May 14, 2015 Minutes

Monroe County Economic Development, Commerce & Tourism Committee

Theisen’s, 3000 S. Black River Street, Sparta, WI

The meeting was called in accordance with the open meeting law requirements.

Committee members present: Sharon Folcey, Dean Peterson, Bruce Humphrey, Jim Schroeder

Citizen members: Carol Ostrem, Mary Jo Hill

Advisory members: Linda Fournier Tina Thompson, Tim Hyma

Economic Development Coordinator: Steve Peterson

Folcey called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m.

Lance, Theisen’s Sparta store manager welcomed committee members. He announced the second store in Black River Falls will be opening on May 28. The opening has been better than expected in all the departments. Business has been consistent. The Sparta store is 8 out of 22 stores for sales. A question was asked about finding people to hire. Lance stated that he has a good core group. Hopefully, he will be hiring 7 more positions today with pay at $7.75. This is the area that he has had challenges finding people. The store will have 59 hourly and 3 salary employees. He invited everyone to stay and tour/shop after the meeting.

Motion by Humphrey to approve the minutes of the April meeting as presented. Second by Schroeder. Motion carried.

The committee reviewed the financials. Motion by Schroeder to pay the bills as presented. Second by Humphrey. Motion carried.

S. Peterson handed out the 2014 Wisconsin Tourism impacts. He has a showing for the Kendall School and Tee Pee.

S. Peterson spoke about the Bike Trail 50th Anniversary, June 6. They are recruiting 50 riders from each community along the trail to ride. Each group will have a different colored shirt. The Bike Trail Committee is looking for sponsors to help pay the cost of the event. Humphrey made a motion to provide $500 to Bike Trail Anniversary committee. Second by Schroeder. Motion carried. Money will go for items like a banner. For more information go to [www.50elroyspartabiketrail.com](http://www.50elroyspartabiketrail.com).

Gigabyte Park announcement/press conference was well received. The lines are already expanding in Tomah and Sparta. Monroe County has an opportunity to place a ½ page ad in the WI Economic Development Guide to market the existence of the Gigabyte Park. Tomah has pledged $500; Sparta $500; $1100 Lemonweir Valley Telcom. Still need $1100. Motion to pay $1100 by Humphrey towards the ad. Second by Schroeder. Motion carried.

S. Peterson announced the application has been completed and filed for the Monroe County Connect Communities. This is a county-wide pilot program for villages such as Norwalk, Wilton, Kendall, Warrens, etc. Monroe County is one of two counties participating. The cost is $100 per community for a total of $700. S. Peterson recommended this committee should pay the first year for the 7 communities. Hopefully they will see the value and come up with the $100 each for the following year. Humphrey made a motion to pay the $700 for Connect Communities. Second by D. Peterson. Motion carried.

The agenda item Gomonroecounty.com and Bikes&Berries.com Websites was tabled.

S. Peterson mentioned that he was checking into details on a program that will allow target marketing by business via email. More to follow.

5 Minute Reports:

* Monroe County will be the featured county in 2017 Hidden Valleys magazine. Need to budget additional money for the guide.
* Hyma reported on the “Will to Ben” bike tour in October; the downtown revitalization initiative; and the tourism grants he has received.
* Thompson reported on their upcoming events – Tomah night at the Loggers; Golf Outing; 40th Anniversary of the Tractor Pull. Chamber is working on finding a building architect for the Ranger Station. Thompson also talked about finding qualified employees to fill jobs in the communities.
* Fournier mentioned the Armed Forces Day Open House, May 16 and passed out copies of the 2015 Fort McCoy guide.
* No Bikes & Berries report.
* No SW-ITBEC report.
* S. Peterson mentioned a bill working its way in Madison regarding event barns.
* S. Peterson talked about partnering with 7 Rivers Alliance for an October seminar on vacant storefronts.

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for Pizones in Tomah at 9 a.m. on Thursday, June 11th.

Motion by ? to adjourn. Second by? Motion carried

Linda Fournier Recorder