

KANDIYOHI COUNTY AND CITY OF WILLMAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)
BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION/RECRUITMENT (BRE/R) COMMITTEE

MINUTES

November 18, 2016

EDC Board Room

Present: Jim Ellingson, Roger Imdieke, Jean Marthaler via telephone and Les Nelson

Excused: Sam Bowen, Bob Carlson and Ranae Rahn

Staff: Aaron Backman, Executive Director

Secretarial: Nancy Birkeland, Legal & Administrative Assistants, Inc. (LAA)

Chair Les Nelson called the meeting to order at approximately 9:20 a.m.

AGENDA—

IT WAS MOVED BY Jim Ellingson, SECONDED BY Roger Imdieke, to approve the Agenda as emailed. MOTION CARRIED.

MINUTES—

IT WAS MOVED BY Roger Imdieke, SECONDED BY Jim Ellingson, to approve the minutes of the October 21, 2016 meeting as emailed. MOTION CARRIED.

REPORTS—

Business Visits/Tours. Aaron Backman reported he attended the 2016 Industrial and Economic Development Summit where he connected with site developers, mainly for the Twin Cities area. The consensus at the Summit appeared to be that 2017 will be a positive year for industrial/warehouse development. This week, the EDC hosted Deane Foote, a site selector from Arizona, who toured the Willmar area, including the Industrial Park. Foote noted to Backman that working in Minnesota can be challenging due to its tax structure. Roger Imdieke stated Foote indicated some frustration with the lack of information from the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) office. Foote had indicated it would be valuable if a spec building was built in the Industrial Park, however, Backman stated that is costly and a financial risk. Nelson noted a distribution warehouse is valuable and generally needed for communities. Backman showed the new DEED magazine, *Minnesota Thriving in the North*, a copy of which he gave to Foote. Backman discovered DEED has not yet given the magazine to a number of site selectors. Backman will be contacting DEED as to how the magazine is distributed. Backman

stated Connie Schmoll may attend a major cheese conference in Wisconsin in April 2017. Willmar's diverse downtown business community was featured on MSNBC's *Your Business* show this past Sunday and showed Willmar in a positive light. Backman showed aerial photos he engaged a photographer to take of the Industrial Park. Backman reported ERC Holdings received approval for a Job Creation Fund grant from the State of Minnesota and is in the process of hiring staff.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

2016-2017 Goals. The committee reviewed the proposed 2016-2017 committee goals (see attached).

Board Goal 1. Expansion of High-Speed Broadband in Rural Kandiyohi County. Some objectives/actions under this goal are completed and some are in process. The EDC is waiting to hear if the county will be awarded a state broadband grant.

Board Goal 2. Transportation Infrastructure—Improve, Maintain and Expand Kandiyohi County's Transportation Infrastructure through Increased Collaboration. Backman reported Oasis Aero, Inc. is the new FBO (fixed base operator) at the Willmar Airport. Backman suggested the EDC potentially could create a marketing flyer for the Willmar Airport. Nelson recommended being proactive and going to a flyers association to promote the airport. Nelson noted numerous businesses are in the vicinity of Flying Cloud Airport and may be looking to expand—the committee suggested contacting some of those businesses. Backman stated some businesses need to be near a runway and others could be in the Industrial Park. Jean Marthaler commented a business must be aware of air space when building near an airport. Marthaler suggested it would be beneficial if the city placed the Willmar Airport on Google Maps. Backman stated he agreed to serve on the Airport Master Plan Committee. Nelson will forward to Backman a marketing plan he created several years ago for the Willmar Airport.

It was the consensus to change the second Objective/Action under Strategy 2.1. to “Participate in Airport Master Plan Committee and assist with goals and objectives.”

Strategy 2.2 Railroad. Leave as is.

Add Strategy 2.3 Highway 23 and move the fourth Objective/Action under Strategy 2.2 to the new Strategy 2.3. It was suggested to possibly hold a Transportation Summit in July. Imdieke recommended including MnDOT representatives for Highway 23 around Paynesville as that is in a different district.

Board Goal 3. Industrial Park Development. Leave as is.

