

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
MARCH 17, 2015 MEETING MINUTES**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Vice Chair Commissioner Rieck, Commissioners Roggenkamp, and Merritt

ABSENT: Commissioner Stroot and Chair Jurchen

ALSO PRESENT: Chris Lindholm, School Superintendent; Matt Kilian, Chamber of Commerce; Dan Frank, Initiative Foundation; Merritt Bussiere, University of Minnesota Extension; Dawn Bittner, Planning and Zoning Administrator; Chris Robinson, BLAEDC; Carol Park, Leslies; Greg Karr, Council Member; and Sandy Peine, City Clerk

1. Call Meeting to Order

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Rieck at 8:00 a.m.

2. Approval EDC Minutes

COMMISSIONER MERRITT MOVED TO APPROVE THE FEBRUARY 17, 2015 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MINUTES. COMMISSIONER ROGENKAMP SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION CARRIED 3-0.

3. University of MN – Merritt Bussiere

Dan Frank introduced Merritt Bussiere. He explained that Merritt has been invited to consider how the alternate Highway 371 route will impact the community and discuss options to deal with the impact.

Mr. Merritt discussed the following available research and education resources:

*E-marketing workshops – marketing for small businesses.

*Roadside Advertising in the Digital Age - Helping businesses get found by getting on Google Maps and Yelp which. The U of M offers workshops for small businesses on these topics and would come to Pequot Lakes to conduct the workshop.

*Mobile eMarketing – How to optimize business presence on the web.

*Getting high on Google – Search engine optimization.

*Using Social Media – Facebook and twitter for your business.

*Dealing with online Reviews – Managing online reviews is an essential business practice.

*Downtown Market Analysis Toolbox – A working group that includes local business leaders, economic development professionals and community leaders to utilize the free online Downtown Market Analysis Toolbox. This may be a tool for the EDC to use.

*Retail Gap Analysis – Compares the demand for stores based on the spending potential of the area's residents to the supply of stores actually in the trade area. Merritt stated he could do this for the City at no charge.

*Market Area Profile – Organizes data into a comprehensive description of who shop and visit the community, demographics, purchasing power, and lifestyles. The Extension organizes this data into an easy-to-understand report and leads discussions about the data.

*2nd Homeowners Survey Report – Develops outreach and engagement strategies with seasonal residents who have business experience.

*Customer Service Training – Provide training for private and public sector employees.

Matt Kilian stated he is working on a regional tourism study. Pequot Lakes needs to find a brand that each individual business can communicate. It should include no more than three key points. This would help in marketing the City and could be used for signage near the Highway 371 alternate route. Matt stated that the Chamber would assist in spearheading the City's marketing endeavors.

Commissioner Roggenkamp questioned how to bring all of the different types of businesses together to focus on 3 key points. Matt stated that the broader you go the more diluted it becomes and the less useful the message. He noted that the goal of the marketing logo is to bring people off of the highway and to be used as an economic driver of tourism. Commissioner Merritt stated that Pequot is not Nisswa and is not entirely driven by tourism. Chris Lindholm suggested that Pequot is a great place to visit and even a greater place to live.

Dan Frank stated that the Initiative Foundation can act as the coordinator and help the EDC figure out how to pull all of the different aspects together. They have many resources available and can offer tools to use to come up with a plan to take advantages of the opportunities presented with the alternate Highway 371 route.

The EDC will focus on branding, marketing, and messaging. Commissioner Roggenkamp suggested using the Toolbox to work with the branding and having

the Chamber work with the City on the branding. Matt Kilian stated that this could begin in the fall.

4. School Update

Chris Lindholm had no major updates to report. He noted that they are working on construction cleanup expanding parking.

5. Request from Pequot Promoters for Banner Funding

The Pequot Promoters are requesting the City to put \$1,000 toward the banners. The Clerk noted that there was no specific earmark for banners in the 2015 budget, however there is \$2,000 for marketing. It was the consensus to discuss this at another meeting.

6. Chamber Update

Matt Kilian stated that the Chamber is moving forward with tourism studies, supervisory, leadership, and customer service training.

7. BLAEDC Update

Chris Robinson stated that the Execs are watching the CEO program to see if it is something they could be engaged in. Business Chats are continuing.

8. Other Business

There was no other business.

9. Adjournment

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS, COMMISSIONER
ROGGENKAMP MOVED TO ADJOURN. COMMISSIONER MERRITT
SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED 3-0. THE
MEETING AJOURNED AT 9:20 A.M.**

Respectfully Submitted,



Sandra A. Peine
City Clerk