

# Florence County Economic Development COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Date: May 26<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Time: Tuesday, 4:15 pm – 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference Room Courthouse

1. **Call to order and roll call:** Director W. Gehlhoff called the meeting to order.
2. **Roll Call:** Supervisors F. Modshiedler, J. Bomberg, G. Steber, L. Dzekute and new committee member J. Mills were present.
3. **Elect Committee Chair:** Director W. Gehlhoff opened the floor for nominations for Economic Development Committee Chair. L. Dzekute nominated F. Modschiedler. W. Gehlhoff called 3 times for other nominations, hearing none, J. Bomberg moved to close nominations and cast a unanimous ballot for F. Modschiedler, 2<sup>nd</sup> by G. Steber. Motion carried.
4. **Elect Committee Vice-chair:** Chair F. Modschiedler opened the floor for nominations for Vice-chair. L. Dzekute nominated J. Mills. The Chair called 3 times for other nominations, hearing none, J. Bomberg moved to close nominations and cast a unanimous ballot for J. Mills, 2<sup>nd</sup> by G. Steber. Motion carried.
5. **Approve agenda:** on a motion by G. Steber, J. Bomberg 2<sup>nd</sup>. Motion carried.
6. **Approve 12/16/19 minutes:** on a motion by L. Dzekute, G. Steber 2<sup>nd</sup>. Motion carried.
7. **CDBG CLOSE PFED Sawmill Road Infrastructure Project:**
  - a. **Construction progress, business status and timeline update:** Director provided an update.
  - b. **Amendment to request extra \$35,000 for CDBG grant:** Committee doesn't wish to increase grant due to greater chance of not maintaining employment criteria during COVID pandemic.
  - c. **Fair housing requirements:** On a motion by J. Bomberg, G. Steber 2<sup>nd</sup>, the fair housing requirements (proclamation, letter and ordinance mailing) were approved. Motion carried.
8. **RLF Loan Payments update:** 6 loans are current, 1 missed April due to COVID and 1 is in default.
9. **COVID impacts and assistance for businesses:** Director assisting businesses with federal and state funding options to help weather the COVID Pandemic. See attached project update for details.
10. **Mid-priced Housing Project:** See attached project update for details.
11. **Tourism Data and 2020 Strategies:** 2020 will likely be down overall due to COVID, but up so far Jan-May 2020 (\$104,454) versus Jan-May 2019 (\$101,648). State data shows 4% down 2018 vs. 2019 but local tourism businesses have all said they were up. State model is heavy on lodging so Nicolet could have caused drop since big road projects were done. Tourism work this year is focusing on: new website design and layout (content being shortened and more pictures added), Facebook contest for new pictures to use on website and Facebook (10,500 followers), Fb summer/fall campaign to push UTVs, waterfalls, tubing, hiking, paddling, partnering with Nature's Waterpark for social media networking (he has DNR contract), adding new content to Travel Wisconsin things to do, lodging, dining, etc, designing Spread Eagle Barrens State Natural Area brochure to help market SNA's, considering October Snowmobile USA tradeshow depending on COVID shutdowns and partner funding.
12. **Update on Economic Development Projects:** Director reviewed attached project summary.
13. **Board Member Concerns:** A concern was discussed related to an unsafe housing condition in outlying Township. Members stressed the need to continue to search for a hotel developer. Check industrial park covenants to see if lots 19 and 20 should revert back to ED Commission if no building occurs.
14. **Adjournment:** On a motion by J. Bomberg, G. Steber 2<sup>nd</sup>, meeting adjourned. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Wendy Gehlhoff – FCED Director

# EDC Project Update May 26<sup>th</sup>, 2020

## • Facilitate Business Growth

- **RLF Program:** 7 of the 8 loans are paying on schedule.
- **COVID Business Assistance:** emailed 154 businesses 2x's/week with PPP, EIDL and other programs and info to help them cope during 60-day COVID shut-down. Advocated for their needs during multiple state-agency and local COVID online meetings and webinars. May business survey said 50% of our businesses didn't apply for financial help. 33% received funding, 3% took unemployment, 3% were denied and 17% still had not heard.
- **CDBG/RLF CLOSE PFED Grant:** Completed 3<sup>rd</sup> state payment request to reimburse Utility for their final payments to contractor. Completed semi-annual paperwork. Business is at full 13 jobs with 11 at LMI levels. Organized paper/digital files for upcoming state audit. Researched amending agreement to receive the full \$35,000 per job created to provide extra funds for higher than expected asphalt paving bid that was awarded to Bacco Construction.
- **Assisted Living:** Contacted by new investor group through Zadek's realtor. Sharing info.
- **Sustainable Forestry Conference:** postponed to September 22, 2020 eyes Peak Ski Lodge.
- **TID:** Preparing reports for Joint Review Board meeting in mid-June with Paul Martin.
- **NRTC:** Executive Committee work with WisDOT re CN's desire to sell/lease Hwy 8 line
- **Micro-loan:** \$10,000 loan in Jan. to Seven1Five Outpost to remodel building by CarQuest.

## • Market our Assets

- **Website:** New website redesign went live and additional work was needed for photos/content.
- **Facebook:** Took over all posting to keep public and businesses updated on COVID details including who was doing take-out orders, status of campgrounds and health order changes.
- **Wild Rivers:** Working with new Wild Rivers DNR Parks employee and Nature's Waterpark owner to increase Wild Rivers promotions and amenities. DNR signed concessionaires contract.
- **Keyes Peak Uphill Truck Drags:** Promoted/worked at this great new 3/14 event that replaces Summerfest as the key fundraiser for ski hill. 2,000+ people attended and profits were great.
- Designing new Spread Eagle Barrens State Natural Area brochure with WDNR to promote SNAs.

## • Workforce and Community Development

- **Mid-priced Housing:** Flyer included in Florence Utilities March bill resulted in 5 calls from persons interested in building mid-priced home or rental units. Following up with each re possible locations, zoning process, as well as development cost estimates for US 2 EDC land.
- **Chamber:** Promoted 3/7 Winterfest and 6/6 Rummage & Sidewalk Sale events for Chamber.