

MONROE COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, COMMERCE & TOURISM COMMITTEE
MONTHLY MEETING – 5-18-17 – Farmers & Merchants Bank – Tomah

Present:

Committee Board Members – Sharon Folcey, Dean Peterson, Noji Van Wychen

Citizen Members – Bernie Arena, Paul Harms, Pete Reichardt, Dennis Berg, Mary Jo Hill

Advisory Members – Tim Hyma

Economic Development Coordinator: Steve Peterson

Absent: Jarrod Roll, Tina Thompson, Tonya Townsell

Special Guests: Kayla Collins – Three Bears Resort

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

Minutes - Motion by N. Van Wychen to approve the minutes of the April 13th meeting. Second by M.J. Hill. Motion carried.

Invoices were presented:

- Val's Gourmet Cupcakery - \$234.00 – cupcakes for the 40th Anniversary Hidden Valleys Meeting & Party – (the original approved amount was \$216 so the new amount was approved)
- Wisconsin Economic Development Association membership renewal – Steve Peterson - \$325.00
- An invoice from the WI Cranberry Discovery Center for items given away at the Hidden Valleys Party. No action would be taken and invoice given back to Hidden Valleys since the amount was not approved previously by the committee and it wasn't in our budget.

Motion by P. Reichardt, 2nd by D Berg to approve the invoices. Motion carried.

S. Folcey updated the Committee about the Monroe County Justice Center project. The official Open House will be on Sept. 29th with a ribbon cutting at 1pm. There will be an open house at the Justice Center, the new County department offices in the old Gundersen Clinic building and the administrative offices in the old Citizen's First Bank building. There will also be events happening at the Local History Room at the Museum building.

Monroe County E.D. Coordinator Report:

- **Meetings**
 - **Community Venture Network** meeting in the Twin Cities on 4/21. Met with 9 business prospects and have follow ups with 6 of them.
 - **Friends of the Elroy-Sparta Bike Trail Board meeting** – 4/24. Serious financial issues and will not be opening the Depot this year. DNR will be taking it over for the time being.
 - **Day Care Workforce Task Force meeting at WTC** – Viroqua – 4/27. Met to discuss day care issues and possible solutions. Will be pursuing a new day care facility in Cashton to be build this year, partnering with Organic Valley.
 - **Kendall Village Board meeting** – 4/26. Closed session to discuss a prospect & potential TIF District through the downtown.

- **Music on Main Committee** meeting on 5/4 in Cashton. Working on the promotion & marketing along with finalizing set up schedule downtown.
- **MC'd the opening of the Bike Trail ceremony** – 5/6 - Sparta
- **Harvard Study** – met with a professor from Harvard on 5/10 who is working with 2 other professors on a study of non-metropolitan America with the effects of National policy changes.
- **WDAC Board Meeting** – Oshkosh – 5/12. Working on new membership strategies & Fall Summit at Blue Harbor in Sheboygan. Reminder that Monroe County is hosting in September.
- **Hidden Valleys Annual Meeting** – Richland Center – 5/17.
- **Prospects**
 - Currently working with 13 prospects at various levels.
 - Working with potential business on renovation project.
 - Finalist with a city in MN – will find out decision by Memorial Day weekend
 - Finalist – only Wisconsin site – prospect will be doing a site visit in the next 3 weeks
 - Finalist – will be touring the County next week
 - Prospect – touring the County on 5/30
 - Prospect – touring the County on 6/1
 - Prospect – touring the County on 6/8 – developer working in assisted living, multi-family homes & hotels
 - Prospect – touring potential sites on 6/13
- **DNR** - talked with Representatives on the upcoming BIKE ME Fun Ride and options for the Depot to be taken over by Top Dog Marketing.
- **SET PROGRAM** - Strategic plan still being reviewed by the USDA. They suggested a revision as our talk schedule was a bit too over aggressive.
- **Tomah's Downtown Action Plan** – now official with the approval of the City Council.
- **Mill Haven project** – ahead of schedule
- **MEP Solutions** – working with the company on some potential savings on energy with the area School Districts.
- **CGI Video update** – area businesses are getting their videos done and they will be in the area filming the E.D. videos in mid-June and will continue filming throughout the summer.
- **MapNTour** – working with company on a future project with a video mapping of the County and showcase the business parks and downtown areas for recruiting projects on line.
- **Gigabit project – downtown Tomah.** Coordinating an effort with LYNXX, the City of Tomah and the downtown businesses on a potential gigabit expansion project through the entire downtown.
- **SW-ITBEC** – Created a new recruitment brochure for future recruitment of counties.
- **Rural Partners Small Town Forum** – pushing for Cashton to host this year's forum for this region.
- **BIKE ME FUN RIDE** – www.bikemeride.com
 - Presented a \$10,000 JEM Grant check at a news conference on 4/27 in Sparta.
 - 12,000 **BIKE ME FUN RIDE** brochures throughout the State through Ad-Lit as part of the JEM Grant. We've also distributed an additional 3,000 locally.
 - Have 41 riders signed up so far from 5 states. Big push will be the last week when riders wait until they see what the weather is like before the sign up.
 - Currently have 28 sponsors so far.

