

**City of Isanti
Economic Development Authority
Regular Meeting Minutes of
November 26, 2013
Isanti City Hall**

1. Call To Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Kuechle at 7:00 p.m.

a. Pledge of Allegiance

b. Roll Call

Members Present: Larry Kuechle, Keith Dragisich, Dan Collison, Mayor George Wimmer and Tara Hallberg

Members Absent:

Staff Present: Economic Development Director Sean Sullivan

c. Agenda Modifications

Chair Kuechle acknowledged receipt of an amended item 5a and told the EDA members to replace there item 5. Motion by Collison, Second by Dragisich to adopt the Agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously

2. Approve Minutes of October 22, 2013 Regular Economic Development Meeting

Motion by Collison, second by Hallberg to approve the minutes for October 22, 2013. Motion carried unanimously.

3. Member Term Expiration

Sullivan presented the staff memo and indicated that Chair Kuechle's term is ending and a vacancy would be created next year.

The EDA membership indicated that Chair Kuechle was able to re-apply if he so chooses.

Sullivan communicated to the Board that applications could be obtained from Karissa Henning at Human Resources and that interviews would be conducted at the first City Council Meeting in January.

No action requested and no action taken.

4. Establishment of Comprehensive Summer Isanti Event Calendar

Sullivan presented the staff memo and discussed an increased role by the city to help market events in Isanti. Staff asked for the EDA to pass on events that members are aware of to Economic Development Director Sullivan or Community Events and Parks Coordinator Wood. He highlighted that that Ms. Wood would be updating the Isanti Community Events and Community Center page with events as well. The goal was to help make these events more successful by doing a better job marketing them.

Consensus by the EDA was that the calendar was a good idea and creating synergy between city events and private sector events was encouraged.

No action requested and no action taken.

5. Farmers Market / Street Dance Discussion

Sullivan presented the staff memo. Sullivan highlighted the successes of the 2013 Farmer's Market and Street Dances and the financial and staffing commitment to these important economic development activities. The duties of these events will be passed on entirely to Community Events and Parks Coordinator Josi Wood and the Park, Recreation and Culture Board. Sullivan indicated that oversight of this budget must be held by the Community Development Director and the Community Events and Parks Coordinator. Discussions with the City Auditor have led to the recommendation to transfer funds from the EDA to the Park, Recreation and Culture Board on an annual basis to fund these events. Abdo, Eick and Meyers have confirmed that the transfer of funds as described is in accordance with Minnesota State Statutes.

Mayor Wimmer indicated that the transfer of funds from the EDA to Park Recreation and Culture would be done on an annual basis.

Motion by Dragisich, Second by Hallberg to approve the transfer of funds (\$16,150) for the City of Isanti Street Dances and Isanti Family Farmer's Market from the EDA to the Parks, Recreation and Culture Board. Motion carried unanimously.

6. Downtown Meeting Summary

Sullivan presented the staff memo which highlighted the November 6, 2013 downtown Business Meeting at the Creamery. Sullivan stated that the City had completed informal traffic counts for the downtown area and that the downtown businesses appreciated the information and would like another count to be done during the spring/summer season. The technology exists to monitor traffic counts on other streets like Heritage Blvd and staff would need to coordinate with police to do so.

Discussion regarding the commitment of downtown businesses to get more involved in the Street Dances and Farmers Market ensued. Sullivan indicated that there needed to be food and drink at the street dances and that a business needed to commit to all three events in order to guarantee exclusivity and success of the events themselves.

Themes included:

- Interest by Rum River Rods to bring Car Show downtown on Wednesdays from June to August
- Increased interest by downtown businesses to participate more in street dances
- Request to move meeting to Tuesday or Thursday to not conflict with BNI group on Wednesdays
- Expansion of business meeting to include more Isanti businesses, not just downtown
- Change of name of group to remove the word “downtown”
- Maintaining a subgroup that focuses on downtown events

Member Wimmer questioned the commitment of downtown businesses to participate in downtown events. He indicated that Retail Meats was present for first dance but did not attend second event. He also stated that the businesses that participated needed to participate in all 3 dances, not just one.

Collison indicated that he was surprised that there was not a sandwich board up during the event from the Creamery or other businesses.

Mayor Wimmer indicated that city staff does a good job encouraging businesses to get involved.

Sullivan indicated that previous vendors have already contacted the city with interest in participating next year. Josi will be the contact moving forward.

Sullivan stated that there was competition for the Minnesota State Cup this year. Two communities had submitted their interest to the organization and a decision would be made on December 14.

Member Dragisich stated that combining events like the sidewalk sales, citywide garage sales would keep people in Isanti all day.

Member Collison indicated that the Creamery was packed with people from the Car Show during that event. Businesses were truly benefitting from the event but they still could do more to capitalize. He also suggested taking advantage of Rum River BMX with a Coupon page handout. He asked if there was a welcome packet by the city.

Chamber President Neifert indicated that they had one but it was in need of updating.

Chamber President Neifert indicated this was done for the soccer event, but it wasn't very successful.

