

La Crescent Economic Development Commission Meeting Minutes  
La Crescent Chamber of Commerce and Tourism/Keep Company Co-Working Space  
111 S Walnut Street, Suite B  
March 10, 2025

- 1: Call to Order: Chair Sarah DeLacy called meeting to order at 3:03 p.m.
2. Pledge of Allegiance: The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
3. Roll Call: Members Present: Sarah DeLacy Chair, Troy Nolop, Alan Voss, Lori Kadlec, Honor DiDonato, Michael Welch, and ex-officio City Council Member Cherryl Jostad  
  
Members Absent – Brett Kemer  
  
Staff Present - Larry Kirch, Community Development Director, Brian Meeter, Chamber Executive Director
4. Approval of Agenda: Mike Welch, made a motion to approve the agenda, seconded by Al Voss, the motion carried unanimously.
5. Approval of December 9, 2024 Meeting Minutes: A motion was made by Mike Welch, to approve the minutes of the December 9, 2024 meeting, seconded by Troy Nolop, the motion carried unanimously.
6. Election of Officers for 2025 – Chair and Vice Chair  
  
Mike Welch moved to approve the current slate of officers for 2025, seconded by Lori Kadlec. The motion carried unanimously to approve Sara DeLacy as Chair and Troy Nolop as Vice Chair respectively for 2025.
7. Discussion Items:
  - a. Walnut Street Updates – Funding and Engineering Design – The city is set for funding with the \$1.5 MnDOT Local Road Improvement Project funds, \$600,000 MnDEED Small City Development Program funds for streetscaping, Municipal State Aid funds, and 2026 Street Reconstruction Bonds. The city has to prepare an Environmental Review Record for the project so that it meets Federal NEPA requirements.
  - b. Main Street Design Project – WHKS tie in to Walnut Street – Larry let everyone know that the city hired WHKS to begin preliminary designs for Main Street. People may have seen survey crews along Main Street. The initial project is to ensure that a future Main Street reconstruction/streetscaping project ties into the Walnut Street project seamlessly. The ultimate design will follow, to the extent possible, the same designs and streetscaping amenities as Walnut Street. Stay tuned for updates in the future, there is no project schedule at this point.
  - c. Root River Trail Towns – Membership and Updates – Larry mentioned that the city has joined the Root River Trail Towns organization. Jeremiah Burish from Explore La Crosse is attending. Council Member Teresa O’Donnell Ebner is also attending. Meetings are in-

person or remote. The next meeting is March 19<sup>th</sup>. Anyone interested in attending, let Larry know. Nearly all attendees are Chamber of Commerce Executive Directors.

- d. Status of connecting with the Minnesota Main Street Program – Larry relayed that Allison Wagner reached out to Emily Kurash Casey to follow-up on our discussion of the Minnesota Main Street program. Ideas were to create two cohorts of northern Mn cities and SE Mn cities to exchange ideas. Emily was to survey the SE Mn communities as to their interest in starting with some generalized meetings. There will be an update for the next EDC meeting.
- e. Updates on USA Cycling Gravel National Championships Applefest Weekend 2025 and downtown activities/events – The Local Organizing Committee meets monthly on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday. Plans continue to be worked out for a Thursday night event with live music, an EXPO with vendors, finalizing the course, medical needs, emergency response needs, rest stops, permits, sponsors, vendors, working with AppleFest, pre-event rides, etc. Honor noted that close coordination with the Applefest 5k needed to occur as the 5k starts at 8:00 a.m. in the downtown.
- f. Grant updates on Root River Trail and Railroad Crossing Safety Grant – Larry mentioned that the Federal Railroad Administration Rail Crossing Elimination Grant of \$229,000 seems to be in limbo at this point. The grant was awarded on January 13<sup>th</sup> but the webinar for February 11<sup>th</sup> was cancelled by the Federal Government. MnDOT also put their matching grant program for these purposes on hold until the status of the grant is made available by the federal government. The grant is to study 4 crossings in the city and town and to determine if the DOT/City crossing and Crest Precast crossing can be combined as well as look at adding crossing arms, lights, signals, and median barriers at the remaining three crossings.

Root River Trail grants - Larry applied for federal funds through the ATTIP program which was not funded. That is the Active Transportation Infrastructure Improvement Program and is a discretionary grant. That project was for preliminary design. 14 projects nationwide were funded. Larry applied for the Federal RAISE grant, now changed back the BUILD grant. That grant application was more extensive and if funded, would complete the public and agency stakeholder process, the environmental review and 100 percent construction plans. We find out about that grant in June. The BUILD grant was cut by \$1.35 Billion in the new administration so funding is not very likely. Larry was also going to submit a LCCMR grant using the state lottery dollars. That grant will cover the same scope of activities as the ATTIP and BUILD grant but, after conversing with MnDNR officials will cover 15% engineering plans and not 100% engineering plans. Larry will also apply for funds through the Congressionally Designated Spending program through our federal legislators.

- g. Member Reports – Honor mentioned that her son continues to secure grant funds for the bike skills course on school district property and has obtained grants from Skogens, Dahl, IMBA and SHIP. Cheryll mentioned that the animal rescue group was having a listening session this evening. Sarah noted that her family foundation assisted in funding the listening session and long-range planning efforts by the animal rescue. Larry mentioned

that the Driftless Hiking Trail group was having a listening session in Caledonia this evening.

h. Other Items - none

8. Staff Report

- a. Updated Project List/Workplan – Larry briefly went through the Workplan as many of the items were covered earlier in the meeting.

The West Channel Bike Ped Bridge (Wagon Wheel Phase IV) is ahead of schedule and will be bid out this spring. This is to avoid impacts to species during certain times of the year.

The Root River Trail Extension / MOA to Jointly Cooperate: The City Attorney is still drafting a Joint Powers Agreement for the communities to consider. The city engineer is working on a model and cross sections for the corridor from the Wagon Wheel Bridge to Miller's corner (MnDOT \$30,000 IJA Technical Assistance Grant).

Overlook Plaza –Larry and Teresa O'Donnell Ebner drafted a Call for Indigenous Artists for the project and are seeking input from the Project Resource Committee members. The city focused on issuing a Request for Proposals for indigenous artists to design the plaza and we are working with the Minnesota Design Center (part of the UofM).

Kwik Trip – KT is having discussions with Dr J about acquiring his property for future redevelopment.

Larry said he was getting all the Federal forms together for the city hall project that have to go to the USDA. There are about 10 forms plus five years of city audits, current balance sheet and 2025 budget that all have to go to the USDA staff for their review. This is just the "pre-application" process.

- b. Public Arts Plan grant application – Arlyn Falck Foundation – not funded. Larry previously applied through SMIF for Otto Bremmer Foundation funds and that was not funded either.

9. Next Meeting Date/Time: The next meeting is scheduled for April 14<sup>th</sup>.

10. Adjourn: Lori Kadlec made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mike Welch, the motion carried unanimously. The Chair adjourned the meeting at 3:58 p.m.

Minutes submitted by: Larry Kirch