

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES

West Square Building, Room B24 & B30

Baraboo, WI

Wednesday, August 25, 2010

Members present: Marty Krueger, Joel Gaalswyck, Kathy Zowin, Peter Murray,

Members absent: Don Stevens, Shawn Posewitz, Gerald Lehman

Represented Stakeholders: WSOR, Ken Lucht; WRRTC, Amy Seeboth; PLRTC, Alan Anderson; MCRM, Don Meyer; Prairie du Sac, Ray Bolton; Sauk City, Jim Anderson; Baraboo, Ed Geick; Reedsburg, Don Lichte, John Dougherty; United Cooperative, Karl Beth; Town of Prairie du Sac / Badger, Bill Wenzel; Village of Rock Springs, Marvin Holtz; Baraboo Chamber, Gene Dalhoff; Sauk Prairie Chamber, Patrick Taggart; Reedsburg Chamber, Kristine Koenecke, Carrie Kovell; Together Sauk Prairie / Snowmobilers (Recreational Trails Advocates), Chuck Cady

Others present: Kathy Schauf, Karna Hanna, Barb Hummel, Tracy Taggart, Susan Kenney, Jim Franke, Pete Storch, Virgil Kasper, Gregg Johnson, Kim Johnson, Scott Scherer, Scott Alt, Melody Moore, Deaxi Faber, Mark Hertzfeldt, Kim Underdahl, Kris Harbort, Sam Landes, Claire Meinholz, Chris Meinholz, Pete Filus, Mike Carignan, Steve Scisll, Vern Menholz, Kurt Eakle, Brandy O'Leary, Keith Kading, Linda Kading, Eldorn Ruehling, Paul Dietmann, Randy Krantz, Laurie Spahn, Kevin Meinholz, Dan Fargen, David Kerl, Rob Sinklair, Jenny Haack, Mike Frey, Debbie Koznos, Scott Stokes, Barbara Cady, Timm Zumm, Matthew Habada, Brandon Greenheck, Randy Carey, Dean Breunig, Meghan Meinholz, Gary Williams, Chris Hanson, Catherine Frisch, John Geoghegan, Greg Zygan, Ruth Trupp, Tim Lins, Haakon Carlson, Laurie Cody, Shari Walz, Jeremiah Tucker, Jim Meier, Mark Kuehn, Don Pertzborn, Don Meyer, Randy Schoenenmann, Harold Weber, Diane Wipperfurth, Dave Sarbacker, Andrea Gibson, Mike Gibson, John Simonson, Dave Tremble, Tom Jackson, Lynn Mittelsteadt, Julie Hellenbrand, Don Lichte, Randy Krumenauer, Philippe Coqijard, Joe Fish, Ted Walmer, Claire Walmer, Mike Schiffman, Gene Robkin, Thane Newman, Bill Stehling, Donna Stehling, Richard Handel, Ron Haugen, Frank Huntington, John Sauer, Linda Sauer, Jason Accola, Jamie Dahlk, Jeff Balch, Jonathan Cody, Kurt Wenger, 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 Murray, second by Gaalswyk. Motion carried.**

Public Comment

Rob Sinklair – Merrimac bridge study review, conversion would be economic engine.

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

Dan Fargen – off road recreational club member who supports a multi use trail system

Randy Krumenauer – supports Rails to Trails

Philippe Coqijard – In support of a trail.

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.

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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.

Review of meeting process

Focus of tonight's meeting: rail service in Sauk County (priorities A & B from priority grouping below)

- 1) Can we get consensus that the stakeholders agree that permanent access of rail from Madison to Reedsburg is essential? (addresses items 3, 15, 6,14) DISCUSSION if needed.
- 2) Discussion related to second cluster of issues under item A (addresses items 4,2,9)
Any consensus/recommendations the stakeholder group wants to make on this grouping of issues?
- 3) Second priority grouping, *establishing rail service in Sauk City, Prairie du Sac*:
Information to get shared status/understanding:
 - a. Villages' official position on re-establishing dependable rail service in Sauk Prairie area – Ray Bolton and Jim Anderson
 - b. WSOR's intentions re: rerouting rail service – Ken Lucht
 - c. Current status re: Highway 12 bypass plan – Frank Huntington
- 4) What discussions are needed before making recommendations about rail service to Sauk City and Prairie du Sac?

