ITBEC – N. Van Wychen reported that Chair Jim Ehrsam is having health issues and was not able to attend the meeting. Vice Chair S. Folcey also could not attend so Van Wychen handled the Chair duties for the short meeting. It was decided by the group to start moving the monthly meetings around the SW-ITBEC member areas. May & August – Vernon County; June & September – Jackson County; October – Monroe County – Warrens.

Hidden Valleys – K. Murray reports:

- Attended her 1st HV Board meeting on Feb. 21st as the new Monroe County representative. S. Folcey informed the Committee that Murray has been approved for a 2-year period.
- The County’s payment to Hidden Valleys is being processed
- Board voted to add more booth signage, so they can work at more than one trade show at a time
- The back-cover page of this year’s magazine is to promote a Photo Contest
- There are 2 sales positions open that need to be filled – Green & Richland Counties
- May 16th – Annual Meeting – Fennimore – will be a night meeting
- Each County hosts a monthly Board Meeting – July 18th – Monroe County – Cranberry Discovery Center
- Pres. Joe Fisher is working with UW-Eau Claire on a social media strategy which includes radio spots, web site upgrades and a DVD for sales recruitment for the magazine.
- Cannot attend the March board meeting due to a conflict with her own CDC board meeting.

Local History Room – no report. Jarrod Roll was commended by the Committee for a fine job with the Monroe County Trivia Game at the Monroe County Economic Development Conference, finishing as one of the Top 10 highest rated sessions.

Ft. McCoy – T. Fitzgerald reports (filling in for T. Townsell):

- The Economic Impact of Ft. McCoy on the area was just announced. It was the highest every with a \$1.18 billion impact on the area.
- No Concert this year at Ft. McCoy
- Wrapping up training sessions on the base
- Armed Forces Day – May 19th – free to the public. Also, the Change of Command will take place that day. Special invitations will be sent out for that event.

Go Monroe County Guides – S. Peterson reported that he had received all the graphics from Evans Printing, so he will be upgrading the www.gomonroecounty.com tourism web site. The graphics will mirror the look of the new 2018 Guide. He also said that there would be a digital version of the guide available on the site as well.

N. Van Wychen questioned how the guides were going to be distributed? According to the contract, Evans Printing is responsible for distribution. She asked that the guides get distributed in the Warrens area soon, so they have them on hand as their tourism season begins. N. Vix, from Evans Printing, in attendance, was asked to pass that information back to Kyle Evans to ensure that the guides would be delivered on time.

S. Peterson asked the Committee for clarity on guide requests that come through the "Contact Us" section of the tourism web site. If it's a single magazine request, he was instructed to split the requests between the Sparta & Tomah Chambers. If it's for a larger request, like a case of guides, he should pass that information on to Evans Printing and they will ship out the guides.

Next meeting – Thursday, April 12th, 2018 – 9:00am – TBD. T. Thompson was asked to look for a meeting location in the Tomah area. J. Hendricks was asked to see if a future meeting could be held at Century Foods International? The Committee would like to start having meetings at businesses in the County that they could tour and get to know better as part of their monthly meetings.

Motion by D. Peterson to adjourn. 2nd by N. Van Wychen. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 10:34am.

Submitted by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve Peterson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Steve Peterson