Wimmer indicated that Isanti businesses have not participated at the level of Cambridge businesses in the BMX events. Isanti businesses need to step it up.

Member Hallberg stated that Mite Jamboree brings a lot of people to town as well. This is a market that needs to be tapped by local businesses as well

Member Dragisich stated that combining events like the Family Fun Day, Street Dances, sidewalk sales, citywide garage sales would keep people in Isanti all day. He highlighted many downtown businesses.

Member Dragisich indicated that he thought the newsletter was a good place to advertise for businesses.

Mayor Wimmer state the Isanti is still a ‘bedroom community’. Street Dances and other community events help build community. City needs to be careful that equal representation is given to businesses. We need to be fair.

A Battle of the Bands idea was communicated by Mayor Wimmer and Collison to expand events.

Sullivan reiterated that Community Events and Parks Coordinator Wood would be the primary contact for coordinating these events.

Mayor Wimmer announced that this position has been moved to a full time position earlier in the evening.

Sullivan suggested Josi to attend a future EDA meeting and update the EDA on events dates and to introduce herself.

Consensus of the EDA was to have her attend a future meeting once some items were set.

No action requested and no action taken.

7. City Website

Sullivan presented the staff memo. He indicated that the City of Isanti Website could be improved and that he was researching options to “freshen” the site up. Staff is also looking at other websites and plans to present options to the Development Advisory Committee and ultimately the City Council in 2014. A Quality Website is often the first impression one will get for a community and our website should be something that is professional, functional and pleasing to the eye. Over the past 3 years City Staff has been operating the existing website and making small improvements and updates. Staff asked the EDA membership to look at other websites and to contact Economic Development Director Sullivan if they had run across some good ideas or concepts already out there.

Mayor Wimmer requested that a report on website traffic be given to the EDA. Sullivan indicated he could put some info together and email to EDA.

No action requested and no action taken.

8. Minnesota Manufacturing Week Business Expansion / Retention Meeting Summary

Sullivan presented the staff memo. Mayor Wimmer and Economic Development Director Sullivan were able to meet with 14 manufactures during Minnesota Manufacturers Week. Theses visits included a brief interview with a survey and presentation of a “Certificate of Commendation” from Governor Dayton. The informal discussions focused around operations of the particular business and perceptions the business had on some economic development items. The business visits were positive. Sullivan indicated that he was using a newer shorter form that was used by Grow

Minnesota. He asked the EDA to review the form and to suggest changes if they had any. In order to get better use of the data but to still maintain privacy Sullivan asked the EDA to consider sharing aggregate data from these business surveys with Grow Minnesota and Greater MSP. The EDA was comfortable sharing this data as long as confidentiality could be maintained.

Sullivan indicated that he had a business ask for the removal of some stop signs in East Dual Blvd. The City Engineer indicated that current traffic numbers did not require stop signs at the location. Police Chief Sager did have public safety concerns and recommended that the signs not be removed. Decision was made to do nothing.

Mayor Wimmer stated that there was a lack of Welders in Isanti. We need to do a better job in the education system to train people in the high schools and beyond.

Sullivan stated he saw a theme that many businesses were not aware of programs offered by Pine City and Anoka Technical College. Welders, CNC machinists and general labor is lacking in Isanti area.

Motion by Hallberg, Second by Wimmer to authorize Economic Development Director to share aggregate data with other organizations to get better quality regional data and to be sure to keep confidentiality of the specific business. Motion carried unanimously.

9. 2014 Tentative Meeting Schedule

Sullivan presented the staff memo and asked the EDA members to review the proposed calendar dates and to be prepared to discuss in January.

No action requested and no action taken.

10. Other Business / Updates / Communications

Economic Development Director Sullivan answered questions regarding the Staff memo.

- a. Business Prospects
- b. Revolving Loan Fund Document Template
- c. State of Minnesota Road Projects to Improve Commerce
- d. Positively Minnesota Meeting
- e. CVN Meeting
- f. Minnesota Real Estate Journal Conference
- g. GPS 45:93
- h. Isanti County EDA
- i. Isanti Area Chamber of Commerce
- j. Isanti Hotel
- k. 2013 Business Arrivals and Departures in Isanti

Mayor Wimmer asked Economic Development Director Sullivan to update the EDA on the Community Center and research being done to evaluate options for improvements to the community center as well as improvements to adjacent public parking and public sidewalks.

Sullivan indicated that the City had approximately \$50,000 from TIF 9 that could be spent on eligible TIF activities. These activities included public parking lots and public sidewalks. If it were to be used for storm

water purposes it would need to be a part of a regional plan that benefitted the downtown area as a whole. He notified the EDA that the City had received a sizable donation of \$120,000 from the Ruby Johnson Trust to assist with capital improvements for the community center.

11. Adjournment

Motion by Wimmer, second by Member Collison to adjourn at 8:01 pm. Motion carried unanimously.

Dated at Isanti, Minnesota, this 27th day of November 2013.

Respectively Submitted,

Sean M. Sullivan, Economic Development Director