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.
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

1. Consensus was reached by the stakeholders that permanent access of rail from Madison up through to Reedsburg is essential.

2. Discussion related to second cluster of issues in cluster A above:

- Re: ownership of rail re: maintenance and cost;
- WisDOT become an owner of the Merrimac bridge/line;
- Want ownership of entire railroad line from Madison to Reedsburg in public ownership.

Discussion:

- Current arrangement is an agreement between two private parties (WSOR and Union Pacific) in the form of a lease that must be re-negotiated periodically. Current agreement expires in October of 2011.
- Huntington from DOT apprised group of requirements for state involvement and limitations on state funding.

3. Second priority grouping (cluster B above): establishing rail service in Sauk City, Prairie du Sac.

Information re: Official village position on re-establishing dependable rail service in Sauk Prairie area

- Ray Bolton – Prairie du Sac
 - No desire to disrupt rail service to the area.
 - Request consideration of trail request.
 - United Cooperative is a viable business. Reaffirm that area is potential customer of the service provided.
 - Line from Mazo to Devils Lake is publicly owned, and has been dormant for a decade.
 - Request that the County support Rails to Trails initiative.
- Jim Anderson – Sauk City
 - 14 rail crossings in the Village.
 - In support of rail from Madison to Merrimac.
 - Would like to see rail abandoned through community (safety).

- No prospective customers for rail use.
- Bill Wenzel – Town of Prairie du Sac
 - Quality of life issue. In support of a rail to trail conversion.
 - Respectful of the continued use of rail in the County.

WSOR's intentions re: rerouting rail service

- Ken Lucht, WSOR
 - 576 carloads originating in County. Has jumped 300%. Increase is due to private public partnerships that have been effective. 14 customers save \$3 million annually.
 - Awareness of United Cooperative activities within the county. Potential industrial development. WSOR is willing to take off the table their plan to reroute rail service through the industrial park.
 - Offer to communities – help us identify opportunities, enter into a dialog to address existing needs for rail service, discuss benefits we could achieve. 3.5 million bushels of grain which could be transported by rail.
 - Discussions to meet community needs and desires and rails.
- Karl Beth – United Cooperative (user of rail services in Sauk Prairie area)
 - Economic benefit to customers that sell grain to the cooperative (farmers save in shipping costs). Rail is more cost effective for transporting grain.
 - Discussions of options including short haul truck traffic to utilize rail service in Sauk Prairie area. Make transfers on Sauk County side to avoid congestion with Highway 12 traffic.
 - Grain facility next to feed mill on Highway 60 had looked to the Sauk area for potential investment. Volume makes the location feasible. Securing rail service would be of benefit. Transferred grain to rail head in Rock Springs. Rock Springs is built out to capacity.
 - Freight rates based on markets that it has proximity to determine preferred locations. Load out on Mazo to Sauk line results in cost savings.

Highway 12 bypass plan – current status

- Frank Huntington, WiDOT
 - Frank will research agreement regarding Highway 12 bypass. Attempt at consensus on Madison to Sauk portion.
 - Discussions cannot be initiated until 2020.

It was agreed that the elected officials of the three villages and the railroad representative will meet prior to next large stakeholder meeting to talk about rail service and potential conversion. They will report back to the larger stakeholder group.

Potential change in venue for next stakeholder meeting. Date will be determined via Doodle.

Public questions and comments

Gene Robkin – considering some items beyond the scope is incorrect.

Sam Landis – Consideration should be given to those who want to use the trail system.

Rob Sinklair – Question regarding the ongoing lease of the UP line.

Dave Tremble – Structure of discussion – focus on two point consensus that includes a regional recreational trail.

Timm Zumm – seconds Dave's motion

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Ken Underholt – Remember that snowmobilers are a good family sport.

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

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

Respectfully submitted,

Donald Stevens

Economic Development Committee Secretary