

La Crescent Economic Development Commission Meeting Minutes
La Crescent Chamber of Commerce and Tourism - Keep Company Conference Room
June 10, 2024

- 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, Michael Welch, Alan Voss, Lori Kadlec, Brett Kemmer, Troy Nolop and ex-officio City Council Member Cherryl Jostad. Honor DiDionato attended via phone.

Members Absent – none

Staff Present - Larry Kirch, Community Development Director, Brian Meeter, Chamber Executive Director
4. Approval of Agenda: Lori Kadlec, made a motion to approve the agenda, seconded by Mike Welch, the motion carried unanimously.
5. Approval of March 11, 2024 Meeting Minutes: A motion was made by Mike Welch to approve the minutes of the January 8, 2024 meeting, seconded by Mike Welch, the motion carried unanimously.
6. Staff Report:
 - a. Updated Project List/Workplan: Larry went through the spreadsheet item by item and reviewed the status of the projects and grant applications that the city is working on.

There is not much to report on for the City of La Crosse and the bike-ped connections from the Cass Street Bridge to the West Channel Bridge other than the city's consultant continues to move the project forward and the city of La Crosse applied for additional federal funding.

Walnut Street Corridor planning –Since there was no bonding bill this year, the city applied for the federal Congressional Designated Spending (CDS) program for \$2 million dollars. The city will hear later this summer if the project request stays on the list and in November/January if the project got funded. The city did receive \$1.5 million from MnDOT under the Local Road Improvement Program (LRIP), and the city applied to the MnDEED Small Cities Development Program (SCDP) for \$600,000. The total cost of the project is approximately \$5,400,000. If the CDS program does not fund the project, the city will have to reapply for the bonding bill funds in June of 2025.

The Root River Trail Extension / MOA to Jointly Cooperate: The Root River Trail Extension – Citizens Exploratory Committee will meet on Wednesday, June 12th. The committee will be asked to approve the Trail Plan which will be presented to each city council and the county board over the summer. The committee still has one vacancy that has to be filled by the City of Houston. The city continues to meet with MnDOT officials on the scope of services for the \$30,000 IJA Technical Assistance Grant which will now include both the trail segment noted above as well as the portion from S 14th Street to Miller's Corner from S 14th Street. The city did receive Safe Routes to School fund to build a multi-use path from S 14th and Oak Street to the Kistler Mobile Home Park. This portion of bicycle/pedestrian path was included in the city's \$1 million-dollar federal Transportation Alternatives grant request for a multi-use path from the Wagon Wheel Bridge to S 14th.

Overlook Plaza – The UofM graduate student project concluded on May 2nd with a table top planning exercise using a method called Placelt. There is some consensus about what the project for a plaza should entail. The city continues to work with UofM over the summer with two new graduate students on refining the project by looking at other Indigenous projects in Red Wing and Dakota County parks as well as continue outreach to the Prairie Island Indian Community and the Lower Sioux Nation. The city continues to work toward creating a design for the plaza.

Kwik Trip - The city staff continues to work with Kwik Trip staff to discuss both the north and south stores. Kwik Trip is discussing the possibility of a store expansion with abutting property owners on at the S 3rd and Oak Street store.

Larry will remove the reference to the housing rehabilitation loan program as that program is wrapping up in the fall with 8 houses completed and a possibility of another 3-4. Larry will also remove the laundromat project from the list as the building was coming down, the city created a TIF District and the city worked with Troy in obtaining a Redevelopment Grant to tear down the building.

The city continues to work on a preliminary application to USDA Rural Development program for loan funds for the city hall, police station and library. There are also Library grants available through the State. Several funding sources will likely be needed to complete these projects.

b. Economic Development Element 2017 Comprehensive Plan: A discussion took place regarding the comprehensive plan, the role of the commission and possible projects. The members discussed a list of possible redevelopment projects that will be added to the work plan and include Bauers, the old Montessori School, the Fitzgerald Center, the vacant lot next to Thorson Graphics, the house at 233 Main Street and the Commodore Club Building. Larry mentioned that Houston County was starting a “core group” to discuss housing issues in the county. The city may participate on that committee.

7. Discussion Items:

a. Draft Commission Job Description: It was suggested by the Chair that we move this up in the agenda for the next meeting and spend more time on the job description and the duties of the Commission.

b. Member Reports: Brian mentioned that he does keep track of open office space and makes that available to anyone interested. He mentioned the Chamber golf outing on July 18th. He noted that Bauers Market is apparently on the market. As noted above, it will be put in the work plan as a work item for redevelopment. Troy noted the progress on the building demolition and that there was some drone footage of the building coming down. Questions ensued about the Walnut Street project and funding and timing and how sidewalk grades at building entrances were being determined and who would cover the cost of tying in the grades. Larry noted that the schedule depends on the funding and whether the project can be phased. There will be disruption but perhaps it can be phased to avoid the busy summer months. The city will have to work with property owners on coordinating the project with meetings with city and business owners. There was more discussion about possible redevelopment sites and the difficulty in promoting/coordinating redevelopment when the sites are spread out and the timing is not certain.

Other Items – None

8. Next Meeting Date/Time: The next meeting is set for Monday, July 8th, 2024 at the Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Building at 3:00 p.m.

9. Adjourn: Mike Welch made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Troy Nolop, the motion carried unanimously. The Chair adjourned the meeting at 3:59 p.m.

Minutes submitted by: Larry Kirch