

Economic Development Committee
Tuesday, February 23, 2016 – 4:30 p.m. - City Council Chambers

Members present: Morack, O’Connell, Steinhorst, Shaw, Romberg, Johnson, Asman and Schirpke. Tate and Bishop absent.

Also present: Administrator Hager, Ann Hunt (4:48), Scott Bellile, Jim Resick (4:37), Jessica Beckendorf, and Dave Thiel.

1. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Morack at 4:30 p.m. O’Connell/Steinhorst to adopt the agenda. Carried unanimously.
2. The Economic Development Committee convened a panel discussion of the following Economic Development Professionals from our area: Committee member Kitty Johnson from CAP Services, Jim Resick, UW Extension, Outagamie County, Jessica Beckendorf, UW Extension, Waupaca County and Dave Thiel, Executive Director for the Waupaca County Economic Development Corporation. Each of the above individuals introduced themselves and explained what role they play in developing our local economy. A wide ranging discussion occurred. Several topics were touched on including the following:
 - Jim Resick is leading a local effort to establish a regional entrepreneur network. One of the main questions we receive from prospective new business leaders is “What help is out there.” People do not know where to go for assistance. There are a lot of opportunities that new and existing businesses can take advantage of; it is just that they do not know where to start. It is hoped that a united and seamless web site can be developed where all of the existing opportunities for assistance can be made available. We need to get better coordination in place among ourselves. We need to build a network of resources that are already here. All present thought that this was a great undertaking for the region.
 - A question was asked of those present: “How do we attract business here.” Several attempts were made to answer this question including providing an incubator facility and also by supplying additional capital. It was generally agreed that attracting industry is not a game we can afford to play on our own. It is way too expensive and typically not productive. The best thing we can do is to try and attract people here and keep the people we have. Demographics are changing so much that we need to focus on making our community an attractive place for people to want to live and work. That is the best way to support our current industry and to attract future industry. We are likely not going to be able to convince people to start businesses here; rather people will come here because they want to. A good community becomes its own best promoter for attracting people and industry.
 - Think about our area’s major employers. How did they get started here in New London and the area? It was a very long time ago and it likely will not happen again. They were started by local families, some over 100 years ago. Now those industries have transitioned into ownership from around the world. These industries would most likely never locate here today. Think of the following and their history: Hillshire Farms, the Waupaca Foundry, and Sturm Foods. Hillshire is now owned by Tyson

Foods, Inc. Tyson has operations world-wide and has annual sales of over \$40 billion dollars. The Waupaca Foundry was started in Waupaca in 1871 and is now owned by Hitachi Metals with annual sales of \$7.8 billion dollars. Stur姆 Foods was founded in Manawa in 1905 and is owned by Treehouse Foods, a multi-national corporation with over \$2 billion in annual sales.

- The industries that have located here most recently did so almost exclusively because they are from here. Wohlt Cheese, EJ Metals and Northland Electric.
 - We are better served by working cooperatively as a region regarding the manufacturing segment of economic development.
3. The Committee reviewed the status of the Connect Communities program. The Connect Communities Committee has determined that their work on the mural project is over. They are looking at options to beautify the downtown. It was suggested that any future improvement endeavors for downtown directly involve the owners of the buildings. The future of the Connect Communities program will be further discussed.
 4. The City Billboard has been budgeted for re-facing and also lighting. The budget stands at \$19,500. It was the consensus of the Committee to invite Bill Zeinert from the company My Marketing Director back to talk with the Committee about digital marketing options. Before we spend substantial funds to update and light the billboard, we may be better served by looking into the world of digital marketing of the community. Bill will be invited to the March meeting.
 5. The Committee reviewed Kent's memo. Dave and Kent spoke about their visit to Missy Porath's class and their talk with Olivia Steingraber who is proposing a project to establish a New London template for the Snapchat web site. Olivia was given the go-ahead with her project. She will present the results of her work at a future meeting. Dave reported on his recent attendance at the economic outlook breakfast of the Fox Cities Regional Partnership. The region experiencing a labor shortage was a topic of concern. Laurie and Kitty agreed to consider this topic further for a future discussion at an Economic Development Committee meeting.
 6. The next regular Committee meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 29th. Bill Zeinert will be invited to attend the March meeting. We will still try and schedule in the new Chief Executive Officer for the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation, Mark Hogan. The Executive Director for the Transportation Development Association of Wisconsin, Craig Thompson has indicated that he would like to meet with the Committee as well.
 7. There being no public comment, the meeting adjourned at 6:15 pm.

Kent Hager
City Administrator