

MONROE COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, COMMERCE & TOURISM COMMITTEE
MONTHLY MEETING – 8-9-18 – Covia (formerly Unimin) – Tunnel City

Present:

Committee Board Members: Dean Peterson, Nodji Van Wychen, Mark Halverson

Citizen Members: Dennis Berg, Mary Jo Hill

Advisory Members: Tonya Townsell – Ft. McCoy, Tina Thompson – Tomah Chamber of Commerce

Economic Development & Tourism Coordinator: Steve Peterson

Absent: Pete Reichardt, Paul Harms, Bernie Arena, John Hendricks – Sparta Area Chamber of Commerce, Jarrod Roll

Guests: Jim Bialecki – County Administrator Pete Peterson – County Board Chair

The meeting was posted in accordance with the open meeting law. Meeting was called to order at 9:06am by Chair Nodji Van Wychen. Roll-call was taken.

Minutes – Motion by D. Berg to approve the minutes. Second by M. Halverson. Motion carried.

Covia presentation – Mark Massicotte – Plant Manager gave a synopsis of what Covia has been doing as one of the first frac mines in Monroe County, where they are today and what their future growth and mining goals are. He outlined the map of the mining territory and the future of the mining will go well into the next generation of people. Covia's dedicated to being well connected to the townships, the area communities and being a good neighbor. He also said that the quality of workforce is a true asset at Covia's plant.

Financial/Invoices – No invoices were presented. N. Van Wychen instructed S. Peterson to compile a financial summary for next month's Committee meeting, breaking down where funding is still available and potential projects the Committee should be considering.

Monroe County E.D. Coordinator position – there has been movement by County Committees to approve a future County Land Use Planner position. To help fund that new position, there has been discussion of dissolving the County E.D. Coordinator contract and moving those funds into funding the new Land Use Planner position. J. Bialecki outlined what the Land Use Planner position would be and the benefit for the County, including grant writing, long range planning for County Land, working with communities and towns on building consistent plans involving growth, zoning, permitting, etc. There was a long discussion on the value of the E.D. Coordinator position, the value it's had in the past 5 years and the need to continue to have one in the future. Other options for funding the new LUP position were discussed and it will come down to whether it will fit in the 2019 budget or not. N. Van Wychen asked J. Bialecki to present the Land Use Planner job description and goals and S. Peterson to compile a summary of his work as the E.D. Coordinator and have both presented at the September Committee meeting.

Replacing Paul Harms on Committee – there was discussion of finding a replacement for P. Harms on the Committee as he has moved to the Oregon, WI area and will not longer be able to serve on the Committee. Harms recommended his replacement at Three Bears Resort but the Committee felt they should look at all options for his replacement. Members of the Committee were to think about other

potential candidates to replace Harms on the Board. It was also suggested that the current Committee members who have missed many meetings should be contacted to see if they are wanting to continue on the Committee or replacements be found for them too. It will be an agenda item for the September Committee meeting.

Monroe County Workforce Alliance – Solutions to Workforce Summit – November 1st at Best Western in Tomah. T. Thompson informed the Committee about the event which will deal with labor issues in the region. SW-ITBEC agreed to be a major sponsor of the event. More details will be explained further at the September Committee meeting.

VINO FEST – S. Peterson informed the Committee on the upcoming festival on Labor Day Weekend at Winnebago Park in Tomah. Saturday is DAPPER SATURDAY where people are encouraged to dress up in their 30's, 40's and 50's outfits. The Tomah Area Community Theatre is sponsoring a SPILLER FASHION SHOW at the Cranberry County Lodge as a fundraiser and tickets are on sale now. Sunday is VINO FOR VETS day where all veterans and soldiers get in free as a thank you for their service to our Country. Peterson said that 12 wineries will be spotlighted with wine tasting along with food, a Corks N' Creation area featuring artisans and music on stage both days. Peterson said that with the help of the WI Dept. of Tourism's JEM Grant, they were able to advertise in the Twin Cities, Chicago, Rochester, Rockford, Milwaukee and Madison markets. Monroe County Tourism is a Bronze sponsor of the event. Express Tickets are on sale now.

