

KALAMAZOO COUNTY
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
MINUTES

MEETING DATE: Thursday, September 16, 2010
PLACE OF MEETING: County Administration Building

Present were: Clare Annen, Larry Baumgart, Ruth Blake, Leroy Crabtree, Julie Rogers, Anne Summerfield, Matthew VanDyk, Thell Woods
Comstock Township: Tim Hudson
Staff Support: David Artley, Jeff Hawkins (consultant), Lotta Jarnfelt
Absent: Robert Barnard, Representatives from Augusta and Kalamazoo
Recording Secretary: Lori Pyatt

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson VanDyk at 5:14 pm.

2. MEMBERS EXCUSED

Mr. Barnard's absence was determined to be un-excused.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion to approve the agenda was made, supported and approved.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion to approve the August 26th Minutes as presented was made, supported and approved.

5. CITIZENS COMMENTS

There were no comments made.

6. ACTION AGENDA

There were not items on the action agenda.

7. REPORTS

A. BY-LAWS REPORT

There was nothing reported.

B. UPDATE FROM STAFF ON APPLICATION FOR RZF PROJECT(S)

The remaining project, Bell's Brewery, would go before the County Board of Commissioners for discussion on Tuesday 9/21. The organization applying received rave reviews from County Legal, County Finance, Bond Specialists, Bond Attorney and from a third party financial reviewer.

The State Treasury will be claiming up to two thirds of the original Stimulus Allocation Bond Cap that has not been assigned effective October 8th, 2010.

There was some discussion on who would issue the bonds, the policies of local bond issuing bodies, and some of the potential costs involved. It would make economic sense for the Michigan Strategic Fund to issue the bonds. The County staff recommendation was to award Bells' \$12,400,000, which would be combined with \$4,000,000 from the company. The deadline for issuing bonds was December 31st of 2010, but work needed to start at the present. Discussion returned to the cost of issuing bonds and the County's stance on who would issue.

C. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FUND PROGRAM

This would be on the County's agenda the following Tuesday. Mr. VanDyk reported that the County Administrator and Deputy Administrator discussed un-freezing the funds and turning it into a loan program as previously discussed. One committee would exist as a subcommittee of Southwest Michigan First, and would possibly be housed with SWMF. The County EDC, SWMF and County Administration would each have at least one seat on the subcommittee, which would review the applications and make loan recommendations. Discussion ensued on the proposed organization and on the EDC's ultimate role.

Ms. Rogers felt it was important to remember the mission and vision was jobs and not just primary jobs; smaller businesses and small governmental projects (like the Augusta Bridge project) were also important.

Mr. Woods thought it was logical for the EDC to maintain relationship with SWMF and be the County's voice for countywide concerns. Mr. VanDyk thought it was an opportunity in that regard, and it would also be an opportunity to show what the EDC's skill-set was. To him it seemed a reasonable approach. He was interested to hear how the members felt about housing the subcommittee at SWMF. The members gave their views and discussed staffing needs, and the history of the fund. Mr. Annen suggested that the applications could come to the EDC to be considered on the basis of job creation. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Crabtree recalled that during his time on the County BOC that many Commissioners relegated the decision and discussion to SWMF, yet this body was more qualified than SWMF to support the needs of the entire County. Mr. VanDyk made the argument that, before this proposal, the EDC was entirely out of the conversation.

Discussion turned to the criteria for funding and of the County Administration's ultimate goal for the Fund. Mr. Artley stated he could send out the policy, adding that it needed much work. Mr. Artley thought that any new procedures drafted would outline the loan procedures.

Mr. Woods suggested that the by-laws could be changed to reflect the EDC's newer role in the community. Mr. VanDyk thought the way they were written would be needed at a later date – after a sense of cooperation was established. He expected to bring up the issue of primary jobs at the next meeting, but thought it was important to stay involved in the process.

Discussion returned to staff requirements for the proposed program. Ms. Rogers stated that it was clear in the meeting that the EDC would not be given a larger role. Mr. VanDyk asked the group if he accurately represented the EDC's views; discussion ensued, and many members agreed. It was declared that the group would vote on who would be filling its seat on the loan committee; the issue would be discussed in the future.

D. ACW UPDATE – There was nothing to report.

E. EVENT CENTER – The committee was back from summer break; the center was being lobbied for in Washington regarding RZF bonds, and another study would be done.

Mr. Artley stated that he would forward the minutes from the meeting to the EDC members.

8. OTHER

There was nothing reported.

9. BOARD MEMBERS COMMENTS

-Ms. Rogers asked that her wish be entered in the minutes that they find more ways to collaborate with the County, that information be brought to the EDC in a timely manner, and that they be kept informed of projects such as the Year-Round Farmers Market.

10. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made, supported, and approved at 6:05 p.m.

NEXT MEETING: Thursday, October 28, 2010

Respectfully submitted: LP