

Florence County Economic Development COMMITTEE MEETING

MISSION: EDC will retain, expand and recruit a diversified business population which provides broad and varied job opportunities while safeguarding the area's natural surroundings.

Date: June 24th, 2015

Time: Wednesday, 4:00 pm - 2nd Floor Conference Room – Courthouse

1. Call to order and roll call

The meeting was called to order by Chairman, L. Neuens. Members J. Bomberg, G. Steber, and L. Dzekute were present. J. Halada was excused. Director W. Gehlhoff and Ed Kelley were also present.

2. Approve agenda

The agenda was approved on a motion by G. Steber, L. Dzekute 2nd, motion carried.

3. Approve minutes

The minutes were approved on a motion by J. Bomberg, G. Steber 2nd, motion carried.

4. TIF District Update

Preliminary numbers from R&R Assessing show a sizable increase in value for the TID in 2015. Final numbers from the state Department of Revenue are available in August. Director is inquiring into the manufacturing growth detail as well since 1 Florence Hardwoods project is complete. Currently 2 TIF projects are complete, 2 are in the final building stages and the Assisted Living project is in development. Joe Bestor's TID cash flow spreadsheet was reviewed. This is a great tool to monitor TID going forward.

5. Economic Development as County Department

The group reviewed budget data, a draft job description and examples from other EDC entities to discuss the logic of Economic Development becoming a county department. After surveying 12 other northern counties, 1 out of the 12 (Rusk County) is structured with Economic Development as a county department. There are also 2 cities that function this way in the Fox Cities area. The TID, RLF loans and many other work items fall under county goals and accountability so there is reason to consider a different structure. On a motion by J. Bomberg, L. Dzekute, 2nd this item will move on to Audit & Budget. Motion Carried.

6. Update on other EDC Projects and Loan Program

The attached EDC Project Update was reviewed with committee members.

7. Board Member Concerns

L. Neuens asked how the Grain Store in Aurora is doing. Director will inquire. The group discussed how powerful the county GIS system is after seeing a presentation. Zoning could write an article to explain and describe this tool to the public.

8. Adjournment

On a motion by G. Steber, J. Bomberg 2nd, the meeting was adjourned. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Wendy Gehlhoff – FCEDC Director

EDC Project Update 6/24/15

- **RLF Loan Program**
 - 14 RLF loans in Fence, Florence, Tipler, Long Lake. Balance to loan out \$180,000. Loans are current.
- **Forest Products Industry Support**
 - Met with 4 of our 5 sawmills to discuss markets, workforce issues, raw material supply and ask if they will be part of our Grow North Hardwood Market expansion project. All four were willing.
 - CNNF SPA #1: Goods sale is nearly complete, rain has slowed the harvesting. Service work is partially complete with weather again causing delays.
 - 2nd SPA is on schedule to be signed in September. Good Neighbor Authority will reduce the need for these SPA projects, although road work cannot be done with GNA so SPA's would be a good tool.
 - Initial discussions to develop a Forest Industry Day for FHS students to get a hands on understanding of the industry careers and importance of the industry to our economy
- **Business Development and Entrepreneur Support**
 - Chamber newsletter detailed events and 2 new businesses: Longshot Bar & Grill and Superior Detailing.
 - Completed \$4,000 micro-loan process for Uncle Buck's Creations, monitored 3 other micro loans
 - Helped 4 other entrepreneurs locate business resources, regulatory info, site options and loan options
 - Helped Assisted Living facility developer with locations, builders, zoning change and funding options.
 - Working with Developer and hotel study person to locate potential hotel investors; presentations next.
- **TIF District (TID)**
 - Family Dollar building nearing completion. Store to open late July/August.
 - Grocery store assessment from R&R Assessing was \$250,000 higher than projected
 - Presented TID summary/update at May Towns Association meeting
 - Completed update on TID status and cash flow with Joe Bester to present at July Audit & Budget
- **Tourism and Website Projects**
 - Organized logistics, coordinated speakers, ensured trail access/signage, wrote press releases, wrote and recorded radio ads, created mailers, flyer and event program and MC'ed 50th Anniversary of the Wild Rivers Celebration weekend 6/12-6/14.
 - Writing and taping monthly radio ads re events/attractions in Florence County for 2 radio stations.
 - Worked with Pat Smith, Lori Moore and our Legislators to get DNR funding for WRIC back into budget.
 - Coordinated with Pat Smith, TORPEDOS students, Meg DallaPiazza and Statewide Fencing to create and implement the new Florence Bark Park behind the new RV Dump Station at the Visitor Center to get more US 2 travelers to stop and explore our community. Completing final publicity steps and signage.
 - Coordinating and promoting Badwater Bass Tourney July 11th with no Ski-ters show or band.
 - Helping a new Masons event at Keyes Peak on the morning of Summerfest by sharing posters/radio
- **Northwoods Rail Transit Commission (NRTC)**
 - Gathered support letters from 20 counties and several other entities to accompany US-DOT TIGER grant application that was submitted June 5th. Application is requesting \$4.8 million with \$1.2 million match from CN to build 50 log cars. Additional log cars may be built with possible match money from WI & MI.
 - Gathered support letters to WI Joint Finance Committee to support the WI match monies request.
 - Working with several entities to develop log car manufacturing in our region, possibly Niagara mill site.
- **Other Projects**
 - Continuing to provide support and industry input for Florence High School Fab Lab project to provide students with hands-on learning geared toward work readiness skills for businesses in our area.