Board Goal 4. Expand Funding Options for Businesses in Kandiyohi County. Backman noted WAM-BC (Willmar Area Multicultural Business Center) is a 501(c)(3) that could be beneficial to the

EDC. In discussions with Backman, WAM-BC's board is supportive of moving into the EDC's vacant office, which Backman has proposed to the EDC Joint Operations Board.

[Roger Imdieke was excused from the meeting.]

Backman reported on discussions with Scott Marquardt of Southwest Initiative Foundation about a BRE grant for diverse businesses. The EDC Joint Operations Board is in support of receiving such a grant. The grant would be for seven months and focus on meeting with minority-owned businesses.

Goal 6. Create, Recruit, Retain and Expand Businesses in Kandiyohi County. It was the consensus, to move the fourth objective, Initiate Diverse BRE Program, to Goal 4.

Committee membership. Due to her schedule and inability to attend committee meetings, Marthaler invited Dean Steinwand of Heritage Bank to join the committee and requested he be added to meeting notices. Marthaler is willing to stay on the committee for the present.

Other. Backman reported a housing developer is considering making offers to purchase properties around the downtown Willmar Mills Auto site.

ADJOURNMENT—There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:19 p.m.

NEXT MEETING—The next regular committee meeting is **9:00 a.m., December 16, 2016**, in the EDC Board Room.



Kandiyohi County & City of Willmar
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

2016/2017 Goals and Projects

Business Retention and Expansion/Recruitment (BRE) Committee

Goal 1 Expansion of High-Speed Broadband in Rural Kandiyohi County

Strategy 1.1 Business Retention and Expansion

Objectives/Actions	Responsibility	Target Date	Status/Update/Comments
Complete Kandiyohi County Broadband Feasibility Study	Connie, Broadband Committee	August 2016	Communication Network Engineering (CNE) completed the study on 8/12/2016. The final report concerning the feasibility study was submitted to and approved by the Blandin Foundation on 11/3/2016. The study report provided information for the state Border-to- Border grant application.
Network with current broadband providers and elected officials to work toward continued expansion of high-speed broadband	Connie		Attended Blandin Broadband Conference in September and Broadband Communities Fiber Conference in October; provided opportunity to meet with several legislators, private broadband providers and others to promote broadband projects in Kandiyohi County.
Submit Border-to-Border Grant Application to Office of Broadband/DEED	Connie, Broadband Committee	October 2016	Consolidated Telephone Company (CTC) submitted a \$5 million grant application to DEED on 10/3/2016. Kandiyohi County indicated it would support providing loans to CTC to secure local match for the grant. Grant rewards may be announced sometime in December 2016.
Continue project planning to move toward high-speed internet access throughout Kandiyohi County	Connie	Throughout 2016/2017	Joann Hovis, President of Community Toolkit Technology and Energy and CEO of Coalition for Local Internet Choice, has provided some consultation advice for moving forward as we continue project planning. The Broadband Committee did not meet in November and will continue with meetings in December.

Goal 2 Transportation Infrastructure—Improve, Maintain and Expand Kandiyohi County's Transportation Infrastructure through Increased Collaboration

Strategy 2.1 Willmar Municipal Airport

Objectives/Actions	Responsibility	Target Date	Status/Update/Comments
Support efforts of the city of Willmar to market the airport to existing and prospective businesses within the city/region	Aaron	Throughout 2016/2017	
Assist city of Willmar with any funding opportunities to maintain, improve or expand the existing facility	Aaron	Throughout 2016/2017	
Examine opportunities to create linkages that might expand the utilization of the airport	Aaron	Throughout 2016/2017	

