

Monroe County Economic Development, Commerce and Tourism Committee
Regular Monthly Meeting, December 8, 2016
Monroe County Local History Room, Sparta, WI

Present:

Committee members: Sharon Folcey, Nodji Van Wychen, Dean Peterson

Citizen member: Dennis Berg

Advisory members: Bernie Arena, Paul Harms, Tim Hyma, Jarrod Roll, Tonya Townsell, Tina Thompson

Economic Development Coordinator: Steve Peterson

Chair Folcey called the meeting to order at 9 a.m. Roll call was taken.

Motion by Berg to approve the minutes of the November 2017 meeting. Second by Thompson. Motion carried.

The budgets (2016 and 2017) were reviewed.

Motion by D. Peterson to approve the invoices presented. Second by Van Wychen. Motion carried.

There was discussion on the way that invoices coming through this committee should be paid. Folcey will meet with Shelley Bohl and get it straightened out.

Folcey stated she had received an invoice (#00016916) from Evans Printing for a mailing he did to solicit ads for the activity guide. She met with Greg Evans regarding it because it was not authorized. It had not been done before and no committee person was contacted about it even though all committee names appeared on the letter. There was discussion on the matter. Motion by Thompson not to pay the bill. Second by D. Peterson. Motion carried.

S. Peterson gave his EDCT report. The following items were reported:

- Met with Greg Evans regarding the MC Activity Guide. Layout has started.
- The SET conference at the Ground Round on 11/30/16 had a great turnout and active dialogue.
- Received a \$10,000 JEM grant from the Dept. of Tourism for the BIKE ME Fun Ride.
- Attended the ECO DEVO meeting at the LaCrosse Airport on 12/6/16.
- CJI Corporation video project to include welcome, economic development, tourism, healthcare, agriculture and quality of life
- Several prospects moving to the county within the next year

S. Peterson reported on the progress with the upcoming Monroe County ED Conference to be held February 22 & 23, 2017 at Three Bears Resort in Warrens, WI. Brochures on the event were available to anyone who wanted to take some. The website is www.mcedconference.com.

Folcey and S. Peterson met with Cathy Schmit before she left. It was agreed to have Top Dog Productions run the conference with the Monroe County EDCT having a \$2,000 naming sponsorship. Three Bears is offering a very low lodging rate to attendees. At least four counties are offering per diems to county officials who attend the event.

Roll gave an update on the Local History Room. There is a new logo. He passed out the new tri-fold brochures that feature the logo on the front, and highlight the museum, research library, online resources, programs and the Wegner Grotto.

Roll said that 8,000 visitors came to the museum last year. Channel 19's evening news would be featuring the museum tonight. It is the 40th anniversary of the museum in 2017. He noted that 189 people came last Saturday to see the Christmas displays. It broke a museum record for one day attendance.

Arena passed around the Monroe County section of the Hidden Valleys Magazine, the four pages around the map that feature the county and the cover which also includes county photos this year. The magazine files are at the printers, and it will be available for distribution in early 2017. 70,000 copies are being printed. There will also be 5,000 extra maps printed for distribution.

Arena noted that this is the 40th anniversary issue. A celebration of those 40 years will be held at the annual meeting slated for May 17, 2017 in Richland Center. Invitations will be going out in January. Townsell reported on Fort McCoy's strategic planning (25 years out). Items on that agenda included water issues, buffer zones, expansion, housing and strategic objectives such as foundation and guidance documents.

She said that 140,000 plus troops trained at the facility this year. They are working on bringing in more troops for winter training.

Thompson stated that the renovation of the old DNR building is halfway done. Landscaping is starting to come together. They are getting bi-weekly tours and will be receiving a full update today. Deconstruction was the hardest to do. They found 80,000 bees in the walls of the building. The CVB is hoping to move in sometime in May of 2017. The Tomah Chamber will be hiring a special events coordinator to work with new and ongoing events, and to work with Rec Park on getting more things happening in that facility.

Hyma noted all the Christmas activities happening in Sparta, especially the Kriskindlmarkt Market downtown. Horse-drawn wagon rides go from the market to the Holiday Lights at the Evans-Bosshard Park. The Sparta Chamber has hired Tallitha Blondin as a part-time Marketing & Media assistant. She joins Kathy Kuderer (tourism and events director) and Leigh Ann Trzinski (marketing & membership). Harms noted that the Three Bears Resort is investing in a culinary team. They have hired a pastry chef and are looking forward to being open more hours.

Berg stated that overall all banks had a good year in 2016.

D. Peterson stated all was going well with Martin Trucking.

Van Wychen said that all local growers are done harvesting. It was another record year for cranberries. She noted that 80% of the Cran Grow products will be exported internationally. Thirty-nine growers are a part of the company.

Motion by Van Wychen to adjourn. Second by Townsell. Motion carried.

The next meeting will be January 12, 2017 at a location to be announced.

Bernie Arena, Recorder