

Florence County Economic Development

COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

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: January 29th, 2014

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

1. Call to order & roll call

The meeting was called to order by Chairman G. Steber. Board members G. Steber, T. Bomberg, E. Wenger and C. Nelson were present along with FCEDC Director, W. Gehlhoff. S. McLain was excused.

2. Approve agenda

An amended agenda was approved with the addition of 4/d and Job Description review now listed as item #6 on a motion by E. Wenger, T. Bomberg 2nd, motion carried.

3. Approve minutes

The minutes were approved on a motion by T. Bomberg, E. Wenger 2nd, motion carried.

4. RLF Loan Program (discussion and/or action)

- a. **Current RLF loans – monthly/yearly payment status:** All loans are current with the exception of one on deferral and one asking for deferral. Huth's Fence Post loan was paid in full due to sale of business.
- b. **RLF #2014-58 application:** Shelley and Art Dumais are requesting a \$60,000 RLF loan to help purchase Huth's Fence Post. This will create/retain 4 FTE jobs and will leverage \$169,000 of owner investment. Collateral will be a 1st position mortgage on the business property. Art and Shelley own several successful businesses including a café in Norway. On a motion by E. Wenger, T. Bomberg 2nd the loan is approved pending a 3rd party screening for old tanks on property and all necessary paperwork as required by the Florence County RLF Loan Program. Motion carried.
- c. **RLF #2006-30 payment restructuring:** On a motion by T. Bomberg, C. Nelson 2nd, RLF #2006-30 Spread Eagle Garden Center will be restructured to make payments May – Dec in the amount of \$460.21 since this business is seasonal. The loan term will be extended accordingly. Motion carried.
- d. **RLF #2006-34 deferral request:** A request was received from Tipler Bar & Grill to defer payments due to the extreme rise in LP costs depleting their cash flow through the already slow winter months. On a motion by T. Bomberg, E. Wenger 2nd, it was agreed to defer payments on this loan for the months of Dec, Jan, Feb and March, with payments resuming as automatic withdrawals. Motion carried. Director will ask offer options for a loan rewrite that would change payments to 8 months/year.

5. Industrial Park lots cost and criteria: The criteria and cost was reviewed. It was agreed to publish lots as *\$4,000/acre - negotiable based on the number of jobs created and/or the assessed value of new buildings.*

6. Job Description (discussion/action): On a motion by T. Bomberg, C. Nelson 2nd, the FCEDC Director Job Description will be forwarded to J. Bomberg for County review and adoption. Motion carried.

7. Update on projects: The attached list of 2013 Accomplishments was reviewed. Director will see if 1 page summary could be added to tax bill mailings each year. This was mailed to all town boards. Could also submit to newspaper to help get the good word out.

8. Board member concerns: none

9. Adjournment: On a motion by T. Bomberg, E. Wenger 2nd, the meeting was adjourned. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Wendy Gehlhoff – FCEDC Director

Florence County Economic Development 2013 Accomplishments:

(delivered to Florence County Board at 1/21/14 board meeting by Wendy Gehlhoff FCEDC-Director)

- Provided business and community information, loan program assistance and specific resource people as needed for 17 entrepreneurs exploring a new business or expanding a current one.
- Facilitated creation of 1st County Tax Incremental Finance District according to state rules and coordinated the local meetings and application to state DOR office in order to grow jobs, and grow the number of businesses, products and services available to all County residents.
- Managed RLF Loan Program portfolio of 15 loans for businesses located in Aurora, Fence, Fern, Florence, Long Lake and Tipler. These loans created 64 jobs, leveraged \$1,787,200 investment.
- Wrote for, obtained and implemented a \$6881 New Event State JEM Grant to promote the new Badwater Bash & Bass Tourney that drew 800 people with an estimated economic impact of \$34,944. Organized committee representing the 6 community organizations that participated.
- Led a local and state multi-agency group that identified, designed and created the Wisconsin Wild Rivers Tour to unveil in spring of 2014. Wrote, obtained and am currently implementing a \$18,935 State JEM Destination Grant for a 6 month state-wide promotion of the new tour. 72 DOT road signs are up on the 100 mile loop highlighting our Wild Rivers through 6 of our towns.
- Lobbied successfully for a new law to allow MI axle configured lower weight per axle trucks to haul more total weight of logs and finished wood products on US 2 and Hwy 139 in order to bring increased trucking efficiencies for our sawmill and logging businesses.
- Facilitated application to WEDC for a \$49,000 grant to initiate the first Stewardship Agreement on the CNNF to increase timber harvest closer to plan so the forests are healthier, more logs are available for our regional forest products industry and so local contractors have the chance to bid on FS service work. Currently on multi-agency Steering Committee to oversee project.
- Promoted and Co-organized new Mike Roberts Memorial Ski Race & Lessons and Winterfest to draw new visitors to Keyes Peak Ski Hill. Both events were very well attended.
- Chair of Northwoods Rail Transit Commission that now includes 12 WI Counties and 3 MI Counties. Worked with DOT for completion of a market study and are now working to gather next level data for presentation to CN and short line rail operators in order to demonstrate the viability of resuming rail service on some or all of the out of service rail lines in our NRTC area.
- Misc: updated and added to www.ExploreFlorenceCounty.com website, taught Junior Achievement "Economics of Success" 6-session program to FCSD 8th graders, produced 3 Chamber Newsletters, assisted with a variety of other community projects and committees.