Goal 2 Transportation Infrastructure—Improve, maintain and expand Kandiyohi County’s transportation infrastructure through increased collaboration			
Strategy 2.2 Railroad			
Objectives/Actions	Responsibility	Target Date	Status/Update/Comments
Assist efforts of BNSF, city of Willmar and Kandiyohi County on all funding opportunities through the TIGER federal grant program, MnDOT and DEED for construction of a rail bypass west of Willmar	Aaron	Throughout 2016/2017	EDC participates in weekly conference calls for the Railroad Wye Project. Attend public engagement sessions for project, including at the Willmar Library.
Coordinate with BNSF, city of Willmar and Kandiyohi County a design build for a rail-serviced Industrial Park loop for land west of the expanded Willmar Industrial Park	Aaron	Ongoing	In July 2016, developed another version of the Willmar Rail Park and provided it to the Willmar Wye partners.
Coordinate with BNSF marketing outreach to rail-serviced customers that are in need of expanded building development opportunities with the Willmar Industrial Park	Aaron	Ongoing	
Engage Highway 23 Coalition and Willmar Chamber of Commerce to hold a Transportation Summit in Willmar to promote with MnDOT the development of passing lanes along Highway 23 corridor from Willmar to I-90 and the completion of the planned 4-lane along Highway 23 between New London, Paynesville and Richmond	Aaron	June 2017	In November, had discussions with Ken Warner, Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce, regarding Transportation Summit.
Goal 3 Industrial Park Development			
Strategy 3.1 Mapping of industrial development within Kandiyohi County for infrastructure and services			
Objectives/Actions	Responsibility	Target Date	Status/Update/Comments
Complete shovel-ready process for Willmar’s Industrial Park 4 th Addition and portion of unplatted area	Aaron Bruce Peterson	July 2016	Application submitted to DEED 6/7/2016. John Rhodes, DEED Consultant, visited on 6/15/2016. On 6/30/2016 notified 181-acre site approved by DEED. Completed flyer for Willmar Industrial Park on 10/27/2016. Invited 10 site selectors from around the country to visit Willmar. On November 15 and 16, 2016, Deane Foote, site selector from Arizona, visited Willmar and toured the Industrial Park.
Assist other cities in county to map industrial properties and/or consider the shovel-ready process	Aaron	August 2017	
Contact service providers (utilities, broadband, telcos) for cooperative mapping programs for Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar	Connie		
Work with countywide community officials and real estate professionals to create and maintain a compilation of	Connie	June 2017	

available commercial and industrial property			
Update Community Profile information in searchable database on EDC's website. Ensure that Location One Information Services (LOIS) is current on EDC website	Connie	December 2016	Entered all available platted sites for Industrial Park into LOIS database.
Goal 4 Expand Funding Options for Businesses in Kandiyohi County			
Strategy 4.1 Economic development programs, including WAM-BC, downtown development and community development throughout Kandiyohi County			
Objectives/Actions	Responsibility	Target Date	Status/Update/Comments
Attend WAM-BC Board of Directors meetings as liaison to promote collaboration and EDC programs and services	Aaron	Ongoing	
Encourage co-location of WAM-BC with the EDC, utilizing the vacant office of the former Assistant EDC Director	Aaron	March 2017	During the Fall of 2016, ongoing discussions with WAM-BC Board members, EDC Joint Operations Board and the Elks Board officers.
Provide outreach to city councils within the county to promote collaboration and EDC programs and services	Connie	Throughout 2016/2017	Attended Atwater EDA meeting in October. Currently working on locating a site for a business that may expand in the city of Atwater within the next two-three years. Worked with New London Mayor and EDA members to accommodate visit with Sen. Franken Field Rep., Carson Ouellette, October 2016.
Goal 6 Create, Recruit, Retain and Expand Businesses in Kandiyohi County			
Strategy 6.1 Business Retention and Expansion			
Objectives/Actions	Responsibility	Target Date	Status/Update/Comments
Complete step 2, analyze data and create reports from 2014 Kandiyohi County Business Visitation program	Connie, Visitation Program Participants	June 2017	Completed in 2015
Initiate and move forward step 3, projects to respond to identified issues from the 2014 Kandiyohi County Business Visitation Program	Connie, Visitation Program Participants	Throughout 2016/2017	Completed in 2015
Provide follow-up to individual businesses with expressed needs from 2014 visitation program	BRE Program Directors and Coordinators	April 2017	Completed in 2015
Introduce BRE program to cities in Kandiyohi County that were not part of 2014 programs and implement BRE visitation programs in at least three of the cities. (Willmar, Spicer, New London and Atwater completed and a few businesses in Raymond and Pennock)	Connie		Completed New London in 2015 and Atwater in 2016. The Atwater EDA will conduct follow-up to implement a city-wide marketing program. BRE survey program planned for agriculture producers throughout the county during February of 2017.
Initiate Diverse BRE Program	Aaron and Connie	June 2017	In November 2016, discussions held with Scott Marquardt, SWIF, regarding \$15,000 grant to EDC on program to assist minority business owners.