

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES

West Square Building, Room B24 & B30

Baraboo, WI

Monday, February 28, 2011

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

Members absent: Gerald Lehman

Represented Stakeholders: WSOR, Ken Lucht; WRRTC, Forest Van Schwartz; PLRTC, Virgil Kasper; MCRM, Don Meyer; Prairie du Sac, Ray Bolton; Sauk City, Donna Stehling; Baraboo, Ed Geick; Reedsburg, Don Lichte; United Cooperative, Alan Jantz; Town of Prairie du Sac / Badger, Bill Wenzel; Village of Rock Springs, none; Baraboo Chamber, none; Sauk Prairie Chamber, Patrick Taggart; Reedsburg Chamber, none; Together Sauk Prairie / Snowmobilers (Recreational Trails Advocates), Jody Kapp; Town of Excelsior, Joe Fish

Others present: Kathy Schauf, Gene Dalhoff, Barb Hummel, Sam Landes, Ron Haugen, Alan Wildman, Dan Fargen, Ted and Claire Walmer, Dana White Wuam, Elaine Meinholz, Chris Meinholz, Tim Lins, Dick Goddard, Rob Sinklair, Fred Halfen, Neghan Meinholz, Vern Meinholz, Greg Johnson, Kim Johnson, Jeff Hellebrand, Chris Radtke, Larry Volz, Fred Wolf, Tim Damos, Gary Tupper, Chris Hanson Scott Alexander, Pete Filus, Mike Carignan, Scott Stokes, Shari Walz, Tom Jackson, Frank Huntington, Dan Viste, Jenny Erickson

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 Zowin, second by Gaalswyk. Motion carried.**

Public Comment

Scott Stokes – spoke in favor of regional center for multi-use trail.

Rob Sinklair – spoke in favor of resolution supporting trail development that was previously considered by the Economic Development Committee.

Review ground rules:

1. Each here to build a collaborative relationship not to be “right.”
2. Each here to identify and solve a problem not to place blame.
3. Each can influence the outcome but I cannot control it.
4. Each will share all relevant information with integrity.
5. Each are willing to do the hard work necessary to create understanding.
 - One conversation at a time
 - I will listen actively
 - I will acknowledge others points and feelings
 - I will utilize “I” statements not “you” statements
 - I will speak for his/her benefit, not his/her loss (No zingers)
6. Public comment will be on the agenda at the beginning and end of each meeting. The audience will speak only during public comment.
7. Number of stakeholder representatives needed to hold a meeting: Thirteen (13). (If the primary stakeholder is not available, secondary named representative will be counted.)
8. Recommendations will be formed by consensus. Consensus is defined as “I can live with it”. When calling for consensus, stakeholder representatives will ask for thumbs up or down. Those items not having consensus will be noted as such.

Synopsis of prior meetings and priority groupings was distributed (see below).

Overview of process since last stakeholder meeting

August 25, 2010 meeting of the stakeholder group

- **It was agreed that the elected officials of the three villages and the railroad and United Cooperative representatives would meet prior to next large stakeholder meeting to develop a joint solution for continued rail service and recreational trail development in the Sauk-Prairie area.**

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September 15, 2010 - meeting: Jim Anderson, Ray Bolton, Ken Lucht, Karl Beth, Barb Hummel, Alan Wildman, Karna Hanna, Marty Krueger, Bill Wenzel, Donna Stehling, Cheryl Sherman, Vicki Bruenig, Ron Lins, Dave Bierman, Richard Marks, Kathy Schauf

- WSOR took proposed rail service to Coop through Industrial Park off the table
- Villages and townships agreed that service to Coop and other potential users is an important issue that needs to be resolved. Therefore, WSOR and United Coop agreed to look at options to make this happen before meeting again with village representatives.

November 18, 2010 meeting: Jim Anderson, Ray Bolton, John Lichtenheld, Ken Lucht, Karl Beth, Barb Hummel.

- Until Merrimac Bridge is publicly owned, WSOR is wanting to hold onto southern route of railroad into Sauk County
- WSOR offered the option of permit for joint or shared use of rail corridor through the villages.
- WSOR agreed to work with bottlenecks in the rail corridor where the slope would be too steep to establish a trail in the right of way.

December 1, 2010 large stakeholder meeting set, with intention to bring option of a shared use of rail corridor to the stakeholder group for discussion and its impact on trail development.

- Meeting was cancelled when it was reported that the villages no longer supported the shared use option.

