

SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS

Economic Development Committee
East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission
ECWRPC Offices
January 17, 2007

Committee Members Present:

Duane Brown, ChairmanWaupaca County
Merlin Gentz..... Calumet County
Kenneth Robl Winnebago County

Absent:

Brian Kowalkowski, Vice-Chair Menomonee County
M. Eugene Zueske.....Shawano County
Don Grissman.....Outagamie County

Staff Present:

Eric Fowle..... Executive Director
Betty Nordeng Associate Planner
Christine Kaup Associate Planner
Ed Kleckner..... Associate Planner

1. Welcome and Introductions, Duane Brown / Chairman

Duane Brown called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

Betty Nordeng announced that she will be leaving the Commission and her last day will be February 2, 2007, due to her family's move. Eric Fowle reported that he plans to seek someone to fill her position.

2. Economic Development Updates:

--2007 EDA CEDS and Planning Assistance Grant Status: East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission has been awarded the (\$51,628 plus East Central matching funds) Economic Development Planning Assistance Grant for 2007; all final and financial reports, and award request documents have been filed with the Chicago EDA Regional Office; the *Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy – 2006 Annual Report* (CEDS) has been printed, assembled, and is being distributed throughout the region. Final draft copies of the CEDS were distributed to those present.

--EDA NE WI Telecommunications Infrastructure Assessment Pre-Application Status:

Eric Fowle updated the Committee on the status of this grant request and that \$31,000 has been committed from the Wisconsin Department of Commerce with Calumet County serving as the agent. Eric reports that Jack Price has not responded to recent inquiries regarding the EDA portion (\$62,000), but that matches of \$15,000 each, from Bay Lake and East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commissions have been received.

--Calumet County Regional Economic Response Effort and EDA Amendment: Christine Kaup reported that the additional funds from the EDA grant amendment are being utilized to coordinate activities with Workforce Development, Inc., Fox Valley Technical College, Calumet County Economic Development Group, Calumet County UW-Extension, along with local elected and appointed officials (including a second Job Fair on either February 16 or 23, 2007, and brochure

that offers additional support to the New Holstein/Calumet County area). (Tecumseh Power Company has filed notice with the Division of Workforce Development on August 25, 2006 that they may be laying off 450 employees on or after October 27, 2006, "due to current business conditions and the cessation of certain operations in New Holstein" (Zorn, Letter to R. Danowski, 2006).)

--Regional Revolving Loan Fund Opportunities: Jerry Bougie, Winnebago County Planning Director, has requested that East Central consider administrating the Winnebago County Revolving Loan Fund, currently having a balance of approximately \$300,000 – that includes the \$75,000 assessment that P. H. Glatfelter Company had to forfeit for not following through with their economic development commitment to the region. Eric is proposing a regional revolving loan effort for the area, but cannot recommend Commission commitment to the administration of this fund.

--NEW North and East Central's Role: Eric Fowle and Christine Kaup attended the *NEW North Summit* in Manitowoc and learned of co-branding and other opportunities – such as serving as a resource for the promotion of the northeast 18-county region of Wisconsin. Eric is scheduled to meet with Robin Cannedy on January 30 to learn more of their needs. Jerry Murphy, Executive Director of NEW North has been invited to the quarterly commission meeting in April 2007.

--Wood Products and Timber Utilization Program Grant: Christine Kaup reported that WDNR Wood Products and Timber Utilization Program Grant funds has scheduled and finalized the plans for two conferences focused on the secondary wood industry:

- February 27, 2007, in Keshena at the College of the Menominee Nation, *Elements of Sustainable Forestry, Biomass Opportunities, etc.*;
- February 28, 2007 at LaSure's on Hwy 41 in Oshkosh, featuring *Lean Manufacturing*, along with the director of WoodLINKS, Inc., Steve Ehle, and others.

Brochures describing these conferences were provided. WoodLINKS Steve Ehle attended the Wisconsin Technical Education Association annual conference in Wisconsin Dells and has met with Brain Kowalkowski, UW-Extension in Keshena to discuss the possible establishment of a WoodLINKS program at Menominee High School.

Brochures for the *Woodland Owner's Conference*, scheduled for February 3, 2007 at LaSure's Banquet Hall in Oshkosh, were also distributed by Christine Kaup.

