

La Crescent Economic Development Commission Meeting Minutes
Chamber of Commerce and Tourism – Keep Company Co-Working Space
August 7, 2023

- 1: Call to Order: Vice Chair Troy Nolop called meeting to order at 3:05 pm.
2. Pledge of Allegiance: The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by the members and guests.
3. Roll Call: Members Present, Troy Nolop, Alan Voss, Lori Kadlec, Michael Welch, ex-officio City Council Member Cheryl Jostad

Members Absent – Sarah DeLacy, Brett Kemmer

Staff Present - Larry Kirch, Community Development Director, Brian Meeter, La Crescent Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Executive Director
4. Approval of Agenda: Mike made a motion to approve the agenda, seconded by AI, the motion carried unanimously.
5. Approval of June 5, 2023 Meeting Minutes: We did not have a quorum at the July meeting. A motion was made by Mike, to approve the minutes of the June 5, 2023 meeting, seconded by AI, the motion carried unanimously.
6. Walnut Street Planning Project – Update - Larry presented a draft of the PowerPoint slide show on the monitor. Larry reviewed each slide and the concepts and alternatives that had been developed from previous meetings with the public and city staff. The corridor alternatives include facilities for bicyclists, pedestrians, cars, trucks, and busses. The consultant, MSA Professional Services, prepared some poster boards that include ideas for lighting, seating, signage and wayfinding, bike parking and the like as well as the corridor concepts. These will be presented Tuesday night at the Farmers Market and on Wednesday at three meetings that include the residential property owners, merchants and businesses, and the general public. The EDC will be reviewing a draft plan at their next meeting.
7. Review Updated Project List/Workplan: A copy of the updated project list/workplan was transmitted with the agenda and minutes. Larry Kirch handed out a color copy of the updated project list/workplan and briefed the commission on the various projects.

The Root River Trail Extension Citizens Exploratory Committee did not have a quorum at their July meeting but will meet this Wednesday. Larry received some information from the DNR to confirm public ownership of several parcels from the State Land Records System. Larry had hand colored an aerial photo of the area between Miller's Corner and Houston of just the publicly owned properties including using the ownership information from Houston County. This included property owned by the U.S. F&W, MnDNR, MnDOT and private owners.

Larry also updated the Commission on the Highway 16 corridor planning study to Miller's Corner. The consultant has finished its work and Larry sent to the MnDOT District 6 staff in Rochester so that a traffic engineer, a civil engineer and right-of-way staff can review. Larry gave them until September 7 to finalize any comments. After that, Larry will host a final meeting of the corridor planning committee that was set up for this project. That group will recommend a final draft plan, then Larry will host a public information meeting later in September. The Planning Commission is also likely to take up the recommended draft plan which will then be presented to the City Council.

Blandin Foundation Grant. The city council will take up two contracts for two projects through the University of Minnesota under the Resilient Communities Project (RCP) to work with two student classes (or perhaps one student working on their Master's Thesis) on the project. One class would research the indigenous history and the other would be a landscape architecture class that would help with concepts for design. Larry will combine the projects for the Bike Trailhead Area and the Blandin Foundation Grant. The Walnut Street project is somewhat related to the Overlook Plaza project on South 1st Street since the two are in close proximity.

There is no new news on the two Kwik Trip project. Kwik Trip will continue to be informed about the Walnut Street project as well as the informal study that the city and MnDOT are doing of the North 4th Street intersection with US Hwy 14/61. Larry will make sure that Kwik Trip is invited to the business/merchant focus group meeting to be held on Wednesday of this week.

The City of La Crosse continues to work on the Phase 4 West Channel Bridge project with another project meeting next week. The project extends from the Cass/Cameron Street bridges along the north side of the roadway (Pettibone Park side). The project will widen the sidewalk on the north side of the highway between the West Channel Bridge and the Cass/Cameron Street bridges.

The Keep Company intern continues to develop a marketing plan and a business plan. Larry and Sam visited the Red Wing Ignite facility a few weeks ago. Ignite is in a city building so they don't need to worry too much about income. The facility houses some city departments and has a large training room, a small conference room and a conference room for about 15 people along with individual offices. Using the information from Red Wing and Lansing, Sam is now drafting the business and marketing plan and recently hosted a mixer for Chamber members at the Keep Company co-working space.

The city staff continues to conduct space planning for the city hall, Library and Police Department.

7. Discussion Items –

- a. Member Reports: None (we skipped this item)
- b. Other Items – Larry mentioned that the Root River Trail Extension Citizens Exploratory Committee is looking for two members. One to represent Houston County and the other to represent the City of Houston.

8. September Meeting Date/Time: The commission discussed having their next meeting on Monday, August 28th to review the Walnut Street Corridor Plan with the possibility of a meeting on September 11th for a final review and recommendation. The August 28th meeting would be held where we can conduct a remote call with MSA Professional Services. That may be at City Hall or at the Community Center.

9. Adjourn – Mike made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Lori, the motion carried unanimously. The vice chair adjourned the meeting at 3:55 p.m.

Minutes submitted by: Larry Kirch