

**MEETING OF THE PEQUOT LAKES  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION  
TUESDAY, JULY 18, 2023**

Members Present: Chair Lottman; Commissioners Becklin, Hallan, and Holley

Members Absent: Commissioner Lelwica

Others Present: Angie Duus, City Clerk/Treasurer; Scott Pederson, City Council Liaison; Kurt Stumpf, Pequot Lakes School District Superintendent; Mark Jurchen

1. Call Meeting to Order

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

2. Consider Agenda

**COMMISSIONER HOLLEY MOVED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS PRESENTED. COMMISSIONER HALLAN SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION CARRIED 4-0.**

3. Approve EDC Minutes

**COMMISSIONER HALLAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE MAY 16, 2023, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MINUTES AS PRESENTED. COMMISSIONER HOLLEY SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION CARRIED 4-0.**

4. City Council Update

Chair Lottman stated they discussed updating the Highway 371 sign and updating the business directory on the City website at the Council meeting. He said the Council directed the EDC to investigate some pricing on updating the City website and marketing and bring some recommendations to the Council.

5. School Update

Mr. Stumpf stated they had a Safe Routes to School presentation from Tad Erickson from Region 5 at the School Board meeting and it was approved. He said if the City would like he could set up a presentation here as well. He said it does not require other entities to approve but it does help the final process. Council Liaison Pederson stated the City is trying to figure out a good route with natural traffic flows with pedestrian traffic thriving too. He stated one focus is for a bike trail and walking lane that gets people from the schools to the park area and safely across Patriot. EDC consensus was they did not need to hear the presentation.

Mr. Stumpf said the School Board did vote to have 2 ballot questions. He said it will be a special election in November. He said the first ballot question will be a capital projects levy for technology and transportation vehicles. He said in order to be fiscally responsible with adding square footage for classrooms, early

childhood or an auditorium they school better have some money to pay for these costs because he has seen some schools go into a hardship doing projects. Mr. Stumpf stated the second ballot question is contingent upon question one passing. He said question two is the seventy-six-million-dollar bond question. He stated they do not want to create spaces they cannot afford to pay the operating costs for. He stated they are getting communication tools ready for to present to the public.

Mr. Stumpf stated the school had eight new students come in over the weekend. He said they know a good portion of the kids coming in but don't always know the kids that leave until the first day of school when the records requests come. He said they are monitoring and Kindergarten is still a bit low and would love to see ten to fifteen more enroll. He said they are at about eighty-three right now. He stated the special program of Patriot Academy for the bridge between early childhood and Kindergarten has fifteen kids and last year they only had ten or eleven. He stated the parents really appreciated it and they got great feedback about the program.

Mr. Stumpf said they added a full-time staff member, Joanna O'Neil to internships and to reach out to businesses and building collaborations with the. He said it was previously a part-time position. Discussion ensued about getting kids involved in Government like with the Junior Council Member and School Board reps.

6. Chamber Update

Chair Lottman said he tried reaching out to Nichole Heinen at the Chamber about helping to update the City's business directory. Discussion ensued about having more than just Chamber members businesses on the City website. They suggested inquiring with the school to see if it could be a school project or internship. Tyler Glynn stated he has an intern for the summer and said they could build off of the City's business list and the Chambers businesses. Discussion ensued about only including business that pay taxes in the City of Pequot Lakes.

7. Hubbard Radio Marketing

Nikki Lyter Digital Brand Strategist with Hubbard Radio said they wanted to come meet with the EDC because they have met with Rich Spiczka the City Administrator several times primarily about the Heart of the Good Life. She said the initiative started about five years ago but there has not been a lot of effort since then to push the message out and bring that opportunity to specifically business owners. Ms. Lyter said they have come up with some ideas on how to market the HOTGL to Key business leaders and they could help grow the tax base. Kim Churack said with e-mail marketing they can target these people. She said one thing that we had talked about and this is in relation somewhat to the website is a landing page that's dedicated to the HOTGL because when someone google's it you are brought to the Pequot Lakes City website and it kind of gets lost in the shuffle. She said it desperately needs to be updated since it is information from 2018. Ms. Lyter said they primarily have two big strategies for B2B marketing and that's e-mail marketing and social LinkedIn ads. She said right now if

someone knows or has heard of the HOTGL they have to search for that otherwise there is no other way people know about it. She also stated looking at the website as a whole it is not user friendly and you have to dig to find information. She said investing a ton of money into developing the website is not going to help people find the HOTGL, there has to be marketing done as well.

Ms. Lyter said they do design work but not signs. Ms. Churack said 2060 digital is a part of the Hubbard company and if someone wants to do social marketing they have a group of people where that is all they do and Nikki does monthly check ups to find out what is and isn't working. Ms. Lyter left information with the EDC on examples of work they have done for other cities and asked the EDC if it is something they would like to explore and bring to Council. Chair Lottman suggested having a meeting possibly prior to next month's meeting to discuss what they would like to see and invite Hubbard back and potentially other companies. Mark Hallan suggested updating the website to show the progress that is currently happening in the HOTGL and then marketing. Discussion ensued about the current City website.

