

**MEETING OF THE PEQUOT LAKES
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
TUESDAY, AUGUST 18, 2020**

Members Present: Chair Lindholm; Commissioners Holly, Lelwica, Rieck attended virtually via Zoom; Commissioners Becklin and Lubke attended in person.

Members Absent: Commissioners Crochet

Others Present: Angie Duus, City Clerk/Treasurer; Jennifer Peterson, Administrative Assistant; and Mark Jurchen attended in person; Tyler Glynn, BLAEDC and Katie Wasserman attended via zoom.

1. Call Meeting to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Lindholm at 8:03 a.m.

2. Consider Agenda

COMMISSIONER LUBKE MOVED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS PRESENTED. COMMISSIONER LELWICA SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION CARRIED 6-0.

ROLL CALL: LINDHOLM – AYE; HOLLEY – AYE; LELWICA – AYE; REICK – AYE; LUBKE – AYE; BECKLIN – AYE.

3. Approve EDC Minutes

COMMISSIONER RIECK MOVED TO APPROVE THE JULY,19 2020 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MINUTES. COMMISSIONER LUBKE SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

ROLL CALL: LINDHOLM – AYE; LELWICA – AYE; REICK – AYE; LUBKE – AYE; BECKLIN – AYE.

4. CARES Act Funding

Ms. Duus gave an overview of the expenditures the City is considering for our CARES Act funding. Commissioner Lubke inquired about improving the air quality within City Hall. Ms. Duus stated we are getting a quote for a possible air exchanger or a new H/VAC system in City Hall. Chair Lindholm inquired the amount of funding the City received, Ms. Duus responded \$176,000. Ms. Duus stated if the City does not utilize the funds by November 15, 2020, the remaining funds go back to the County. Mr. Glynn then stated that if the County does not utilize the funds they would be returned to the State then onto the Federal Government.

5. Workforce Housing Study

Chair Lindholm shared that at the July 19, 2020 meeting the Commission was presented the information regarding the Workforce Housing Study, which allows us to figure out our next steps. Chair Lindholm stated we, as a City and Commission, are heading in the right way to start

6. Pequot Lakes Housing Inventory – Mark Jurchen

Mr. Jurchen presented the housing inventory of vacant lots and homes that either need to be rehabbed or torn down to create better housing. Mr. Jurchen stated they tried to identify two areas within the housing inventory: (1) those with existing water and sewer and (2) those with at least a paved road within a short distance to keep investment by city for infrastructure at a minimum.

Commissioner Lelwica said she would like to start by thanking Mr. Jurchen for putting together this inventory. She stated the City of Pequot Lakes lacks housing for individuals who work within our City. Commissioner Lelwica would like to explore possible incentives for builders and/or homeowners to rehab their homes or build new construction.

Commissioner Reick stated the City of Pequot Lakes did try to apply for the Small Cities Grant Program, however there was a lack of interest for the program. The City of Pequot Lakes will attempt to get the program again next year for our residents.

Mr. Jurchen stated we need to consider engaging partners such as government, realtors, and contractors to try to brainstorm on possible ways to improve our housing inventory within Pequot Lakes.

Chair Lindholm inquired about the Preserve Golf Course development. Mr. Jurchen stated that there is a 14-unit development going up there, however, we need to see where our moneys need to be spent.

Mr. Jurchen said that there needs to be a look at how we can bring in a larger tax base. Chair Lindholm inquired how do we get to individuals who own multiple lots before they list these properties. Mr. Jurchen said if the task force could possibly start talks with property owners now, in the future there could be a real opportunity for the City.

Commissioner Lubke inquired if this should be more the responsibility of the Housing & Redevelopment Authority (HRA) than the EDC to find the housing options. Mr. Jurchen stated one of the key elements of the housing inventory is to involve the Housing & Redevelopment Authority in the task force to not just manage the properties but to start researching housing opportunities within the City of Pequot Lakes.

7. School Update

Chair Lindholm shared that the School Board has approved recommended plan to start the year which is that K-6 kids will attend in school every day and grades 7-12 will be 2 days in school with 3 days of distance learning to be under the 50% capacity threshold. The school district will receive about \$400,000.00 from CARES Act Funding. Which allowed us to hire a new teacher and a couple paras to assist in working this plan. The school has also had to purchase more cleaning products and PPE to keep the properties clean and safe.

Chair Lindholm that the district is trying to figure out how the band and choirs can perform along with following the MN High School League's rules for all fall sports.

Chair Lindholm stated that the School Board has 4 seats available for the election this year and have had 8 (3 incumbents and 5 new) people apply for the seats. The School Board has also voted to start the task force discussions regarding the Heart of the Good Life sports complex if the land for the project is donated to the District from the City and funding options considered for the project be voter approved referendum dollars, rather than non-voter approved dollars.

8. Chamber Update

Katie Wasserman wanted to state she is willing to help with a marketing or informational packet for the housing inventory/real estate development. She also spoke with a realtor that is interested in getting into the Real Estate Development sign of housing.

The Chamber was hit pretty hard due to COVID, they were not eligible for any funding and 20% reduction of hours. The Chamber Dinner will be held on August 20, 2020 for a fundraiser.

Light the Night will be the Monday following Thanksgiving. She is currently working on adding a couple things for the evening such as candy canes, hot chocolate and trying to secure a tree lighting drone. Lifetime members will also be able to hold individual events during the evening.

Ms. Wasserman stated she is working on a new business flyer with the events, picture and a map for 2021-2022.

She stated the Chamber is revamping the conference room for an inviting space for our members as a free, private option for meeting space. Non Chamber members will also be able to utilize the space for a low fee.

9. BLAEDC Update

Mr. Glynn stated he met with the City regarding CARES Act funding. He has been meeting with all Municipalities to discuss the best way to utilize the funds.

BLAEDC will be working with the County to allow for businesses with 50 or less employees apply for a grant of \$10,000 starting today through September 15th. There are specific perimeters for the grant: COVID related expenses (i.e. payroll, rent, utilities if forced to shut down), expenses must have incurred from March 1st through December 1st and cannot be a budgeted item.

Mr. Glynn explained that BLAEDC has asked each municipality give back a portion of their CARES Act funding to the county to add to the allowable grant money to area businesses. Each municipality that gives to the County will be listed and those funds will be distributed first. Once the "city's" funds are depleted, the County funds will be utilized.

Mr. Glynn stated that he, 2 County Commissioners, a County staff and BLAEDC executives will go through each application. If the application is eligible, the applicant will receive the funds. The County will administer all funds.

Mr. Glynn stated the Brainerd HRA's preliminary budget is to allocate \$500,000 into their Housing Trust Fund in 2021. Commissioner Leiwica stated she and Mr. Jurchen would love to get together with the Brainerd HRA to discuss our housing development and inventory.

10. City of Jenkins Update

Commissioner Lubke said Jenkins new city sign is almost complete and the County Highway 145 project is close to completion.

11. Other Business

No other business.

12. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Peterson
Administrative Assistant