

**MEETING OF THE PEQUOT LAKES
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2024 DRAFT**

Members Present: Chair Lottman; Commission Member Becklin

Members Absent: Commission Members Hallan, Holley, Lewica

Others Present: Angie Duus, City Administrator; Traci Pederson, Zoning Administrator; Nick Roy, Public Works Lead; Scott Pederson, City Council Liaison; Mark Jurchen, Tyler Glynn, Kurt Stumpf, Kyle N., Corey Bergquist;

1. Call Meeting to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Lottman at 8:04 a.m. Seeing that only two members of the EDC were present, this will be an informational meeting without any motions/votes happening: no quorum.

2. Consider Agenda

Chair Lottman stated we'll talk through items noted on the agenda, for informational purposes.

3. Approve EDC Minutes

We'll hold on approving January 2024 meeting minutes until the March EDC meeting is held.

4. School Update

Kurt Stumpf provided an update and presented a new format of monthly communication called "Patriot Connections", which was a back-to-back newsletter they've created in-house and will place in high traffic local businesses for community members to read through. They're working to connect with all community members in Pequot, not just families that have students in the district.

Kurt went on to talk about their adoption of a new strategic plan, which includes a new commitment statement: *A Place to Connect, Learn, and Thrive*. There are four pillars in the new plan: 1) Welcoming, Safe, and Supportive Environment; 2) Connections; 3) Personal Growth & Success; and 4) Facilities & Grounds. Additional information may be found on their website on the new Strategic Plan and pillars within the plan. They're tracking and monitoring data internally vs. spending funds with an external group to gather the same data.

Chair Lottman and Kurt will find time to meet with the school's Work Based Learning Coordinator along with others they deem necessary to find ways to work together and build more working relationships with local businesses, staff and students. The EDC may be able to help/highlight these happenings on their upcoming website, Economic Growth.

Kurt talked about the lack of funding they receive as a school district. It can be extremely complicated and unfair amongst school districts. He stated the Pequot Lakes School District ranks 318 out of 328 school districts in MN for per pupil revenue funding. If they received the state average, they'd have much more in their budget to work with. Even with this lack of funding, Kurt wanted to make sure to highlight that the community is aware that they're still producing high-quality outcomes for our students and operating within their means. There's potential of another ask for voters for additional funds for capital projects so they can stay competitive.

Implemented Patriot Academy awhile back (a Kindergarten program). This program has shown the strides they were looking for. This is a program that is best for the community based on results already provided.

5. Chamber Update

Not present this month. Nichole provided a quick update via email which Traci read aloud:

- a. The chamber is currently working on raising funds to paint the bobber water tower. We have not started to run the campaign yet, but you will see more about this in the very near future. So far, the chamber and the city have both put in \$10k towards the painting. We are at \$20k and need approximately \$80k.

Tyler Glynn and Mark Jurchen talked about the history of how the Chamber became involved in paying for the upkeep for the bobber water tower. There was a time in which it was talked about getting rid of the water tower all together, the town saw value in keeping it – it was a noticeable landmark for the community and visitors. At that time the Chamber said they'd take care of the maintenance for the next 26 years (we're at about year 24 now).

Scott Pederson said the tower was repainted about 10 years ago and the city paid for the full amount at that time.

Mark J. stated the city has some challenges coming up regarding the budget to keep things up to date and in good working order. We have several buildings that are on the National Register that are owned by the city that are going to take and require a lot of maintenance. The Historical Society is looking to get assistance with the Cole Memorial Building While it was recently repainted, there's issues within the building that need to be taken care of. The question for many is do we get rid of these historical buildings/structures or do we maintain them. When the Chamber said they'd take on the maintenance of the water tower years ago, they didn't realize inflation would be that drastic, and here we are today with the challenges of costs.

6. Workforce Housing Update

Mark Jurchen stated nothing much to report on here. He met with Angie and Traci to see if he could be of any assistance with any projects. Trailside will be the biggest project, which he'll work through as things come about. The

apartment building and talk happening with the lot at United Methodist Church – Mark will continue to be involved and aware of these areas.

Corey Bergquist talked about Work Force Housing and his desire to bring this to the area, particularly in the Trailside Estates development. Corey expressed his passion on this topic. He's looking to build homes that would sell for approximately \$230k. Corey wants to build quality homes with integrity, not cheap homes that won't last in the end. He'd like to see this happen soon before costs go up once again (right now he's charging \$140-\$160 sq ft). Workforce Housing is a home that someone outright pays for, there's no 'help' along the way with another entity paying a portion of the home. Corey is from the area and wants to see Pequot Lakes continue to grow and allow the average homeowner to live here.

Mark J. and Corey to connect more on Workforce Housing and how they can work together. Corey said he'll continue to attend the EDC meetings as he's able to stay in the loop and have an understanding of where things are at and where they're going, particularly with Trailside Estates.

7. EDC Goals

Nothing to report currently.

8. BLAEDC Update

Tyler Glynn stated he and Commission Lewica have met and will continue to meet regarding the website, they'll bring their findings to the EDC, including pricing to get things off the ground. Of the branding/marketing groups that Tyler reached out to previously one stated they're not interested in working with a city municipality. He's working with two others to meet and find out what they'll charge – that meeting will be held with Angie as well, City Administrator. If these companies don't work out, we can look to see what some local businesses can do for us. More to come.

9. Trailside Estates Update

Traci to draft a letter to all current homeowners, our Attorney will approve the letter – this will be step one. The ultimate new goal is to have everything done by October 1, mainly due to the annual taxes that the current homeowners would have to pay up front before a final plat is recorded. We're very willing to work with a developer if that opportunity presents itself.

10. Marketing and Branding Presentations

All marketing/branding is on hold until Tyler and Michelle find out more.

Regarding the billboard – Tyler and Michelle will present in March what they've come up with so the EDC can move forward.

Another thought was to just re-create what's currently up so it's at least fresh and not faded, this would give us time to find what truly makes sense for the new look/billboard.

City Council Update

Council Member Scott Pederson present to provide updates. Approximately \$10k in funds have become available for EDC since the last Council meeting.

11. Other Business

No other business.

13. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 9:03 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Traci Pederson
Zoning Administrator