

**MEETING OF THE PEQUOT LAKES ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2016
PEQUOT LAKES CITY HALL**

Members Present: Chair Jurchen, Commissioners Lindholm, Lubke, Rieck, Sjoblad

Members Absent: Commissioners Holley and Stroot

Others Present: David Sjoblad, Mayor; Sheila Haverkamp, BLAEDC; Bob Perkins, TDS; Jenna Crawford, Chamber; and Dawn Bittner, Zoning Specialist

1. Call Meeting to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Jurchen at 8:04 a.m.

2. Approve EDC Minutes

Page 2, first paragraph, Dawn Bittner questioned whether Brainerd partnered with TDS or CTC. Sheila Haverkamp advised it was CTC.

COMMISSIONER LUBKE MOVED TO APPROVE THE SEPTEMBER 20, 2016 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MINUTES, AS CORRECTED. COMMISSIONER RIECK SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

3. Fiber Optic Availability in Business Park

Bob Perkins had no update other than there has been a submission for architectural design. The Connect America Fund is taking precedence to get the design done. The design will be looking at the feasibility of what type of fiber you will put in there and then determine the cost per customer. This design is specifically for the Business Park. There has been discussion regarding expansion of the Business Park, but in fill is more cost effective than expansion of the Park.

Mayor Sjoblad noted that the property where the spray fields were, where there has been discussion for future expansion of the Park, development will be developer driven and costs will be paid by developer. Utilities are available at the edge of the Business Park.

4. Local Economic Area Report

Chair Jurchen reviewed the Report. This area is predominantly Old and Newcomers with a median age of 40. When they refer to median household income that would be the total of two wage earners in the household. Median refers to half of the households are higher than that number and half of the households are lower. 67% of our population is both old and newcomers. We are a lot higher than the average community in the United States in this category, but if you go back to the first page only 46% are homeowners. This equates to a lot

of our population in town living in rental property. Commissioner Lindholm stated he sees this with his student population. The transient, unstable households are saturated in Pequot Lakes, with a few in Breezy Point and Crosslake. Thirty percent of the student body are in poverty. A renter could be an older individual who has lived in the area for a long time. He further stated that we need to support those individuals who live in the apartments because their lifestyles will be different.

Sheila Haverkamp has the statistics outlining the number of people who are renters that work in our community and will supply that information at an upcoming meeting. Chair Jurchen pointed out that we have a transient work force which makes it difficult to integrate and engage our community.

Commissioner Lindholm stated as a community, we need to look at the families in the apartments. If they are working 2 jobs raising a family, what is it that they need to be successful? What is it they do when he is at home mowing his lawn? How do we support that?

Commissioner Rieck stated it is interesting that Pequot Lakes is not representative of communities across the United States.

Chair Jurchen stated Pequot Lakes is unique as we have a strong economic segment, a diverse population.

Commissioner Lindholm reported the secondary level enrollment increased by 50 students. There have been increases in Brainerd, Crosby and Crosslake, also.

Regarding the employment graph, Chair Jurchen stated he would like a synopsis of employment in Pequot Lakes. Landis + Gyr and TDS have approximately 300 employees in the information technology field. Commissioner Lindholm stated the graph indicates residents and their employment, not employers. The graph indicates a number of residents drive to Crosby Hospital and Essentia to work. A lot of our population are commuters to work.

Chair Jurchen stated the EDC needs to know what jobs are in this community now. Sheila Haverkamp stated the information is available and BLAEDC has a DEED Analyst, Chad Bodeen, and he can gather whatever information we like. The EDC is looking for actual jobs in Pequot otherwise we will do a survey. The City's Business Inventory needs to be updated. Knowing this information would be helpful recruiting new businesses, listing what we have and what we may be short on. It would be helpful to know who has job openings to fill and where they are filled from.

Chair Jurchen further stated some small towns with empty storefronts are allowing them to become residential units and shops, changing their zoning and integrating housing into their downtowns. Dawn Bittner stated that Pequot Lakes has changed their zoning and encourage

housing on the second level or rear of shops. Residential development needs to be intentionally planned so it drives and cultivates community.

Mayor Sjoblad stated that blighted dwellings need to be removed, but every budget cycle taxes cannot be raised. It will take tax dollars to improve these properties, which in fact will lower taxes with the increased tax base in the future.

Quality of life and housing are large parts of our economic development.

Sheila Haverkamp stated creating an amenity could drive economic development. In Crosby the amenity is the Cuyuna Trails. People are buying the older homes as there is no lodging nearby. Brainerd is doing it with the focus on the River. A family from Pequot Lakes bought a house next door to her son in Duluth because it is near Canal Park. Pequot will need to hold up its' amenities and people will come and revitalize the housing.

We need to look at what type of impediments may be in the way for redevelopment.

Commissioner Lindholm asked what is economic development and what actions can we take to accomplish that? We need to define that, whether it be housing or commercial. Where can we be most effective with the resources we have.

We could be building the attracting amenity with the new sports area.

Chair Jurchen and Dawn Bittner will meet to discuss what planning documents to include for the next meeting. Sheila Haverkamp will provide housing data.

5. Future Development – Infill & Expansion

No discussion.

6. Thriving Communities Initiative Update

Chair Jurchen reported the TCI meetings are being well attended with 30 to 40 participants. He also working on a grant with TCI. The grant will be for the planning stage for \$5,000; it is too soon to apply for the \$25,000 for implementation. The funds should be received in February. He may need some letters of support and may contact EDC members.

7. School Update

Commissioner Lindholm reported MEA is this week. In addition, he is a non-voting member of the NJPA Board and NJPA has a dream of establishing a children's museum in Region 5. This would be a great educational opportunity and could be an economic development engine depending on where it is built. The location is beginning to be discussed. Pequot Lakes is the center between the Gull Lake and Whitefish Chains.

8. Chamber Update

Jenna Crawford reported the Governor's Deer Opener Community Expo will be held November 3 at the Breezy Point Resort.

9. BLAEDC Update

Sheila Haverkamp reported BLAEDC hired a new employee for workforce issues, recruiting new talent. She has also been talking with Nancy Malecha regarding how to market Pequot Lakes.

10. City of Jenkins Update

Mayor Lubke reported "Life is good in Jenkins".

11. Other Business

There was no other business.

12. Adjourn

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 9:24 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Dawn Bittner
Zoning Specialist