

**MEETING OF THE PEQUOT LAKES
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2019**

Members Present: Chair Lindholm; Commissioners Clement, Crochet, Holley, Lelwica, Lubke, and Rieck

Others Present: Nancy Malecha, City Administrator; Angie Duus, City Clerk/Treasurer; Dawn Bittner, Zoning Specialist; Sheila Haverkamp, BLAEDC; Scott Pederson, City Council Liaison; Katie Wasserman, Pequot Chamber of Commerce; Mark Jurchen

1. Call Meeting to Order

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

2. Consider Agenda

COMMISSIONER RIECK MOVED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS PRESENTED. COMMISSIONER LELWICA SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

3. Approve EDC Minutes

COMMISSIONER RIECK MOVED TO APPROVE THE AUGUST 20, 2019 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MINUTES. COMMISSIONER LELWICA SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

4. Business Park Lot Sale & Project - Dotty Holdings

Nancy Malecha stated the information is the same as it was when presented in July and the only update she has is the intent is to move Dotty Brothers Construction headquarters from where they are existing in the Industrial Park to this new location.

Shelia Haverkamp stated that Joe Dotty has said that he is passing the opportunity on to Dotty Holdings LLP. She stated that the City is dealing with reputable family and as long as we put a purchase agreement together that makes them stand by doing a significant investment with conditions that benefits the City versus selling the property we should proceed. Discussion ensued about the benefits with Dotty Holdings LLP to buy the land and parameters in the purchase agreement if they do not perform that the City could get the property back. Ms. Malecha stated that the purchase agreement is written that they have until December 31st, 2020 to do with the property as intended or it does revert back to the City. Discussion ensued about it being currently being unclear on what the intent of the plan is for the property.

Chair Lindholm inquired if this is something the EDC approves or if it is something the City Council approves. Ms. Malecha stated that the Council approves the purchase agreement and that it is on their October 1st agenda. She also stated there is a resolution that council has to adopt.

Discussion ensued about landscaping and requiring them to use the Heart of the Good Life zoning standards. Ms. Malecha stated that those zoning standards have not been approved at the City Council level or the Planning Commission level at this time, therefore we cannot impose something that's not approved. She stated that it is light industrial and they would have to abide by those zoning standards in the existing business park.

Discussion ensued about obtaining a design plan from Dotty Holdings LLP and allowing the City Administrator to approve it. Then after approval bringing the plan to Council for final approval.

COMMISSIONER HOLLEY MOVED TO RECOMMEND TO THE CITY COUNCIL THAT THEY MOVE FORWARD WITH THE PURCHASE AGREEMENT WITH DOTTY HOLDINGS CONTINGENT ON AN ACCEPTABLE SITE PLAN REVIEWED AND APPROVED BY THE CITY ADMINISTRATOR. COMMISSIONER RIECK SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

5. Sports Fields & Community Use Facility Update

Nancy Malecha stated that at the last EDC meeting the Commission made a recommendation for the City Council to consider the proposal from ICS Consulting to move forward with listening sessions and a process timeline for the athletic field's complex. The Council approved the ICS Consulting contract at the September meeting. Ms. Malecha said that her and Chair Lindholm met with ICS Consulting and came up with a timeline as to how to reach out to different community groups. She said they also came up with a set of dates for different meetings that will be sent out to various groups and individuals this week. Ms. Malecha said she is hoping the first meeting will be on October 1st at 5:45pm between the City Council and the School Board to get these two governing bodies together so that they are all on the same page and can hear the information from ICS directly. Ms. Malecha listed our various meetings that will be held to get the information out to various people and groups. She stated that these listening sessions will last approximately one hour and ICS Consulting will be facilitating the discussions.

Chair Lindholm stated that no one should feel locked into any one of the meetings, he said if you cannot make it to one to please attend another. Chair Lindholm said the meetings are going to have the same information. He stated that in the packet is a graphical timeline that shows the next steps after the meetings are determining a steering committee and then exploring funding options and communications. He stated then in November and December they will be creating options, getting feedback, and creating a final plan. Chair Lindholm stated that it is about a four month process. He thanked the City Council for hearing the EDC's recommendations.

Discussion ensued about getting the word out to ensure the public is informed. Ms. Malecha said she has started a list of media sources that she is going to

reach out to which includes Facebook, the newspaper, press releases, email blasts, a utility billing mailer, the School, the Chamber, the City's website, community sign, various bulletin boards and internal calendars.