**--Fox River Heritage Corridor Grant Proposal and Fox Locks System activity update: -
Ed Kleckner**

Over the past 3 months the State Heritage Corridor proposal has evolved in its scope and strategies and staff are now submitting grant requests to the potential funding partners which include the region's Community Foundations, Economic Development Corporations, and state and federal agency sources. In December and early January staff presented the proposal to representatives of the Oshkosh, Fox Valley, Green Bay and Fond du Lac Community Foundations. The Oshkosh Area Community Foundation has made a funding commitment contingent upon the other foundations also partnering with them. We are waiting for the remaining committees to make their decisions.

The Fox River Heritage Corridor work is a cross-over project that serves 3 purposes. It provides increased public access and recreational opportunities along the river for local residents, but it is also important because it has two economic development components:

- Establishing a Fox-Wisconsin River State Heritage Parkway Corridor will provide an opportunity to draw in more people to expand our tourism economy.
- The Heritage Corridor will add to the quality of life that will make it easier for businesses to attract quality professionals and personnel.

The Winnebago Mental Health Institute's Picnic Point property was in jeopardy of being sold off for development purposes, something which every governmental jurisdiction and many private citizen and user group organizations had opposed. At ECWRPC's October 27th Commission meeting a motion was adopted unanimously to recommend transfer of the property to the WDNR Land Trust for recreational use. Mr. Kleckner reported that staff followed up on this action and wrote a letter which contained the Commission's action and a ten point explanation why the sale of this land was bad public policy, given the continuing growth of the region, and the ever increasing demand for public access to our waterfront recreational resources. This letter was sent to the Governor Jim Doyle's office, to his assistant, to Sec. Robert Cramer/DOA, Sec. Scott Hassett/DNR and the region's legislators. In early December the Governor's office sent out a Press release announcing that the Picnic Point property would be transferred to the WDNR at no cost to them. The economic Development implication is that a unique property like Picnic Point can contribute to an enhanced quality of life in the region making it easier for communities and corporations to attract the best and brightest employees.

Ed Kleckner reported that work on Phase I of the Fox River Navigation System Authority's lock restoration project, which included Appleton Locks 1-4 has now been completed. Staff passed out a press release handout which announced a public demonstration of the Appleton lock number Four (4) held in December, 2006. Commissioner Brown asked about the threat of invasive species getting into our waters with the opening of the system. Staff explained that the invasive species barrier that has been in place since the mid 1980's will remain in place. A lift will move boats around the barrier but only after they have been cleansed by a high temperature wash procedure that will be approved by the DNR. The river channel is and will be tightly controlled. The reason we see invasive species spreading to previously uninfected waters is that boats have been tailored between waters without inspections or proper cautions taken. This is an education problem. Greater education and enforcement working together is the solution. All water users must take responsibility for protecting our fisheries and water resources. Phase II will involve the locks between the Cedars in Little Chute and those located in Combined Locks.

--The Fox Cities Economic Development Partnership Activities Report (FCEDP) – Ed Kleckner

Staff reported that Fox Cities Economic development Partnership has been discussing with the Fox Cities Chamber the idea of forming a new Foreign Trade Zone (FTZ) or expanding an existing FTZ to include businesses in the Fox Valley area. Only 3 FTZ's exist currently in the State. They are located in Milwaukee, Madison & Green Bay. An FTZ is a specific area within the United States located in or near a port of entry, where certain types of merchandise can be imported without going through formal customs entry procedures which can cause significant delays in shipping and receiving assembly materials and raw materials needed for manufacturing.

The Partnership is also working with the Fox Cities Chamber on a new initiative called TEAM which will involve reaching out to corporate offices outside of our region who make decisions on the future of businesses they control within our region. Bill Welch and Chamber President Leon Church presented a video and a printed folder entitled "The Business Proposition Marketing Piece" to the FCEDP group. TEAM representatives would call on Headquarters and site selection consultants to make a case for what our region has to offer.

