

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: December 9th, 2015

Time: Wednesday, 5:00 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, L. Neuens and L. Dzekute were present. J. Halada was excused. Director W. Gehlhoff was 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. RLF Loan Application

An RLF loan application from Whisler Outdoors, LLC was reviewed. The Whisler family has a pending offer to purchase the Florence Sport & Bait shop. They plan to keep current jobs and share the store hours. They will be expanding the retail and service offerings. The loan request is for \$21,500 at 4% interest for a 12 year term. Collateral would be a 2nd position mortgage on the business property and UCC on inventory. This creates 2 FTE positions and leverages a \$63,750 State Bank of Florence loan and \$5,000 owner investment. On a motion by J. Bomberg, G. Steber 2nd the loan was approved and sent to full county board. Motion Carried.

5. Director Vacation Allocation

On a motion by J. Bomberg, G. Steber 2nd, the committee approved director's request to start county job with the 11 years she already served as economic development director being credited toward the county vacation days allowed. This will be forwarded to Personnel Committee for final approval. Motion carried.

6. Broadband survey data and next steps

The summary data from recent Florence broadband survey was reviewed. 27% of 279 respondents do not have high speed internet by choice because of cost or seasonal home or due to lack of access. Next step will be meetings with the providers to determine path forward and possible grant applications. Director will check with Dave Gribble re county service that may have already been mapped out.

7. EDC Project Updates

The attached EDC Project Update was reviewed with committee members.

8. Board Member Concerns

J. Bomberg mentioned that the Ken Laird memorial sign in the industrial park fell down and should be replaced. This was covered at Commission meeting too. Sign will be removed for now and a reference to Ken Laird memorial will be added to new industrial park signs planned for spring of 2016.

9. 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 December 9th, 2015

- **RLF Loan Program**
 - 13 RLF loans in Fence, Florence, Tipler, Long Lake. Balance to loan out \$201,000. One loan not current.
 - Sat through mandatory DOA training for next round of ever more cumbersome federal HUD reporting.
- **Forest Products Industry Support**
 - Received \$1,500 John Force Forestry Education grant to develop Forest Industry Day for FHS students (5th-12th grades) to get hands on understanding of the industry equipment, process and careers.
 - Sustainable Forestry Conference 4/21/16 Steering committee developing agenda ideas and speakers.
 - Grant for regional Wood Products marketing project has been reinstated by USFS from fire funds.
- **Business Development and Entrepreneur Support**
 - Hosted Hotel Investment Opportunity meeting 10/14/15. 9 people attended. Others requested study and proforma by email. Two parties have some interest, but not on fast track.
 - Working with DCH on pharmacy located in Florence Medical Clinic. TelePharm helping find business.
 - Helped 4 entrepreneurs locate business resources, regulatory info, site options and loan options.
 - Helping Assisted Living facility developer with survey monkey to gauge demand/interest for rooms
 - Submitted application for \$10,000 Catholic Diocese Economic Development Technical Assistance grant to do feasibility study and business plan for virtual business incubator to market locally made products.
 - Sent out Florence Township broadband survey and business surveys to whole county. Results will be reviewed to determine possible next steps with providers to consider pursuing a grant.
- **Florence High School/Public Fab Lab**
 - Working with 6 Fab Lab Industry Advisory businesses to determine skill sets needed, materials they can donate, any projects they'd like to propose, and scheduling tours of their businesses.
 - Planned Fab Lab Grand Opening and Open House event with FCSD Superintendent. Next Industry Advisory meeting is 12/15/15 from 1pm-3pm. Lab is open to public on Wednesday evenings.
 - Assisted teachers with \$1,000 WPS Innovative Educator grant appl. for color printer/scanner/copier.
- **TIF District (TID)**
 - This will be first year with increment (+11%) so working through details with County staff as needed.
- **Tourism and Website Projects**
 - Testified at Assembly bill (11/17) and Senate bill (12/8) public hearings to reinstate \$27,000 WI-DNR funding for their share of the employee cost for public information desk at visitor center.
 - Writing and taping monthly radio ads re events/attractions in Florence County for 2 radio stations.
 - Helped with PR for new Keyes Peak "Off the Chains" Disc Golf tournament. 24 teams from out of the area participated, so it drew in new folks who raved about the Keyes Peak Recreation area and facilities.
 - Wrote Chamber November newsletter and did PR for Christmas in Florence 12/5. 500 people attended.
- **Northwoods Rail Transit Commission (NRTC)**
 - Strategy work for draft letter to CN CEO requesting a meeting to get answers on IF we provide Actionable Shipper Data, WILL they consider leasing light density lines to short line rail companies.
 - Will pursue grants to fund data work, but will not submit until we have an answer from CN.
 - Delta and Marquette Counties joined so 22 counties strong with both states pushing for log car monies.
 - 2nd TIGER grant unsuccessful due to 'pending' match monies from state and no on ground infrastructure
- **Other Projects**
 - Time spent on EDC as county position and department details ie budget, job description, etc.