

La Crescent Economic Development Commission Meeting Minutes

La Crescent Chamber of Commerce

Keep Company Shared Workspace, November 7, 2022

- 1: Call to Order: Chairman Stryker called meeting to order at 3:00 pm.
2. Pledge of Allegiance: The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by the members.
3. Roll Call: Members Present – Larry Stryker, Brett Kemmer, Julie Hatlem, Alan Voss, Michael Welch
Sarah DeLacy, Troy Nolop

Members Absent – (Excused) Lori Kadlec, Cheryl Jostad

Staff Present - Larry Kirch

Guest(s): None

4: Approval of Agenda: A motion was made by Mike to approve the agenda as presented, seconded by Troy, motion carried.

5. Approval of October 10, 2022 Meeting Minutes: A motion was made by Sarah to approve the minutes of the October 10, 2022 meeting, seconded by Brett, motion carried.

6: Staff Report:

a. Larry K presented an updated project list/workplan.

- The Root River Trail committee will have its first meeting on Wednesday, November 16 at the Hokah Fire Department. Larry Stryker is going to be on that committee.
- The MnDOT Active Transportation Planning (STH 16 corridor from the new Wagon Wheel bridge landing to Miller's Corner) corridor study continued with all day meetings on November 3rd with a bike ride to Miller's Corner and a walkabout from the bridge to the Ice Arena and back north on Oak Street. An evening public meeting was held in the Community Room at the Fire Station and 35 citizens gave input and insight on the corridor plan. Three alternatives emerged. One along the wetlands west of the RR Tracks, one between the RR and STH 16 and one on the east side of STH 16. All have pros and cons and obstacles. A meeting was held with MnDOT, MnDNR, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife staff on Friday, November 4th to discuss data needs and issues and opportunities with the 3 alternatives. The next phase of the planning study is a survey of the community, agencies, landowners, stakeholders and two more meetings of the local planning team. A project website is being launched with project information.
- Phase 4 Wagon Wheel Trail - La Crosse is calling the project the Wagon Wheel Connector. WisDOT awarded \$4,010,400 million toward the project. The City of La Crosse has to come up with the design engineering for the project which will not just be the bridge but also widening the sidewalks to bike paths up to the new Mississippi River Bridge.
- Walnut Street - The city has to prepare and send out a Request for Proposals to hire a planning firm to do the plan. The process will start in February/March (2023) once

WisDOT and the Federal Highways Administration approve the RFP document in January.

- Overlook Plaza - We received \$60,000 from the Blandin Foundation for the design of a monument at the Wagon Wheel Trail bridge landing area (Overlook Plaza) to provide education about the indigenous people who inhabited the downtown area before white settlement. We are reaching out to both the Prairie Island Indian Community and the Ho-Chunk Nation for their involvement in this project.
- A grant was approved by the Arlin Falck Foundation for the Keep Company shared workspace for \$8,400. The city was the applicant. Funds are for hiring a business/marketing college major staffing and business assistance, for six networking events, coaching and for the creation of a “business plan” to outline long-term financial sustainability. The grant outlined that the city was the fiscal agent and that the Chamber would take the lead on implementing the grant.
- On DNR Landing Road, the Sportsman’s Landing improvement project is nearly completed.
- The Mayor continues to try to set up a meeting with the Government Affairs person from Kwik Trip along with their store planner to continue dialogue with them on both the north and south convenience stores.

7. Discussion Items:

a . Troy mentioned that there are several street lights out in the downtown and he hoped that these would all be upgraded when Walnut Street and South 1st Street are redone and how the two projects should closely mesh together. Larry K said he will ask the street department to look into it. Troy mentioned that he had brought up before an issue with directional signage that the MnDOT agreed to, directing travelers into the downtown. There was also a discussion on the North 4th Street intersection and how problematic it is. Larry K noted that MnDOT was studying the intersection and that he would try and get a report from the City’s engineer. Troy inquired about the parking lot at Old Hickory Park. Larry K stated that the city does have the parking lot paving in the Capital Improvements Plan but not until 2023 or 2024 as funding permits. Troy also asked about the TCMC meeting that was held in La Crosse about the 2nd train to/from Chicago and Twin Cities. Larry K did not attend, but the Mayor did. The Mayor reported that the same information is on the MnDOT website and not much was learned from the meeting. Troy inquired about the La Crescent outdoor performance venue group” and how he had heard the presentation twice recently. He is supportive and inquired where this was at the city level. Larry K mentioned that the city council was to receive a presentation in November but so far the city staff has heard the presentation and was very supportive and that he (Larry K) was volunteered to help write grants for the project.

Julie mentioned that two schools, the Chamber, Sports Hub and the Bike Shoppe all applied to be bike friendly businesses through the League of American Bicyclists. This is thought to be a good prerequisite for the city’s re-application to be a Bike Friendly Community. Troy mentioned an interest as well.

- b. Other items: Larry K mentioned that the city is looking for business sponsors for the two new Level 3 EV chargers behind City Hall, sponsorship is \$900 for each unit. Larry K mentioned that

the city is meeting with the CP Rail this week about safety issues and delays caused by the trains stopping too long or blocking the crossings when that is not necessary.

Larry Stryker mentioned that this would be his last meeting as we are not having a December meeting. Larry was thanked for his service and commitment to the commission. Larry gave a brief history of the commission, how it got started and how originally it was hoped to be an Authority rather than a Commission. Larry, Troy and Al were all on the commission when it started. Larry will continue to help the city by being a member of the Root River Trail Citizens Committee. Al would like to remain on the committee as his term is up. He is moving out of the city but his business is still located in the city. Mike mentioned that he will be out of town December, January and February. The group decided to cancel the December meeting (as is customary) and to hold the January meeting virtually which will allow anyone out of town to participate.

8. Adjourn – Chairman Stryker adjourned the meeting at 3:50 pm.

Next scheduled meeting is Monday, January 9, 2023 at 3:00 p.m. at the La Crescent Chamber of Commerce building and by Zoom.

Minutes submitted by Larry Kirch