

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
JUNE 16, 2015 MEETING MINUTES**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Jurchen, Commissioners Rieck, Roggenkamp, Stroot, and Merritt

ALSO PRESENT: Sheila Haverkamp, BLAEDC; Dawn Bittner, Zoning Administrator; David Sjoblad, Mayor; Chris Lindholm, School Superintendent; Sandy Peine, City Clerk; and Matt Killian, Chamber of Commerce

1. Call Meeting to Order

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

2. Approval of May 19, 2015 EDC Minutes

COMMISSIONER MERRITT MOVED TO APPROVE THE MAY 19, 2015 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MINUTES. COMMISSIONER RIECK SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

3. Review Survey Questions and Coordinate Action Plan for 2015 Summer Implementation

Chair Jurchen spoke about the empty store fronts in Pequot Lakes. He noted that Pequot Lakes is not the only City facing this dilemma. Mayor Sjoblad informed the EDC of a meeting he attended in Crosslake regarding empty spaces. He explained that one of the reasons store fronts are empty is due to the fact that owners will not lower the rent. He stated that if the business is going to cash flow, small business operating expenses have to be reduced. Chair Rieck stated that she read an article that spoke about this era being the end of retail for many businesses as people are spending their dollars on technology items rather than on expensive clothing.

Sheila Haverkamp stated that Crosslake's EDA Chair suggested that areas provide a unique characteristic at each City's downtown.

Chair Jurchen stated that consumers have changed the paradigm of how they do business. The discussion focused on whether Pequot Lakes is a destination for travelers or a convenience stop for local residents. Mayor Sjoblad stated that special events in the City are a necessity to increase retail sales. Commissioner Stroot stated that people who stay on the lake don't want to shop, but people that attend events are more apt to shop.

Chair Jurchen stated that the City is fortunate to have a park in the center of town.

Matt Killian said that the Chamber is beginning a regional buy-local campaign in September. He explained that retailers are frustrated about the lack of awareness of products available in this area.

Matt Killian stated that the Chamber is working on the local retail survey. Chair Jurchen stated that we need to figure out what questions need to be asked in the survey. Matt noted that Jenna is working on this and is looking at ipad programs to use. He further noted that Chris Quisberg is willing to share retail statistics.

Chris Lindholm suggested that consumers should be able to buy locally on the internet. Discussion took place about informing businesses how to market by internet.

The Mayor discussed the idea of the City having some incentives to offer to new businesses who want to build in the City. Sheila Haverkamp explained that the City needs to be ready to present the incentive when a business begins its inquiry.

The Commission discussed possible survey questions such as who are you, where are you from, and what are you looking to buy? Dawn Bittner suggested reviewing a similar survey which was done several years ago. Chair Jurchen suggested putting this on the July agenda. Matt Killian stated that the Chamber will be ready to show the City the applications and the cost at that time.

4. University of Minnesota Retail Trade Analysis

No discussion.

5. School Update

Chris Lindholm stated that there is a need for soccer fields.

Chris stated that school is out and the Board approved budgets for next year. He noted that there is new legislation which will provide more funding for schools in the Greater Minnesota area to maintain the school buildings.

6. Chamber Update

Matt noted that Sue Galligan has been hired by the Chamber as the Events and Communications Manager.

7. BLAEDC Update

Sheila Haverkamp stated that BLAEDC is working with DEED on a higher level marketing project.

8. Other Business

Mayor Sjoblad stated that the City will soon be finished with the negotiations on the Highway 371 project. Matt Killian stated that he was not enthusiastic with the bridge designs that were done by MnDOT. He felt the artistic element was minimal and would like to see something more substantial.

Chair Jurchen questioned if there was anything that the Commissioners felt the EDC should be pursuing.

Mayor Sjoblad questioned whether there is something more that the City can do to recruit businesses? Sheila Haverkamp stated that Brainerd and Baxter are doing the same thing as Pequot, but their advantage is location. She suggested reviewing the business subsidy policy at one of the upcoming meetings. She explained that the City can use marketing techniques but before that the City has to have a vision and (what type of business does the City want to promote), have the property ready to go including a map and pricing.

9. Adjournment

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS THE MEETING ADJOURNED
AT 9:17 A.M.**

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra A. Peine

Sandy Peine
City Clerk

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