Ed Kleckner noted that ECWRPC had been contacted by a party acting as a representative for investors interested in acquisition of the Tecumseh plant in New Holstein. East Central staff provided the agent with maps and a packet of materials that was intended to give their client key information about Wisconsin tax advantages, state and federal resources, background on the business climate and testimonials from existing corporations doing businesses here now. The packet included contact information for the Kuka Robotics program director at the FVTC and other

key people who would be helpful if they wanted to enhance the plants operations. It also included background information on the Village of New Holstein and the quality of life in Northeast Wisconsin.

Ed Kleckner mentioned that planning was being done for the 2007 Global Trade Conference sponsored in conjunction with our bi-partisan congressional representatives, Tom Petri and Steve Kagen. The ECWRPC is a bronze level sponsor of this popular business event which focuses on helping our region's businesses do international trade, and sell their products overseas.

4. Housing Updates:

Betty Nordeng provided a brief description of the differences between the Fox Cities and Winnebagoland Housing Coalitions and described her involvement with each.

--Fox Cities Housing Coalition Update: Betty Nordeng summarized the Fox Cities Housing Coalition's current activities and shared their list of 2007 priorities. She also provided a very brief summary of C.H.A.T.'s (Community Health Action Team) proposal to increase accessibility and reduce the cost of prescription medication, which was shared with FCHC members.

--Winnebagoland Housing Coalition Update: Betty Nordeng provided an update on the current status of the Oshkosh Habitat for Humanity chapter.

5. Other Business:

--Northeast Wisconsin Regional Economic Development Partnership (NEWREP): Christine Kaup reported on her participation in the December NEWREP meeting, the concern regarding Wisconsin's Sunshine Law and how if 50% or more of the organization's funding is from public sources – MEETINGS MUST BE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC! Merlin Gentz suggested that a statement is placed on East Central's agendas reflecting this requirement.

- There are 53 entries for NEWREP's Business Plan Contest.

--Development of the Wisconsin Nonprofits Association: Betty Nordeng provided information on the development of the Wisconsin Nonprofits Association. The purpose of this emerging association will be to enhance the capacity and effectiveness of nonprofit organizations within Wisconsin.

--The Northeast Wisconsin Economic Development Trade Conference: Ed Kleckner provided two handouts that provided insight into the planning for the 2007 Global Trade Conference. The first is the minutes of the October 3rd kick-off planning meeting and the second is a "Timeline" established by the group for the many activities that need to take place between now and April 3rd when the conference takes place. The conference provides business in NE Wisconsin with valuable information and practical assistance with exporting their products in the world marketplace. Fred Monique is a resource that serves the entire 41 corridor, and provides personal assistance to businesses which do international business. This past year the conference was held in the Fox Cities so it is expected to be held back in Green Bay in 2007. The conference is sponsored by our two congressional representatives, Mark Green and Tom Petri. The ECWRPC was a sponsor in 2006.

--Wisconsin Aquaculture Association (WAA) Update: Bill West, President of the Wisconsin Aquaculture Association, has reported to Christine that the Northeast Wisconsin Fish Cooperative has been formed as a legal entity and is in the process of purchasing and selling fish; a workshop is scheduled for March 9, 2007 (afternoon only); an administrative assistance has been hired to manage finances and other clerical duties, along with updating the WAA Website.

--Conferences and Events Listing on ECWRPC Website: Christine Kaup is collaborating with Tim Badke, Information Technology Specialist, to establish keep a current listing of the conferences and events of interest in the region on the East Central Website. Copies of the present listing were shared with those present and Merlin Gentz offered to have the Wisconsin Counties Association's events included.

--Economic Development and Growing the Economy or Northern EDGE: Information that was downloaded from the Internet regarding Northern EDGE was shared by Christine. Three of East Central's member counties – Menominee and Shawano – are members of this economic development partnership. This is a demonstration project that "contributes to building foundations for local job growth and business development in 29 targeted counties in Northern Wisconsin," and "focuses on building capacity, creating economic and workforce resources, and stimulating business and industry activity" (<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/cced/economies/northernedge/> January 17, 2007).

6. Schedule next meeting – The next Economic Development Committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 18, 2007, at 1:30 p.m.
7. Adjourn – The motion to adjourn was by Merlin Gentz, with a second by Kenneth Robl. Motion carried. The meeting was adjourned by 3:25 p.m.