

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
April 14, 2025

- 1: Call to Order: Chair Sarah DeLacy called meeting to order at 3:02 p.m.
2. Pledge of Allegiance: The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
3. Roll Call: Members Present: Sarah DeLacy Chair, Troy Nolop, Allen Voss, Brett Kemmer, and ex-officio City Council Member Cheryl Jostad

Members Absent – (all excused) - Lori Kadlec, Honor DiDonato, Michael Welch

Staff Present - Larry Kirch, Community Development Director
4. Approval of Agenda: Allen Voss, made a motion to approve the agenda, seconded by Troy Nolop, the motion carried unanimously.
5. Approval of March 10, 2025 Meeting Minutes: A motion was made by Troy Nolop, to approve the minutes of the March 10, 2025 meeting, as corrected (spelling of commission members names), seconded by Brett Kemmer, the motion carried unanimously.
6. Discussion Items
 - a. Status of connecting with the Minnesota Main Street Program – Larry stated that progress is slow as Rethos, the state’s non-profit contractor for the program has been unable to staff the effort. Larry indicated that he will send correspondence to the state legislators about funding for the program and the proposal to attempt to start a county-wide main street effort for all six cities in Houston County.
 - b. Updates on USA Cycling Gravel National Championships Applefest Weekend 2025 and downtown activities/events – Larry stated that the route has been pretty much set pending MnDOT and City of Hokah approval. The route will be more of a N/S route and goes through Hokah, Freeburg and Eitzen on both out and back routes. Coordination with AppleFest continues as well as plans for a concert and event on Thursday night. In addition to the monthly Local Organizing Committee (LOC) meetings, various subgroups have been meeting including a medical committee, meetings with the County and law enforcement, an Expo committee and the routes committee. All the permits have been issued for AppleFest for the Thursday night event. More work needs to be done to find sponsors, vendors and volunteers.
 - c. Grant updates on Root River Trail, MnDOT Transportation Alternatives Grant and Railroad Crossing Safety Grant – Larry mentioned that he applied for the federal BUILD grant and the DNR LCCMR grant to start the engineering, environmental and public outreach for the Root River Trail. Larry also applied for a “short trails” grant from the

DNR for a trail within Abnet Field Park from S. 11th Street to S. 14th and Spruce Street. The big news was that the city was awarded a federal Transportation Alternatives Grant for 2029 which will fund a grant on the west side of STH 16 from the traffic signal to S. 14th Street as well as a grant on the west side of S. Chestnut Street from the base of the Wagon Wheel Trail Bridge south to connect to the DOT path that goes up to Highway 16 (which will be widened to 10' wide in 2027. Larry noted that the Federal Railroad Administration Crossing Elimination Grant is back on track with recent correspondence from the FRA).

- d. Member Reports – Troy mentioned that there are still bikes and EBikes on the sidewalks downtown. Bikes on downtown sidewalks is still an issue! Larry reported that the city purchased a stencil that can be painted on the sidewalks in the downtown. Larry also showed a picture of a small sign that he saw in Mesa, AZ that says “Walk your Wheels” and the Police Department is doing some more outreach to the youth at the schools. It was noted that children under 15 cannot ride an Ebike under Minnesota law. Troy also let the committee know that the building will be finished the 1st week of May, the apartments on the second floor are completed. They are making tenant improvements on the ground floor. On May 15th they will be paving the lot and alley where the asphalt was torn up. The city is expected to pave the alley as part of the Walnut Street project. Troy offered to host the EDC for a tour of the new building next month.

There was a discussion of the use of UTVs on city streets that was going to come up in the city council meeting this evening. There are pros and cons to allowing their use. They are allowed on Houston County Roads but not city streets.

Sarah asked the group to let her know if they would like more information on another listening session that the La Crescent Animal Rescue is hosting this evening. They are looking for input from city residents. They are receiving input from county residents and would like more input/feedback from city residents. Under consideration is a retail/business component for the organization to assist in funding the operations that could include selling of pet supplies, pet grooming, pet boarding or having a room for community meetings.

There was a discussion about tree planting initiatives in the city that is showing up on Facebook. Most are against planting trees that obscure views into Old Hickory Park as well as trees in the boulevard that can uplift sidewalks. The city has received support from 43 homeowners who want a boulevard tree. The city plants several hundred trees a year and has been a Tree City USA city for 8 years.

- e. Other Items – none

7. Staff Report:

a. Updated Project List/Workplan – Larry briefly went through the Workplan as many of the items were covered above.

- The West Channel Bike Ped Bridge (Wagon Wheel Phase IV) is ahead of schedule and will be bid out in August.
- The Root River Trail Extension / MOA to Jointly Cooperate: The City Attorney is still to have a draft Joint Powers Agreement in May. The city engineer continues to work 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 –The City has issued a Call for Indigenous Artists for the project who will work with the Minnesota Design Center (part of the UofM). Proposals are due at the end of May.
- Kwik Trip – KT is having discussions with Dr J about acquiring his property for future redevelopment. There are a lot of rumors floating around if there is a purchase agreement or not.
- Larry said the city has received word that they can proceed to the next step to obtain a USDA Loan. The city council will discuss this at their first meeting in May.
- Walnut Street Updates – The city has to prepare an Environmental Review Record for the project so that it meets Federal NEPA requirements. The city Engineer is going to start preparing the engineering plans and will meet with residents, businesses, the EDC, the city council the 2nd week of August.
- Main Street Design Project – WHKS tie in to Walnut Street – No new information at this time
- Root River Trail Towns – Membership and Updates – Larry mentioned that the City of Hokah has declined membership at this time. The group meets about 10 times per year.

9. Next Meeting Date/Time: The next meeting is scheduled for May 14th and the EDC discussed cancelling the June meeting as there will not be much to discuss until July in terms of receiving news on several federal and state grants that have been submitted. With an offer from Troy Nolop, the committee will get a tour of the Nolop's new building as part of the May meeting.

10. Adjourn: Allen Voss made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Troy Nolop, the motion carried unanimously. The Chair adjourned the meeting at 4:11 p.m.

Minutes submitted by: Larry Kirch