

**MEETING OF THE PEQUOT LAKES ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2016
PEQUOT LAKES CITY HALL**

Members Present: Chair Jurchen, Commissioners Lindholm, Rieck, Sjoblad, and Stroot

Members Absent: Commissioners Holley and Lubke

Others Present: Nancy Malecha, City Administrator/Clerk; Sheila Haverkamp, BLAEDC;
Cory Hendricks, KC Companies; Curt Johnson, Denali Companies

1. Call Meeting to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Jurchen at 8:04 a.m. Chair Jurchen acknowledged Sheila Holley's appointment to the Commission.

2. Approve EDC Minutes

COMMISSIONER STROOT MOVED TO APPROVE THE AUGUST 16, 2016 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MINUTES. COMMISSIONER LINDHOLM SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

3. Fiber Optic Availability in Business Park

Cory Hendricks from KC Companies addressed the Commission regarding minimal broadband speeds for web based business activities in the Pequot Lakes Business Park. Mr. Hendricks noted that they would like to see 100 MB download and 7 MB upload speeds to run their business efficiently as current speeds are too slow. When they contacted TDS Telecom, they were informed that to install fiber optic would cost their business \$60,000.

Bob Perkins informed the Commission that one business in the Business Park currently has fiber optic connection. Mr. Perkins noted that businesses in this area can receive 100 MB service for \$1,500 per month. TDS Telecom is currently in the process of applying for a broadband expansion grant that would assist unserved areas in receiving 25 MB download and 3 MB upload speeds. Mr. Perkins is waiting on an architectural design review which will provide further information on this issue.

Curt Johnson noted that having internet service cost three times as much as rent is not a practical service. Mr. Johnson explained instances where the school district's transportation director had to leave the bus garage premises in the Business Park and go to the school building to download and upload information. Mr. Johnson stated that the services in the Business Park need to compete in today's business world at a reasonable cost.

Chair Jurchen noted that funding for internet upgrades is the biggest issue, just like any other infrastructure.

Sheila Haverkamp suggested the Commission look at Brainerd's model where the school district bonded for funds used to create a larger ring of coverage and partnered this effort with CTC. This partnership helped them to utilize grants at the state level.

Bob Perkins noted that electronics at the end ports are costly expenses and community relationships and partnerships are needed to spearhead further migration. He further noted that it will take a couple of months to get the architectural designs back and this may lead to simple design changes that can be beneficial to customers in the Business Park.

Commissioner Lindholm noted that development of the eighty acres south of Derksen Road may be able to shoulder some of the broadband upgrade expenses. Mr. Lindholm would like to see the Planning Commission and the EDC charged with looking at ways to implement better broadband service and determine an expert to facilitate these discussions.

Commissioner Stroot questioned if TDS Telecom could arrange for someone to meet with KC and Denali Companies for short-term fixes. Bob Perkins agreed to take on this task.

Curt Johnson questioned if a more global analysis should be done for all businesses in the Business Park. Bob Perkins stated that each business' IT professionals should be able to size the needs of their business.

Commissioner Lindholm noted that the EDC needs to sit with the Planning Commission to discuss the future of the business park expansion. Chair Jurchen noted that if opportunities exist to infill current lots that should be considered first.

Bob Perkins stated that he will bring further information on broadband infrastructure to the November EDC meeting.

4. Workforce Development & Talent Recruiter

Sheila Haverkamp informed the Commission on the labor shortage needs in our area and the Brainerd Lakes Area Workforce Continuum. Ms. Haverkamp noted that a workforce summit should be organized to utilize larger funding sources and the creation of a workforce strategy is needed.

5. Thriving Communities Initiative (TCI)

Chair Jurchen noted the good representation on the TCI core team and reminded members of the first TCI training session tonight at 5:30 p.m.

6. School Update

Commissioner Lindholm noted that the school year is off to a smooth start with an increase of 55 kids in the secondary school.

7. Chamber Update

Jenna Crawford gave an update to the Commission via e-mail.

8. BLAEDC Update

No further update.

9. City of Jenkins Update

No update.

10. Other Business

Commissioner Sjoblad informed the Commission about the Habitat for Humanity Fundraiser on September 24th at the Hungry Loon.

11. Adjourn

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 9:20 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Nancy Malecha
City Administrator/Clerk