Commissioner Lehwica asked if they could get signs to put up around town in high traffic areas to help notify the public of the meetings. She also questioned how that could be paid for. Ms. Malecha said that she would have to look into it. City Council Liaison Scott Pederson thank Nathan Norton with ICS Consulting for donating his time and also suggested that the \$3,500 in the EDC budget be used to pay for the signs.

Discussion ensued about keeping the focus about what the goals of the listening sessions are. It was discussed that the goals of the EDC are increasing economic activity and revenue in the City Pequot Lakes and fulfilling the Schools need for athletic fields. Also discussed was engaging the public and their vision.

6. Intelligent Community Forum Assessment – Shawn

Commissioner Crochet talked about a broadband conference that he attended where concerns, desires, and ambitions with broadband were expressed by a group of people. They discussed what broadband can do to help communities by gaining new businesses, growth, and new housing developments. He recommended we apply to get ranked as an Intelligent Community as the Brainerd lakes area instead of an individual city. Commissioner Crochet stated it would be interesting to see how we would compare to other communities and it would help the area see where we are and what improvements are needed to become the top twenty of Intelligent Communities.

Sheila Haverkamp from BLAEDC talked about six primary areas the community needs to focus on to be considered an Intelligent Community. She said there is a conference coming to the area in October and the leader of the Intelligent Community Program will be a keynote speaker. Ms. Haverkamp believes this is an opportunity to continue learning and we should continue to pay attention on how to make our area as robust as possible when it comes to broadband and fiber communications.

Commissioner Crochet talked to contractor with a home north of Leech Lake and that the contractor said he is able to get higher speed fiber there that is faster than speeds in Silicon Valley in California. The contractor stated that he has been working from home more that in California due to this. Commission Crochet stated that if we can get higher speeds in the Lakes Area will get more people that are working from home or telecommuting and he believes this is the way of the future.

Discussion ensued that the goal of the assessment is to help direct us to where we need to be and to try to get the Intelligent Community designation. Ms. Haverkamp stated that there is no monetary value that comes with the designation but it is a way to focus on remaining intelligent, to see how we

compare to others across the world, and show us what we need to do to keep moving forward. She said if we end up in she believes the final seven they will send a team to the area and dig deeper into the Intelligent Community with us.

Discussion ensued about who is going to attend the broadband conference in October at Grandview and the benefits of doing the assessment as the Brainerd Lakes area and not as a solo City. Chair Lindholm said the EDC will look at this again in November after the conference and determine if they need to do anything with this topic.

7. Pequot Lakes Incentive Program

Nancy Malecha informed the EDC that a chart of potential incentives from the City of Brainerd is in their packet. She stated that at the last EDC meeting it was discussed to potentially put something similar together for the City of Pequot Lakes. Chair Lindholm asked if this is something that the EDC would create and send a proposal to the Council for discussion. Ms. Malecha said yes and to possibly bring in the Planning Commission as well if they are talking about waving permit fees. Discussion ensued about incentives being a part of the Small Cities Development Program Grant.

Shelia Haverkamp explained that the City of Brainerd has a geographic designated area that they wanted to encourage economic development in so they asked what they could do to add enhanced incentives to encourage private sector investment in that area. She stated that over the years the Pequot Lakes Economic Development Committee wanted the city to start contemplating something like this for the downtown area. Ms. Haverkamp discussed possible areas to offer incentives that would benefit the City, creating incentives that are acceptable to all community leaders and marketing these incentives. She talked about Pequot Lakes possible having the Small Cities Development Program grants as a financial incentive to encourage people to apply for projects to get the incentives. Ms. Haverkamp discussed having Bruce Buxton coming to an EDC meeting to discuss the City of Brainerd's incentive program since he was a key individual in putting together the Brainerd incentive plan.

Commissioner Lelwica suggested possibly having two separate incentive programs; one for housing and another for business development. Ms. Malecha reminded the EDC that we're in the midst of the workforce housing task force that was presented to them a few months ago and that they should have more information to them by the end of this year. She suggested waiting until you get that information or commingling the two together somehow. Commissioner Lelwica stated that the EDC could potentially have the workings of an incentive program talked about and then maybe those could be married together.

Discussion ensued about potential geographic areas, the downtown area or Grow Zone, and gaining the support from the community to implement the incentive plan. Chair Lindholm asked Ms. Haverkamp to invite Bruce Buxton and suggested that him, Commissioner Lelwica and Ms. Haverkamp get together to

discuss the incentive plan more. He asked to see if in the next couple of months that they start to frame something that sounds like a reasonable proposal for our Grow Zone area that has been called out in our Comp Plan. Ms. Malecha stated that she will reach out to the City Planner too and get his thoughts on this as well because the Planning Commission is working on updating the Downtown Plan at this time as well.