8. Small Cities Development Program (SCDP) Grant Proposal

Gail Levenson from Widseth said her and Tim Houle believe they should approach the grant with a two-step model. She suggested doing the online survey for city residents and the income survey to actually see the interest in the community and then we could pursue doing an application if the interest is there or if not you can decide not to continue at that point. She said doing a little blurb to the public probably would not give them enough information.

Discussion ensued about it being a huge commitment and that there should be a point of contact dedicated to the program and they do not think they have that person. Discussion also ensued about the amount that would go to each homeowner and with the rising costs of everything that it seems it is a waste of time for such a small amount going to each homeowner. Ms. Levenson explained that the purpose is to help with health and safety improvements and not intended to rehabbing as a whole.

Mark Jurchen stated the EDC may have to decide between two issues. He said the first is a social issue because you are making the home safer and a better place to live. He said the second is an economic issue and is the City getting the best return on investment. He said if you are looking at a \$300,000-\$500,000 increase of value on a property you are only looking at a \$2,000-\$3,000 increase of tax revenue to the City.

**COMMISSIONER HALLAN MOVED TO REMOVE ITEM 8: SMALL CITIES DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM GRANT FROM THE FUTURE AGENDAS FOR 2023 AND REVISIT IN 2024 IF DEEMS NECESSARY. COMMISSIONER BECKLIN SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION CARRIED 4-0.**

9. CR 11 Update

No information was presented. Chair Lottman said to leave it on the agenda for the next month. Discussion ensued on whether the City should be involved with a developer on the road in the development.

10. Business Directory & City Website

Chair Lottman said this topic was covered pretty well in the Hubbard discussion.

11. Workforce Housing

Mark Jurchen present pictures of projects happening on Brown and Oak, a cabin on Sibley, Sibley Hills four plex and duplex and housing by the preserve. He stated these homes will bring in some good tax revenue for the City and that it is good to see these beautiful homes being built in our City. He said the final plat for the Gardner/Makowsky plat at the end of Lilac Drive with more buildable lots should be approved soon. He said the apartment complex is still in process. Discussion ensued on the HOTGL and marketing.

12. Fading Hwy 371 Sign

Commissioner Hallan said the sign people said to make it a valuable sign you need to make the sign changeable for events and seasons. He said a new vinyl covering both sides would cost about \$1,500-1,800. He said if it was event based the signs could be repurposed and reused. He said after the sign was put up no one followed through with taking care of it and making the changes. He said someone needs to decide how it's going to be budgeted and change it out. Chair Lottman said hiring a marketing company that can come out with content and timeline and posting on social media. He said an entire plan needs to be established and then presented to the City Council. Discussion ensued about the Chamber initially being involved in building the sign.

13. EDC Goals

Chair Lottman said he went through the goals and the EDC has given the City two recommendations and the Council is firing back which is good. He said the EDC is learning what the City needs and there is actually movement happening. Council Liaison Pederson said he is happy to see things happening.

14. BLAEDC Update

Tyler Glynn said BLAEDC is finalizing the childcare grants and are just waiting on licensing for some of the grant recipients. He said they need to show proof of license before receiving the grant. He said there are more childcare slots being created and it was certainly needed. He said they are tracking some of the legislation right now and they should find out between August 1<sup>st</sup> to August 15<sup>th</sup> what kind of funding there will be trickling down into our communities. He said they are looking at some of the infrastructure dollars going to MNDOT and to see what will be provided to the overpass on 371-210. Mr. Glynn said Baxter has \$58 million dedicated to the project. He said they are hoping to get more funding for childcare. He said he had a discussion with the new MN DEED Commissioner, Matt Varilek, and Mr. Varilek is familiar with this area so hopefully some of the need for the area will be identified. He said they are really trying to nail down the language behind the cannabis so if anybody wants some light reading

there is 347 pages of it.

Mr. Glynn said the owners of the apartment complex just closed on their Baxter property and is putting out the press release. He said now they will be moving forward here. He said the CEO has been in the area the last two weeks and he has met with him and Pequot's apartment complex is the next thing he would like to get nailed down. He said they received some funding through the Housing Trust Fund. He said six of their people few in and attended that meeting. Mr. Glynn said they came to Pequot and met with Rich Spiczka on the property most of the day and they are excited to get started on that project.

Mr. Glynn said he will have BLAEDC's intern tackle the business directory and get some contacts to the web design world. He said if somebody really wants to dig into that and get some quotes out here so you know what you're dealing with and what you can and can't manage. He suggested looking at the BLAEDC website as it is very easy to use and manageable. He said they use Brad Raymond out of Baxter and he can get the EDC his contact information.

15. Other Business

No other business.

16. Adjourn

**COMMISSIONER HOLLEY MOVED TO ADJORN THE MEETING.  
COMMISSIONER HALLAN SECONDED THE METTING. MOTION CARRIED  
4-0.**

The meeting adjourned at 9:09 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Angie Duus  
City Clerk/Treasurer