

La Crescent Economic Development Commission Meeting Minutes

City Hall, April 25, 2022

Members Present: Lori Kadlec, Julie Hatlem, Cherryl Jostad, Brett Kemmer, Troy Nolop, Larry Stryker, Alan Voss, Michael Welch, Sarah Danielson

Members Absent:

Staff Present: Larry Kirch

Guest(s): None

Item

1: Call to Order - Chairman Stryker called meeting to order at 3:02 pm.

2: Approval of Agenda/ Minutes – Mike made a motion to approve the agenda, seconded by Al, motion carried. A motion was made by Mike to approve the minutes of the February 28, 2022, meeting seconded by Lori, motion carried.

3: Staff Report - Larry Kirch presented the updated project list/workplan which included a discussion regarding the status of each of the items.

The Root River Trail communities (Houston County, La Crescent, Houston, Hokah) “work group” (staff from each community) met this morning to discuss the status of the draft of the Joint Powers Agreement. Former Mayor Dick Weiser, who has had a long-term interest in the project was also at the meeting. The county Attorney is still working thought the Joint Powers Agreement and hopefully will finish his review and send out in the next week or so. Each community would approve and appoint two members to the Joint Powers Committee. The meetings will be publicly noticed and open to the public and moved around. The next work group meeting is tentatively set for June 6th. It is hoped that each community would be able to review and approve the agreement by then.

The city would like to continue discussions with merchants along Walnut Street regarding the ultimate streetscaping of the street and the possibility of a demonstration project similar to the 2021 demo project on Elm Street crosswalks. Larry reiterated the communication from the City of La Crosse regarding the West Channel Bridge and also noted the status of a possible “off ramp” from the highway to the boat ramp. Larry mentioned that Mayor Poellenger gave Larry a three-hour tour of the city and discussed projects, housing development and trail connectivity throughout the city. Larry will reach out to Peter Fletcher of the La Crosse Area Planning Committee to see if the regional bike-ped committee has any interest in taking up the cause.

Larry K has reached out to Kwik Trip via email a few times in regards to what direction KT plans to proceed with possible expansion ideas but has been able to set up a meeting as of yet. A short discussion occurred about the land to the south owned by Cindy Gerke and also the land the city owns between Kwik Trip and the highway.

Larry mentioned that there were funds being made available from the Federal Highway Administration for National Scenic Biways and All American Roads. \$22 million is available nation-wide so he reached out to Winona County Engineer regarding the Apple Blossom State Scenic Biway and the Minnesota

Great River Road Group and the Bluff Land Scenic Biway group regarding any projects they have or would like the city to support. The city has very little land in Winona County and very little on the Great River Road. There were very short deadlines for this program, they have been extended but the timeline is very short for an application or a letter of intent. The city itself did not identify any projects but offered to write support letters if other groups did. Winona County is hoping to reconstruct County Road 1.

Larry mentioned that as far as he knew, the various projects for the Wagon Wheel Trail were on schedule for this summer. The business incubator is set to have their grand opening on May 4th.

4. Discussion Item: Housing Demand/Supply – There was a general discussion about the lack of land available for housing and that sewer would have to be extended for additional land to become available. Larry mentioned that he and Bill were still going to reach out to Springbook about any future phases. It was agreed that we would not put this on the next agenda but that this item would remain a priority item for the city and the EDC.

5. Member Reports –

Cherryl gave an update on the “Bluff to Bluff” trolley planned for this fall with tours taking place on September 3rd and 9th and October 23rd and 29th through Explore La Crosse. Cherryl continues to work with Explore La Crosse on the information that the narrator would be using during the tour. They are still working on the route but so far there are considerations of going to an orchard and near the vineyard.

Troy mentioned that they are postponing the remodeling of the laundromat for a year based on the uncertainty in the delivery of products and materials

Sarah mentioned the recent news that the City was given a ranking of 6 by AARP as one of the best small cities in the U.S. to relocate to. It was noted though that very little housing is available for relocation unless someone moves out.

6. Other items - No other business was brought before the commission.

7. Adjourn – A motion was made by Mike, seconded by Lori to adjourn the meeting, motion carried. Chairman Stryker adjourned the meeting at 4:00 pm.

Next scheduled meeting: May 23, 2022 at 3:00 pm.

Minutes submitted by Larry Kirch