Monroe County E.D. Coordinator Report:

PROSPECTS

Like any summer month, activity is sporadic. Not a lot of new prospects but quite a bit of dialogue with prospects who have had different levels of interest in the County.

Prospect 1 – continued dialogue about a lodging facility near the hospital/clinic construction in Tomah. Because of those projects, naturally there is quite a bit of interest in that area for lodging, food, professional offices.

Prospect 2 – restaurant facility near the hospital/clinic location. Same reasons as the lodging interest.

Prospect 3 – looking to relocate current business into the old feed mill complex in Cashton. Premier Cooperative is working with the Cashton Development Corporation on repurposing that buildings after Premier closed and moved to Westby in early May.

Prospect 4 – looking at renovating their old barn into an event barn for seasonal events. Applying for the County RLF too.

Prospect 5 – retail business looking at the north side of Tomah near Wal Mart.

Prospect 6 – competed against 27 other locations in the Midwest for this food processing company. They are looking at either expanding or relocating and Monroe County is their only Wisconsin location in the final 3. I've been working with this prospect for 3 ½ years.

Prospect 7 – food processing company looking at leaving La Crosse County and moving business to Monroe County.

Prospect 8 – manufacturing company looking to relocate from Minnesota. Targeted area is Tomah or Sparta in Wisconsin. They are landlocked in the Twin Cities currently and would use their current location as research and development and build a new manufacturing plant elsewhere.

Prospect 9 – Established distribution outlet in the State is looking to expand with a possible location in Tomah because of the Interstate access.

Prospect 10 – meeting with a development company looking at possibly adding at least 1, if not more

assisted living apartment complexes in the County. There is a real interest on their end.

Prospect 11 – working with a company already located in the County who is looking at expanding with a potential distribution center.

Prospect 12 – working on a potential project with the current Dr. Rodamacher chiropractic facility that is for sale outside of Kendall on Highway 71.

Prospect 13 – working with prospect on setting up a 3 day site visit in mid-August. Looking at options in Sparta, Tomah, Cashton and Norwalk.

Prospect 14 – came back to the table after dropping us an option. Working on another meeting in the County with them in late August, early September. They are opening plants in Nebraska and Colorado but still feel Wisconsin has a ton of promise.

Prospect 15 – California company looking to expand into other regions of the country. Midwest has intrigued them and Monroe County is on their radar for a variety of reasons including transportation values and raw product being close by.

IN THE WORKS

Cashton Day Care – bids have been accepted and the expansion project will begin soon. They are also looking at the County RLF and MRRPC is working with them on the paperwork.

Old VIP Realty building – Tomah – renovations are going well on the new wine bar concept. They are hoping to have the business opening by VINO FEST weekend.

South Pointe Business Park – Sparta – infrastructure work is going very well. Prospects are working on options in the property. Look for the new dental office complex to maybe begin construction early fall.

Graceland Fruit – Warrens – transition has gone very well. Will be doing a tour of the facility and meeting with the new staff in a couple weeks.

Tomah Healthcare campus – construction ahead of schedule on both buildings and progress is getting a lot of attention by prospects and the public.

New restaurant – Kendall – a restaurant is opening up in a section of the old Kendall School. Other entrepreneurs are looking at the facility too to open up shop.

Toro – construction on their \$30 million expansion will begin next week.

Round-about – Sparta. Construction is getting close to completion. Good job keeping traffic through that area during the build.

Fiber optic – Tomah. Laying of fiber continues to in Tomah, near the new hospital and in the alleys behind downtown businesses.

Bank of Cashton – new building won't start construction until 2019 due to issues.

