

La Crescent Economic Development Commission Meeting Minutes
La Crescent Chamber of Commerce and Tourism - Keep Company Conference Room
July 8, 2024

- 1: Call to Order: Chair Sarah DeLacy called meeting to order at 3:01 p.m.
2. Pledge of Allegiance: The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
3. Roll Call: Members Present: Sarah DeLacy, Michael Welch, Lori Kadlec, Brett Kemmer, Troy Nolop and ex-officio City Council Member Cherryl Jostad.

Members Absent – Alan Voss, (excused), Honor DiDionato (excused)

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 Troy Nolop, the motion carried unanimously.
5. Approval of June 10, 2024 Meeting Minutes: A motion was made by Mike Welch to approve the minutes of the June 10, 2024 meeting, seconded by Lori Kadlec, the motion carried unanimously.
6. Staff Report:
 - a. Draft Commissioner Job Description: Larry asked if there were any changes or suggestions to the draft Job Description. There were none. Everyone agreed that it was good to have this document available and for purposes of giving to new members or in the recruitment of new members.
 - b. Economic Development Element 2017 Comprehensive Plan: Larry had sent a PDF version of the Economic Development Element of the 2017 Comprehensive Plan to the Committee for their review. Larry noted that there were 23 strategies in the plan element that the EDC could look to as part of their role for the city. Larry went through a few of these and notes that the City Planning Commission did the same for the Comprehensive Plan a few years ago. Larry suggested that he could put the Economic Development Element strategies in a grid format and then add notes as to whether the item had been addressed or if it were something that the EDC could/should work on.
 - c. 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.

The City of La Crosse did not receive a federal discretionary RAISE Grant they were hoping for to augment the bike ped improvements between the Cass Street bridge and the new Phase 4 West Channel Bridge. The project continues to move forward with city's consultant SEH.

Walnut Street Corridor planning –The city waits to hear if the federal Congressionally Designated Spending (CDS) program for \$2 million dollar remains in the appropriations bill. There were no funds on the House side but on the Senate the project is still in the bill. The city will hear in August if the project request stays on the Senate list. If not on the August list, it will not get funded. The city waits to hear about 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 2026.

The Root River Trail Extension / MOA to Jointly Cooperate: The Root River Trail Extension – Citizens Exploratory Committee approved the Trail Plan. The City of La Crescent and the City of Houston and Houston County have approved the plan. The City of Hokah is hopefully going to approve the trail plan on August 6th. The city continues to meet with MnDOT officials on 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 was accepted as a member of the Root River Trail Towns organization. Brian is invited to attend those monthly meetings. The city was applying for a Federal Discretionary Grant called ATIP or Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program for Planning and Design for the Root River Trail extension.

Overlook Plaza – The city continues to work with UofM through its Resilient Communities Program called RCP Scholars Program over the summer. The two graduate students are doing two case studies on Red Wing and Dakota County Parks and conducting more interviews. The city continues to work toward creating a design for the plaza.

Kwik Trip - The city staff will reach out again to Kwik Trip store planners on any updates. Bauer’s market properties are not listed for sale as of yet. Some research can be done on the old Montessori school building at Main/Oak on its viability for redevelopment. Larry indicated that sometimes when city’s make improvements like Walnut Street or a new City Hall, that it spurs redevelopment on nearby properties. Larry has to close out the Arlyn Falk grant related to Keep Company. Houston County was a primary mover of this project in the initial SMIF grant along with the city and the chamber and the city is the fiscal agent for the Arlyn Falck grant and hired the intern last summer. The city worked with the intern to come up with a business plan. The city, county and the Chamber worked together to bring in the Office Works to manage the day-to-day aspects of Keep Company and place the space as part of the Rural Ideas Network.

The city continues to put together the data and federal forms that make up a preliminary application to the 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.

d. Tax Increment Financing – TIF 101 Handout: Larry had thought he attached something to previous agendas but had not. Larry said he would send something out via E-mail that was general overview of TIF so that the Committee members could be familiar with TIF in Minnesota.

7. Discussion Items:

a. Member Reports: Brian noted that the Chamber of Commerce and Tourism’s golf outing is coming up next week. The event has a lot more participation than last year. They have a record number of hole sponsors this year. The Chamber continues to work with Explore La Crosse and therefore gets the benefit of regional marketing. The Minnesota Association of Convention and Visitors Bureaus is holding their annual meeting this year at the Event Center on October 2-4, 2024. There will be a “Taste of” event with local and regional vendors. The Healthy Community Partnership is looking for new space as part of the city’s project to construct a new city hall and Library.

Cherryl mentioned that three of the four twindominiums were under construction and that one was sold and that another had an offer accepted.

Troy mentioned that the contractor was playing catch-up because of all the rain and that they were to start pouring footings later this week. Troy mentioned that the city was going to have a hearing on a cannabis moratorium.

Other Items – None

8. Next Meeting Date/Time: The next meeting is set for Monday, August 5th, 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 4:01 p.m.

Minutes submitted by: Larry Kirch

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