

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES

West Square Building, Room 213,
Baraboo, WI

Monday, July 25, 2011

Members present: Marty Krueger, Peter Murray, Dave Riek, Kathy Zowin, Don Stevens, Joel Gaalswyk

Members absent: Gerald Lehman

Others present: Kathy Schauf, Bill Stehling, Dana White-Quam, Frank Huntington, Steve Koenig, John McKenna, Gene Dalhoff, Donna Stehling, Sheri Walls

The meeting was called to order and certification of Open Meeting compliance was given at 6:30 p.m. **The agenda was approved on a motion by Murray, second by Zowin. Motion carried.**

The minutes from prior meetings were approved on a motion by Zowin, second by Riek. Motion carried.

Public Comment

Bill Mertens - Reasons to keep the forest:

- Recreational value
- Consistency with Comprehensive plans (town and county)
- Timber value
- Intrinsic value of non-developed land: property values
- Conservation issues – groundwater
- Sound stewardship of resources

John McKenna introduced himself and expressed his interest in the discussion of the community forest.

Communications

None

Business Items

Community Forest

Review of work and research to date – Steve Koenig reviewed studies conducted by Parks and the Town of Spring Green; and the history and management of the forest.

Process and location of future meetings – questions will be compiled and addressed at the next meeting.

The next meeting will be held in Spring Green with an in-depth tour of the forest at the outset of the meeting.

Trails Sub-Committee Process

Dana White-Quam and Frank Huntington updated the committee on the state processes for trail development and laid out expectations for what the desire from the local ad-hoc committee. Huntington indicated that the State intends to follow the timeline laid out by the County resolution that indicates acquisition of the line by the state prior to trail development. Funding of the acquisition was discussed. Acquisition funds have been cut in half. DOT still does not have final acquisition price for the line. It is an eligible project, even though many details are yet to be worked out. Acquisition has not been definitively defined. Huntington anticipates purchase at an undetermined date. It will potentially take a number of years. DOT works with both the transit commission and the railroad to approve transition to trails. There are a number of details to be worked out prior to finalizing the transition. Krueger updated the committee on discussions from state officials. The project is moving forward (procurement of Reedsburg to Madison line and trail development within communities). Krueger will continue to work with political units to demonstrate local support for the acquisition of the line by the state. Huntington responded to questions on timing regarding actions needed to finalize acquisition. WiDOT and DNR are working on agreement for Badger conversion.

White-Quam updated on the Badger portion of the line. Badger agreement will be completed by October, setting the property aside for trail use. Development will not occur until the remainder of the line is acquired. Having a corridor and connection is vital to having a usable resource. Worst case scenario for vacation of the land by GSA is 2017. The transition is an ongoing process. Master planning is scheduled to begin next year. This is a two year process. Master plan is to collect information on vegetation, soils, history of the site, and potential recreational uses. There will be multiple public input sessions. There are

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multiple areas of research that the subcommittee can participate in as the state is working on the development of the trail. White-Quam recommended the formation of a friends group for fund raising and educational purposes. The agreement that DNR and DOT enter into will protect the existing easement. Stehling indicated that the Chamber has been working on a brand for the river way. Trails typically cost anywhere from \$25,000 per mile for gravel to \$100,000 per mile for pavement. Committee will be charged with looking at the trail design process, and tasked with making sure the public and stakeholders are kept informed of the process. Newsletter process is another way of promulgating information about the process. DOT is unable to speak to connections via the rail bed to either Mazomanie or Reedsburg at this time.

Motion by Stevens, second by Riek, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Donald Stevens
Economic Development Committee Secretary