

MONROE COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, COMMERCE & TOURISM COMMITTEE
MONTHLY MEETING – 9-14-17 – Steve Peterson’s office – 819 Superior Ave. - Tomah

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

Citizen Members: Dennis Berg, Mary Jo Hill, Pete Reichardt, Bernadine Arena

Advisory Members: Tonya Townsell – Ft. McCoy, John Hendricks – Sparta Area Chamber of Commerce

Economic Development & Tourism Coordinator: Steve Peterson

Absent: (CBM) Nodji Van Wychen, **(CM)** Paul Harms, **(AM)** Jim Bialecki – Monroe County Administrator, Jarrod Roll – Monroe County Local History Room, Tina Thompson – Tomah Chamber of Commerce

Media: Tim Evans – Monroe County Herald

Minutes – Motion by D. Berg to approve the minutes of the August 10th meeting. 2nd by D. Peterson. Motion carried.

Invoices – S. Peterson requested funding for the WEDA Fall Conference registration of \$175.00. Motion by D. Peterson. 2nd by D. Berg. Motion carried. Peterson reminded the Committee that he would be getting invoices from 7 Rivers Alliance for their annual membership of \$315.00 and an invoice from the Wisconsin Downtown Action Council for their annual membership of \$250.00. They were in the budget but have yet to be paid in 2017.

Budget Review – The Committee reviewed the proposed budget breakdown for 2018 with revisions they had discussed over the past few months. S. Folcey said that S. Peterson would be meeting with County Administrator Jim Bialecki on negotiating his 2018 contract with the County.

S. Folcey updated the committee about the reimbursements for the Hidden Valleys meetings in the future. With N. Van Wychen now the County’s HV representative there needed to be clarification on whether her travel/meeting expenses be paid out of the Monroe County EDCT budget or through the County’s budget since she is a County Supervisor. It was decided that N. Van Wychen’s reimbursements would come through the County, so adjustments to the 2018 budget would lower the total amount and allow the Committee to potentially move those funds to other line-items.

J. Hendricks reminded the Committee about reviewing the possibility of co-funding a 2019 Discover Wisconsin TV episode on the County. The 2 options are taking ½ of an episode with another destination for \$22,000 or taking the full ½ episode for \$40,000. The payment can be made over a 3-year period. There was discussion of having other County partners help fund the show, including the Sparta and Tomah Chambers and Villages in the County. D. Berg pointed out that if those other funding sources could be secured it may make more sense having the full ½ hour so we have more time to promote more regions of the County. S. Peterson said he would talk to the Village Boards about a financial commitment. It was decided that a subcommittee be formed with S. Peterson, J. Hendricks and T. Thompson on it. They will review options and report to the Committee at the

October meeting.

S. Peterson talked about the old Campground map brochure that the County had done many years ago, and that some were still being distributed even though some information in it was outdated. The Committee felt it wasn't necessary to print a new guide, but to go through the old one, get information updated and possibly do a digital version on the County tourism web site and the Chambers could update their information as well.

B. Arena talked about the County tear off maps that were very popular years ago, and was wondering if they are still being used? And if there are any available anymore, and if so, where are they stored at? J. Hendricks said he would check to see if they had any left in Sparta Chamber's store room. B. Arena and S. Folcey both commented that those tear off maps were very useful when directing tourists around the Cities and County and could still be useful tool.

Monroe County E.D. Coordinator Report:

- **Congrats** to Organic Valley for winning the WEDA's Economic Driver of the Year Award at last night's Community & Economic Development Awards Banquet in Madison. Congrats to MRRPC for winning the Economic Development Initiative Award for the SMRT Bus program. Bell Square in La Crosse was a finalist for the Redevelopment & Reuse Award.
- Helping start a Monroe County Job Skills Initiative with the Tomah Memorial Hospital, Tomah & Sparta Chambers, school districts and citizens at large
 - Completed a survey from over 60 businesses in the county
 - Will have follow up meetings and drill down further off the results
 - Will have a breakout session at the Conference
 - WISE PLAN is very interested in this initiative
- **MapNTour** – working on the potential of adding this marketing tool for the County. Alliant Energy & Xcel Energy are willing to put some money towards this initiative. The plan is to create a virtual visual tour of the County along with a business directory link to every business in the County. If we use this marketing tool, it will be unveiled at the E.D. Conference.
- **CGI** – county videos are getting close to being done. Topics include an overall welcome, agriculture, healthcare, quality of life, tourism, education, economic development.
- **Connect Community** – will be starting meetings again this fall with all the local villages and game plan on some marketing ideas for 2018. Working with a company that is interested in showcasing their "beacon" system that is tied to an app and web site for villages along the bike trail. Now with the highway project almost done in Cashton we will be holding a Connect Community meeting soon.
- **Business Walk** – working with Kennedy Turner on a possible October 2018 project. Teams of local business and civic leaders would take part in a walking tour (Business Walk) in one of the communities in the County. The Business Walk is an economic development initiative that, in a short amount of time, allows local leaders to get the pulse of how their business community is doing. The goal of the Business Walk is to help create a unified voice, build a stronger relationship between the business community and local government, as well as, target and assist companies at risk to help foster a more prosperous business climate.
- **Added new features to the web site.** The site now features the business parks in the County along with a listing of all the commercial properties that are currently for sale in the County. This automatically updates as realtors register them on the MLS systems.

