

KANDIYOHI COUNTY AND CITY OF WILLMAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)
JOINT OPERATIONS BOARD OF DIRECTORS (OB)
MARKETING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES
June 23, 2014
EDC Board Room, Willmar

Present: Shari Courtney, Lindsey Donner, Mitra Engan, Jean Geselius, Ann Winge Johnson, Heather Koffler, Mike Negen, Julie Redepenning and Joanna Schrupp

Excused: Caroline Chan and Sarah Isdal

Guest: Betsy Bonnema, REDstar Creative

Staff: Jean Spaulding, Assistant Director

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

Jean Spaulding called the meeting to order at approximately 12:05 p.m.

MINUTES—

IT WAS MOVED BY Julie Redepenning, SECONDED BY Shari Courtney, to approve the minutes of the May 5, 2014, meeting as emailed. MOTION CARRIED.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

EDC fall insert. Spaulding noted there is no firm direction for the fall insert. Last month the committee did discuss including Vision 2040 in the insert. Other suggestions were to include the TEDx event and Social Media Rock Star. Spaulding stated Ridgewater College, along with colleges in Brainerd, Pine City and one in Texas, received an \$18 million Rural Information Technology Alliance grant it will use to develop programming for mobile devices, which could be a topic to include in the insert. Spaulding and Joanna Schrupp heard a presentation by a company seeking developers for mobile applications for outdoor events and marathons.

[Betsy Bonnema joined the meeting.]

The fall insert will be published in September.

Professional photographer. Spaulding reported she spoke with Mark Peterson who may attend next month's committee meeting. Heather Koffler spoke with Heidi Duke Wuertz, who is also interested. Wuertz will be invited to attend next month's meeting, as well. Suggested

photos to obtain may be redevelopment projects that are happening, such as the Historic 313 building. Lindsey Donner stated TerWisscha Construction is having photos taken of the Happy Sol in New London. Jean Geselius will check with Liz VanDerBill for Ridgewater College photos. LAA will email area events to ask if they have photographs that may be used in community marketing. Peterson informed Spaulding he felt the EDC's new Jump In ads will draw more attention in the Visitors Guide than ads previously used.

NEW BUSINESS

2015 Willmar Lakes Area Guide ad.

IT WAS MOVED BY Julie Redepenning, SECONDED BY Joanna Schrupp, to repeat the same size ad for 2015 that was placed in the 2014 Willmar Lakes Area Visitors' Guide. MOTION CARRIED.

Social Media Rock Stars event sponsorship. Koffler informed the committee of the Social Media Rock Stars event. The event was held in Redwood Falls in 2013 and was attended by individuals from Redwood Falls, Willmar and the metro area and the event was trending on Twitter. This year, the event will be held September 17 at the Holiday Inn/Willmar Conference Center. The event is seeking sponsors. Spaulding stated the EDC sponsors these types of events as they bring up the prestige of the community and promote it to others. In addition to a sponsorship, the EDC could spend \$500 on a giveaway specifically for the event. The new stick chargers are popular giveaway items.

IT WAS MOVED BY Ann Winge-Johnson, SECONDED BY Mitra Engan, to sponsor the 2014 Social Media Rock Stars event in the amount of \$500 and to do a giveaway promotional product in an amount up to \$500. MOTION CARRIED with Heather Koffler abstaining.

Marketing Molenaar property. Spaulding informed the committee Steve Renquist requested this committee assist in promoting the former Molenaar property owned by Wilson Tools. Shari Courtney offered that typically a realtor will provide information to others who may be interested. Committee members offered the following suggestions:

- use a local realtor or co-list it with a local realtor
- identify alternative uses for the building, such as housing
- obtain information on the current condition of the building
- hold a real estate auction, which sometimes create excitement
- contact a local developer and/or architect to do a design feasibility for repurposing the building

Spaulding will forward the suggestions to the property owner.

EDC website. Spaulding stated Vision 2040 meetings are including discussions on a new website for Vision 2040 or working with existing websites to make them work better together. Spaulding noted the EDC's website needs to be updated and we do not want to wait too long, if Vision 2040 does not make a decision.

Increase awareness. Spaulding stated good and useful postings are made on the EDC's Facebook and Twitter accounts, but there is a need to increase their following and asked for the committee's assistance in that area. Koffler recommended creating a campaign plan. Bonnema suggested using the statistics from the Jump In campaign or a contest. Ann Winge Johnson suggested using LinkedIn as banks do not have Facebook or Twitter accounts. It was determined a plan to incorporate all was needed.

Other. Julie Redepenning asked for volunteers to assist with the New London/Spicer business, retention and expansion survey of 100 businesses. Volunteers will attend a training meeting and visit two business in a team between mid-July and the first part of August. The University of Minnesota Extension will process the data and present the communities with the survey results. Connie Schmoll of the EDC is the red flag person, who will attend to immediate action items. Spaulding informed the committee that the Blandin Foundation did not receive the grant to host Hackfests so it is possible Ridgewater, Blandin Foundation and the EDC will try do something on their own.

ADJOURNMENT—There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 1:15 p.m.

NEXT MEETING—The next committee meeting is 12 noon, Monday, July 28, 2014, in the EDC board room.