- Sparta Chamber of Commerce & Mayo are co-hosting the Pre-Ride Reception on 6/2 at Evans-Bosshard Park. Music by Tony & the Invaders.
- Elroy Ambulance Service is hosting a pancake breakfast on the morning of the ride on 6/3. All riders will leave from there in a progressive ride throughout the day heading toward Sparta.
- Wilton Sportsmens Inc is hosting a Brat/Hot Dog lunch
- Norwalk is hosting an ice cream break in the afternoon
- Kendall is hosting the Post-Ride Celebration on the evening of 6/3. Food by BP Smokehouse. Music by LB & the HiVolts
- Will be auctioning off the Cow spotted bike on Saturday night to raise funds. Other silent auctions as well.
- Three Bears Resort – Water & Wheels promotion tying in the water park and the bike ride. Microtel in Tomah offering special rates too.
- Newspaper article in the Monroe County Herald this week.
- Will be on WXOW Daybreak at the end of next week.

❖ **VINO FEST** – www.vinofest.org

- The WI Dept. of Tourism awarded the festival a \$28,650 JEM Grant. The grant will be coordinated through the Tomah Chamber of Commerce
- Working on a potential partnership with the WI Wineries Association
- Initial committee meetings have begun and will pick up greatly in June

❖ **UPCOMING**

- Many prospect meetings outlined earlier.
- **County Tour** with Gabe Nelson – Golden Shovel intern from 7 Rivers Alliance – 5/22
- **SMRT Bus meeting** – 1pm – 5/23 – Sparta City Council Chambers
- **Workforce Summit** – 5/31 – Days Inn – La Crosse – 8:30am – 3:00pm

Reports:

Local History Room

- S. Folcey reported that Jarrod Roll has done a great job with hosting events in the Local History Room over the past few weeks. Big crowds and more events to come. He is also working with kids on the history of the Civil War with re-enactments and costuming.

Ft. McCoy

- T. Townsell was absent in preparation of the annual Armed Forces Day at Ft. McCoy on 5/20. The committee was invited to attend and S. Peterson reminded them that there will be a special 50th Anniversary commemoration program at 1pm at the Historic Display area in honor of the Vietnam Veterans, sponsored by AUSA Robert B. McCoy Chapter.

7 Rivers Alliance

- S. Peterson updated the committee that there will be a Workforce Summit on May 31st at the Days Inn in La Crosse. No update on the WISE Plan at this time.

SW-ITBEC

- N. Van Wychen commented that the group is continuing to recruit Counties and wanting to get counties to consider memberships as they start their budget process. She said that Trempealeau & Jackson Counties were 2 targeted counties they hoped to get as members in 2018. S. Peterson said that Trempealeau County lost their recently hired E.D./Tourism/Park Director and that may hinder their membership in SW-ITBEC.

SPARTA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE – T. Hyma

- Chamber & Mayo hosting the music for the BIKE ME Fun Ride on 6/2 at Evans -Bosshard Park.
- Concerts in the Park will begin on June 7th through the summer at Evans-Bosshard Park
- Memorial Day festivities are being finalized
- The new upgrades at the Sparta downtown Farmers Market area are completed. Paving & other renovations have taken place. The area looks good and should enhance the downtown quite a bit.
- The hiring process for the new Chamber Executive Director is close to be done. An offer has been made to a prospect, but no final hiring has taken place yet. T. Hyma's last day is on June 16th.

TOMAH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

- T. Thompson could not attend because of moving their offices into their new location in the old DNR building. Their Grand Opening Gala will take place on June 9th. S. Peterson said that WI Dept. of Tourism Regional Specialist Andrew Nussbaum will be attending to present the Chamber with the \$28,650 JEM Grant for the upcoming Vino Fest.
- The Chamber would like to host the Monroe County EDCT Committee meeting in July at their new offices.

D. Peterson comments:

- Very busy at Martin's Warehousing. The pace is not going to slow down anytime soon.

M.J. Hill comments:

- reports that real estate sales is very hot right now with a very tight housing market.

N. Van Wychen announcements:

- June 24th – Warrens Cranberry Blossom Day – starts at her Cranberry Marsh with the Warrens Cranberry Festival royalty. There will be lunch and tours at the WI Cranberry Discovery Center and wagon rides with Grant Moseley through his fields of vegetables. It's open to the public.
- WI will have its first ever Cranberry Research Center located at the Morrison Cranberry Farm in Juneau County.
- First weekend in October will be the Cranberry Harvest Day.
- The former Bog Restaurant will be opening again under new management soon

P. Reichardt comments:

- The strength of the community banks in our area and the value it brings to the area. The constant challenges and successes to offer more and more services through expanded technology and the dedication to strong security technology as well. Both Reichardt and D. Berg commented on the ever-changing landscape of banking and services and the strong local banks we have in the County.

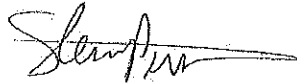
P. Harms comments:

- Looking forward to working with the BIKE ME Fun Ride with the Water & Wheels promotion.
- Three Bears Resort is enjoying continued growth in customers for their restaurant and bar, especially with the local traffic.
- Many foreign exchange youth will be working at the Resort this summer.
- Starting Thursday specials in June featuring different foods, entertainment and spotlights on the amenities at the Resort.

Next Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 8th at 9:00am at the Monroe County Justice Center in Sparta.

Motion by D. Peterson to adjourn. 2nd by T. Hyma. Meeting adjourned at 10:50am.

Submitted by:



Steve Peterson