- **BIKE ME FUN RIDE** – already have 2 national beat writers coming in to do features on the bike trail and ride next year. National sponsors are now being recruited as we have one ride under our belt and now qualify for potential funding.
- **VINO FEST** –
 - will have first organizational meeting in October.
 - Worked with the Dept. of Tourism and they are approving the current JEM Grant that wasn't used again for next year. To take the pressure/responsibility off the Tomah Chamber's shoulders, the Tourism Dept. allowed the change of the JEM Grant sponsor to VINO FEST because S. Peterson hadn't received another grant in the same year. In 2017 S. Peterson received a JEM Grant for the BIKE ME Fun Ride and the chances of getting a 2nd Grant in the same year were not good.
 - Most of the issues with the wineries have been taken care of as we are now only featuring wineries in Southwest Wisconsin and the State association is not going to be a partner in the fest.

❖ **Meetings/Events**

• **Upcoming Meetings/Events**

- **Prospect Visit** – 9/15 – Tomah & Sparta. Looking at possible buildings.
- **WDAC Board meeting** – 9/18 – Oconomowoc
- **WHEDA** – special session to unveil new programs – 9/18 – Madison
- **Prospect tour** – 9/20
- **International Marketing opportunities for Wisconsin Businesses** – Chippewa Valley E.D. Corporation – Chippewa Falls – 9/21
- **Warrens Cranberry Festival** – 9/21 – special guest – tour the event
- **Prospect Proposal** – large company – due on 9/22
- **E.D. Appreciation Day** – Alliant Energy – 9/25 – Trappers' Turn – WI Dells
- **WEDA Fall Conference** – Osthoff Resort – Elkhart Lake – 9/27 – 29
- **Tomah Health Campus groundbreaking ceremony** – 9/28 – 10am

❖ **MONROE COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE**

- Almost complete with securing speakers and the topics
 - Jerry Duschane – E.D. – League of Municipalities
 - Oak Moser – Coaching2Connect – building relationships between employers & employees
 - Succession
 - WEDC – downtown building rehab & revitalization
 - WISE Plan
 - WHEDA
 - Connect Community program initiatives
 - Broadband – coordinating that with the Public Service Commission
 - Tourism – Drew Nussbaum and Shane Broussard
 - Cyber Security
 - Financial partners for business growth you may not know about
 - Ft. McCoy update?
 - Job Skills

- Web site will be up and running by mid-October
- Extending the registration on Wednesday to start at 10am and marketplace will be open at that time.
- Spotlited businesses have been recruited and the final line-up will be done soon.
- Dropping the marketplace in the afternoon on Thursday
- May look at finding another room for an additional breakout sessions or repeat the others.
- Will be raising the registration a bit and restructuring the sponsorship levels
- I will be taking bids on all print materials for the conference and relying heavily on digital marketing and new avenues to attract attendees.
- Would like to work with Jarrod on another round of trivia.
- Will have a Conference app again.

REPORTS:

Local History Room – no report

Justice Center

- Open House is on Friday, September 29 with tours from 8:30am – 5:30pm. Ribbon Cutting ceremony at 1:00pm.
- There will be tours of the new offices in the former Citizen’s Bank Building and the former Gundersen Clinic buildings too.
- People will be able to park in the Parking lots in Memorial Park and then be bused to the Justice Center and back again.

7 Rivers Alliance

- Chris Hardie started his Executive Director duties replacing Lisa Herr
- S. Peterson reported that the final stages of the WISE PLAN 10-year Strategic Plan is being wrapped up and the plan will be unveiled in November.

Sparta Chamber of Commerce

- J. Hendricks that the Honorary Citizen Day is taking place and culminating with the Sparta Business @ 5 will be held at South Post at Ft. McCoy on Sept. 14th.
- Plans are being finalized for the Fall Fest celebration on October 14th.

Tomah Chamber of Commerce – no report

Ft. McCoy

- T. Townsell reported that she has a new Ft. McCoy Public Affairs Deputy Director – Bill Coppennoll. He is a retired Public Affairs Director and will be a great asset to her department.
- Business @ 5 went very well on August 31st with many good comments.
- Training is winding down but numbers show that this could be a record year for # of soldiers training at Ft. McCoy.
- Commemorative Area Hours – Sept. 22nd, October 13th & 27th - 12:00pm – 4:00pm

SW-ITBEC

- Grant recap results will be given by recipients in December.
- Grant was awarded to the Sparta Theater Assessment Committee so they could move forward in getting an assessment done on the old Theater building before moving forward with any discussions of buying the property.

Hidden Valleys

- Will be sending contract/invoice to Committee very soon for the 2018 publication. S. Folcey will be working with the County on getting the invoice paid for the 2018 year and meet Hidden Valleys' deadline for payment and securing the ad space. B. Arena said the new magazine will be printed before the end of the year.
- Committee has agreed to purchase another full-page ad in the 2018 magazine.
- Motion by D. Peterson. 2nd by P. Reichardt that the full-page ad invoice be paid as soon as possible so we have secured the space in the magazine. Motion carried.

D. Berg informed the Committee that we all should go on Equifax and have a scan done on our individual credit report. Because of the hacking scandal, millions of people have had their personal information stolen. This scan will indicate if you are one of those who may be at risk of being hacked. There isn't anything you can really do now, but for peace of mind, D. Berg stressed you should do the scan. P. Reichardt stressed that this is not a banking issue but an Equifax issue. He agreed the scan should be done because your personal information could have been stolen and could be used for a variety of ways to get credit cards, mortgages or even attempt to drain your bank account.

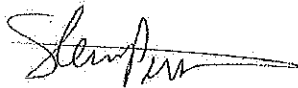
Next meeting – October 12th – 9am – Three Bears Resort – Warrens.

Agenda Items for next month:

- Special guest – Nicole Jacobs – Monroe County Court Appointed Special Advocates
- Monroe County Activities Guide Contract
- Discover Wisconsin
- Finalize Budget adjustments
- Monroe County Economic Development Conference

Motion by D. Peterson to adjourn. 2nd by M.J. Hill. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 10:50am.

Submitted by:



Steve Peterson