January 10, 2011 meeting at DOT in Madison: Alan Wildman, Ken Lucht, Frank Huntington, Marty Krueger, Kathy Schauf, Amy Seeboth, Sherie Walz, Barb Hummel

- WSOR's concern about the condition and ownership of Merrimac line makes them want to keep the southern line as an option as their only other public access point into Sauk County
- Reviewed shared right of way option WSOR still is willing to offer
- DOT indicated there is federal highway funding for trail conversions onto rail right-of-way
- Maintenance/clean-up of the rail must be part of the solution as well

February 3, 2011

- Sauk County Economic Development Committee voted 3-3 on a resolution presented by members of the Sauk County Board from the Sauk and Prairie areas, to request WisDOT railbank the rail corridor from the Sauk City Rail Bridge to Highway 78.

Priority groupings from meeting #1, resorted

A. Line - Securing permanent access of rail into Sauk County

3. Secure permanent rail from Madison to Reedsburg.
15. WRTC – preservation of existing rail corridor.
6. Have level of comfort with rail service to northern Sauk County
14. Midcontinent rail access to Madison (ie: general rail system).
4. Understand ownership of rail re: maintenance and cost.
2. WisDOT become an owner of the Merrimac bridge/line.
9. Want ownership of entire railroad line from Madison to Reedsburg in public ownership.
5. Develop financial analysis of cost associated with repair of Merrimac Bridge.

B. Establishing rail service in Sauk City, Prairie du Sac

7. Re-establish dependable rail service in Sauk Prairie area.

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11. Cost and benefit of establishing rail system into Sauk city. Information to include impact of condemnation of four businesses.

13. Highway 12 bypass – can we open a discussion with WiDOT?

20. Environmental impact of bridge replacement at Sauk City.

21. Impact on new bypass if Sauk City Bridge is replaced.

C. Issues related to multi-use trail development and opportunities

1c. interest in rail to trail from Dane through Sauk (Map 5-2 of Comprehensive Plan).

19. Capitalizing on unique opportunity of a multi-county recreational trail system.

17. WSOR - Liability and safety (assumes a jointly used corridor).

16. Concern over rail conversion to trails that is essentially permanent.

8. Review costs of building multi-use trail development.

D. Considered Procedural: (1a, 1b, 18, 22)

1a. ensure a quality of life for residents

1b. economic development of downtown

18. Safety costs of unused rail corridors

Items beyond the scope of the discussion:

- Cost benefit analysis decisions
- Environmental impact of train derailment on wetlands etc. when transporting potentially hazardous materials.
- Determine economic benefits of Rails to Trails.

Summary of discussion

Committee members discussed the events that had occurred since the last meeting. Bolton read the resolution forwarded by the Villages of Prairie and Sauk on February 8, 2011 to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation. The group discussed where there was potential consensus and where there were break downs in consensus. Much of the discussion focused on clarifying perspectives.

Key points of the discussion included:

- The scope of a potential trail (ie: within the two villages or a regional trail that goes from the villages to Devils Lake and potentially connects with other trails).
- The viability of joint use of the existing rail corridor in the villages.
- Huntington apprised the group of the anticipated DOT process for considering the acquisition of the UP line from Madison to Reedsburg. The ramifications of such a purchase and how it would provide greater security for continued rail service and an opening for trail development were explored. A local match would be required if this plan were to come to fruition.
- The potential for continued rail service in the villages and service to United Cooperative.

Consensus motions

Stakeholder motion by Wenzel, and second by Kapp – for consensus by stakeholders.

Trail that is multiple use that runs from the Sauk County line, through the villages of Sauk and Prairie, up through Badger to Devil's Lake State Park. That it be part of the federal Rails to Trails program, on the rail bed all of the way – at the Y other trail locations would need to be identified. **Six in favor. Seven opposed.**

Lichte / Fish - Should the state acquire the line from Madison to Reedsburg there would be consensus support for a trail that is multiple use that runs from the Sauk County line, through the villages of Sauk and

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Prairie, up through Badger to Devil's Lake State Park. That it be part of the federal Rails to Trails program, on the rail bed all of the way – at the Y other trail locations would need to be identified.

Ten in favor. Two opposed. One abstention.

Next Steps

- The Economic Development Committee will discuss the next steps at their next meeting.
- A final stakeholder meeting will be scheduled to report back next steps and bring stakeholders up-to-date on developments.

Public questions and comments

Ted Walmer – Merrimac Snow Busters – snowmobilers will put in the time to aid in trail development. 90% of trail from Y is done. Snowmobile club priority is safety.

Fred Halfen – commented regarding process from here – ie: resolution to move forward to County Board.

Dan Fargen: ATV's, multiple use trail systems

Set future meeting dates. **Next Economic Development Rail and Trail Stakeholder meeting date: to be determined.**

Motion by Murray, second by Gaalswyk, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Donald Stevens

Economic Development Committee Secretary