Lugar de Reunion – follow up meeting is being scheduled in the next few weeks. Discussions on how to build stronger relationships with the Hispanic population in the area.

Connect Community – surveys will be sent out in the next couple weeks to all the villages to gauge their issues for their communities now and in the near future, their goals and how they see the CC program helping them in those areas.

MEETINGS

- Met with Mosaic rep in Tomah for an interview about workforce & housing issues in the County and area.
- WEDC Board Meeting – Green Bay
- Met with Jim Bialecki to discuss the potential loss of my contract with the hiring of a new land use planner.
- Conference call with a broker representing 2 companies looking at Monroe County. We put together a digital proposal together using tools from the County E.D. web site.
- WI Rural Partners Board meeting – phone

- WEDA Board Meeting – Kenosha
- Business @ 5 at the Monroe County Fair
- Met with Tim Ehler from Principal to package incentives for future prospects
- Met with reps from State Bank Financial on getting their financial interests back up in the County.
- SW-ITBEC meeting at Branches Winery in Westby
- Working with Map N Tour on adding a quality of life section to the web site. This will help spotlight tourism attractions, events and what visitors can find around the County.
- Monroe County Job Initiative Meeting – August 2nd
- Community Venture Network meeting – Twin Cities – tomorrow
- Working on the outline for the 2019 Monroe County E.D. Conference on Feb. 27-28 at Three Bears Resort. In discussion with some speakers already. Topics include workforce, retention/recruitment, marketing online, tourism. Others being added.

REPORTS:

Tomah Chamber of Commerce

- Sheriff's Forum featuring the 5 candidates went well. Over 150 people attended the event at the Tomah High School Auditorium. The Forum is also available for viewing on YouTube.
- Music on Milwaukee is Sat., August 11th with 3 bands.

7 Rivers Alliance – S. Peterson informed the Committee that there will be a Workforce Summit on Sept. 19th at the Cranberry Country Lodge. Tickets can be purchased on the 7 Rivers Alliance web site.

Hidden Valleys – no report. S. Peterson said that he was attending their Board meeting on 8/15 and would report back in September's meeting. The Committee is still looking for a representative to attend their monthly Board meetings.

SW-ITBEC – S. Peterson informed the committee that SW-ITBEC has been very active this past year with their financial support of many projects and that they are looking at trying to attract more Counties in SW Wisconsin to budget and join the organization.

Peterson said that SW-ITBEC was having a booth at the WCA State Convention in La Crosse in late September. He reminded the committee that in the past, the County EDCT had a booth at the Convention when it is held in La Crosse. Peterson said that he'd be willing to set up the booth and work on having people in the booth at Marketplace on September 24th. T. Townsell said she'd see if she could get some giveaways from Ft. McCoy for the booth. Motion by D. Peterson to have a booth at the WCA State Convention. 2nd by M. Halverson. Motion carried.

Local History room – no report

Ft. McCoy

- EPA is having a "Closing a Permit" event at the Sparta American Legion on September 5th. There was an EPA study on some of the grounds at Ft. McCoy and this event marks the end of the study and the closing out of the permit.
- Lots of military exercises happening on the base right now.
- August 30th – Community/Business Appreciation Party
- Reminder that August 13th – 24th there is the Northern Lights Maneuvers at Volk Field that Ft. McCoy takes part in. Be aware of loud noises and flyovers during this training session.

Sparta Chamber of Commerce – no report

Agenda Items for next month:

- Land Use Planner job description & County E.D. Coordinator work summary
- Solutions to Workforce Summit
- Monroe County E.D. Conference
- Committee member replacement
- Monroe County EDCT booth – WCA State Convention
- Budget Update – Potential Projects
- Sparta Wine/Walk sponsorship

Next Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 13th at 9:00am in Cashton. Location will be determined.

Motion by D. Peterson to adjourn. 2nd by M. Halverson. Meeting adjourned at 11:27am.

Submitted by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve Peterson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Steve Peterson