

La Crescent Economic Development Commission Meeting Minutes
La Crescent Chamber of Commerce and Tourism - Keep Company Conference Room
December 4, 2023

- 1: Call to Order: Chair Sara DeLacy called meeting to order at 3:05 p.m.
2. Pledge of Allegiance: The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
3. Roll Call: Members Present, Sarah DeLacy, Michael Welch, Alan Voss and Brett Kemmer, and ex-officio City Council Member Cheryl Jostad

Members Absent – Troy Nolop, Lori Kadlec (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 Brett Kemmer, the motion carried unanimously.
5. Approval of November 6, 2023 Meeting Minutes: A motion was made by Brett, to approve the minutes of the November 6, 2023 meeting, seconded by Al Voss, the motion carried unanimously.
6. EDC Workplan Review: Larry went through the spreadsheet item by item and reviewed the status of the projects and grant applications that the city is working on via a Letter of Intent or final application.

Root River Trail Extension / MOA to Jointly Cooperate: The Root River Trail Extension – Citizens Exploratory Committee is meeting this Wednesday, December 6th. The committee is working on drafting a “trail plan” as required by the MOA. The committee has two vacancies that have to be filled by the City of Houston and Houston County. Information is found on the City of La Crescent website with a web page set up for the project.

MnDOT funded Active Transportation Action Plan is set to go before the City Council on Monday, December 11th for final approval. Several grant applications are in the works that assist in implementing the plan including a federal grant called Transportation Alternatives to create a multi-use path from the Wagon Wheel Bridge on S Chestnut to S 14th along S Chestnut and Highway 16. The city applied for a \$30,000 technical assistance grant from MnDOT to hire the city engineer to put together a federal grant application for the multi-use trail from S 14th to Miller’s Corner as well as a path from S 14th and Oak to the Kistler Mobile Home Park. The project is to do engineering and coordination with MnDOT and the CPKC Railroad for a multi-use path from S 14th to Miller’s Corner between the RR and Highway. The city learned from Tim Hruska, the City Engineer at WHKS that we received the grant. Tim Hruska found out at a meeting with DOT, but the city has not heard anything about it. It will take a Council Resolution at some point (if in fact we did get the grant!), to accept the grant and the manage the grant. The city is also applying for Safe Routes 2 School grant funds along Oak Street to implement the plan.

Overlook Plaza – The city had a meeting this morning with a Project Resource Committee of Indigenous community members, city officials and local historical society to work with the University of Minnesota graduate capstone class through the Resilient Communities Project program to develop

a feature at Overlook Plaza (at the downtown bridge landing of the Wagon Wheel Bridge) to recognize and honor the Indigenous history of the city and area. A landscape architecture class in the summer will design the final feature.

Walnut Street Corridor planning – The Walnut Street Corridor Plan is set to go before the City Council on Monday, December 11th for final approval. The plan does not include a multi-use path via Park Street but instead a path to Veterans Park via Walnut Place. The city is submitting a MnDOT Local Road Improvement Plan grant for \$1.5 million and has submitted a \$600,000 grant for streetscaping via the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (MnDEED) as well as \$2,050,000 for state bonding bill funding. The city has reached out to Kwik Trip again to discuss the Walnut Street project and is hoping for a meeting soon.

City of La Crosse West Channel bridge is moving along with a project meeting in January. The city of La Crosse continues to look for more funding. Larry did not have any news to report on the housing rehabilitation loans. Larry will be closing out the Arlyn Falck grant in January by using remaining grant funds to pay to be part of the Lansing Office Works/Rural Ideas Network co-working environment. The city continues to work with the city's architect to draft building layout plans for the city hall, police station and library. The city is looking for funding for the project from grant sources. Larry is attending a MnDEED webinar this week regarding the Redevelopment Grant Program to possibly apply for funding for the demolition of the laundromat.

7. Discussion Items:

Member Reports: Council Member Cheryl Jostad mentioned that La Crescent was recently named as one of the "11 Most Livable Small Towns in America" written by Money TalksNews. Other cities noted are Aspen, CO, Middleton, WI, Falcon Heights, MN and the city scored 70 out of 100 on the livability scale. Link to article: <https://www.moneytalksnews.com/slideshows/the-most-livable-small-towns-in-america/>

Brian Meeter asked about the old gas station as there is a for-lease sign there and inquired about some of the history of the site and access.

a. Other Items – None

8. Next Meeting Date/Time: The commission decided to have their next meeting on Monday, March 11th, 2024 at the Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Building at 3:00 p.m. Larry indicated that he would provide updates for the ongoing projects and grant applications via email in January and February.

9. Adjourn: Mike made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Al, the motion carried unanimously. The Chair adjourned the meeting at 4:09 p.m.

Minutes submitted by: Larry Kirch