8. School Update

Chair Lindholm stated that the football and tennis teams are winning. He said they are hiring three teaching positions at Eagle View. He said one is due to growth and numbers came in higher than expected at the primary level which he states is important to know from an economic development viewpoint. Chair Lindholm stated that there has been a four or five year pattern of consistent move-ins into the middle school and high school but the Kindergarten to second grade class sizes all jumped up between ten and fifteen kids each which blew away the schools class size guidelines. Discussion ensued about open enrollment and growth in the Pequot School District.

Commission Holley praised Chair Lindholm and the School on what a good job they are doing. She talked about how people searching for homes always ask about places in the Pequot Lakes school district.

9. Chamber Update

Katie Wasserman said the Chamber sent off a survey about doing an event in the winter and they only got 20 responses. She stated that they are partnering with the Public Works Department and received approval from the Park Commission to Light the Night and Trailside Park. Ms. Wasserman said they are hoping to have businesses sponsor a light sculpture that is placed in the park so that when people come to town, they see the business. She stated that they have two sponsors already and that they are trying to bring a little more excitement into town by giving people a destination to have along with shopping. Ms. Wasserman said it will also bring great benefits for the businesses because she will be promoting them social media. She stated that they already have an article that's going to appear in the newspaper and she will be doing community focus on WJJY. Discussion ensued about a date and that they are expecting all sponsorships by November 1st. Ms. Wasserman said they would like to have a lighting ceremony once all the sponsorships are in.

Ms. Wasserman stated that the Brainerd Chamber is working on a new website and Pequot Chamber should get a new one in February which will function a lot better. She said it will be easier to navigate and easier to look at the Business Directory listing to find a business location.

Ms. Wasserman said she is working with the Lion's Club and Crow Wing Energized to bring a bike repair station to the Chamber building. She said that in the last two summers they have sent probably 25 people to other towns because

they needed to tighten something on their bike or change a tire. Ms. Wasserman said it is a small number compared to the 20,000 people that come through the Chamber doors but a bike station would make Pequot Lakes appear to be a more bike friendly town especially since we have the bike trail running through town.

Ms. Wasserman stated that the Chamber is also implementing a new program called Look for a Book to encourage families that are in town to come to business locations to find a hidden book. She said they are going to distribute ten books to the businesses and locations that want to be a part of it and people can come in to find the book, bring it home to read and then hide it in another location. Ms. Wasserman stated that each location will have a sticker that says whether or not they are participating.

Ms. Wasserman stated that the business after hours on October 3rd is at Grand Casino Mille Lacs from 4:30 – 6:00 pm and they will be serving appetizers.

10. BLAEDC Update

Shelia Haverkamp informed the EDC that she has submitted her resignation with BLAEDC but she will be finishing out the year. She stated that BLAEDC has put together a transition team to replace her. The EDC congratulated Ms. Haverkamp and thanked her for all of her support over the years.

11. City of Jenkins Update

No update was given.

12. Other Business

Chair Lindholm stated that on October 12th from 6:00-9:00 pm at the Legion is Octoberfest and it is a first annual party and you're all invited. He stated that tickets are \$15 and can be purchased from him, Ms. Wasserman or Ms. Malecha. Chair Lindholm stated that there will be a cash bar, silent auctions, hors d'oeuvres, and great music with Dos Boys. He stated that this is a fundraiser for the Greater Pequot Lakes Community Foundation which is a fiscal pipeline to local community projects and efforts around economic development, quality of life, and workforce development.

a. October 15th Welcoming Communities IDI Celebration

Chair Lindholm stated that he will be attending the Welcoming Communities IDI Celebration on October 15th that is taking place at the Luminary Fern in the Northern Pacific Center. He has been asked to share a few things since the EDC did do the IDI a while back. He stated that the EDC has not taken on the next step and they need to talk about how to be a Welcoming Community in the near future. Chair Lindholm stated that the school district is working very hard to make sure that every kid feels welcome in the school district.

Discussion ensued about making sure people feel welcome regardless of where they come from.

City Council Liaison Scott Pederson brought up the construction going on downtown for the flag display and wanted to add a reminder that the display was donated for \$150,000. He commented that somebody thought well enough about our town to say this is what they want to give and they see Pequot Lakes as a destination opportunity.

13. Adjournment

There being no further business, **COMISSIONER LELWICA MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. COMISSIONER CROCHET SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED 7-0.** The meeting adjourned at 9:12 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Angie Duus
City Clerk/Treasurer

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