

LA CROSSE COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FUND, INC.

La Crosse County Administrative Center, Rm. 3220

Thursday, October 28, 2010

7:30 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Steve Doyle, Don Brenengen (exc. 8:48), Steve Burgess, Vicki Burke, Gary Ingvalson (7:40), Tara Johnson (exc. 8:48), Audrey Kader (7:57), Dave Lange (for Bill Shepherd), Dennis Manthei, Steve O'Malley (7:32), Mary Jo Werner, John Wettstein

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Dirk Gasterland, Michael Richards, Bill Shepherd

MEMBERS ABSENT: Jill Billings

STAFF & GUESTS: Brian Fukuda, Charlie Handy, Margaret Norden, Greg Flogstad, Karl Green, Jenny Kuderer

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Chair Doyle called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None requested.

APPROVE MINUTES OF OCTOBER 7, 2010

MOTION by Manthei/Brenengen to approve the Minutes of October 7, 2010.

Motion carried unanimously. Gasterland, Ingvalson, Kader, O'Malley, Richards excused; Billings absent.

PUBLIC HEARING ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT FOR EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

- Description and input on Rockland housing project
- Input on other County development needs
- Description of Wisconsin Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program

Charlie Handy explained the requirement to hold a public hearing to receive Community Development Block Grant funds. He reported on the history of the fund, which dates to the 2007 floods, and has been increased each year based on applications to the state. The fund is administered through Couleecap. A significant number of residents have benefited from the CDBG funds. Funds are not used for public works or infrastructure. There were no members of the public present to give comments.

CITY OF LA CROSSE HOUSING STUDY

Karl Green gave a presentation on the results of his study on City of La Crosse housing. It revealed that 53.4% of the City's assessed value is in housing, 37% in commercial, 4% manufacturing, and 6% in taxable personal property. He compared assessed values to other Wisconsin cities of similar size, and found that La Crosse's mill rate is seventh highest of Wisconsin municipalities. He showed a direct correlation between lower home values and non-owner occupied homes. He also compared La Crosse to other municipalities within La Crosse County, and showed that La Crosse's residential value stagnated in the 1960s and 1970s, with other municipalities surpassing it. The study showed that City residents pay a significantly higher property tax compared to suburban residents in the county. This is one of the contributors to urban sprawl. The study shows that the City of La Crosse has by far the largest percentage of properties, approximately 90%, that have less than \$150,000 of improvement value, and only 4% of total number of homes with

improvement value greater than \$200,000. The study showed that as homes age and deteriorate, and neighborhoods have larger numbers of poverty-level residents, a greater tax burden is placed on the entire municipality to maintain municipal services. His study showed a need to develop and improve City housing to be able to combat high taxes. He cited the following areas as having the most housing improvement needs:

- Flood plain properties
- Properties in the Hamilton and Roosevelt school boundaries
- All properties with less than \$100,000 assessment values
- Undeveloped, City-owned acreage, such as the Park Plaza and Mobil Oil sites
- Student housing

Discussion was held regarding the lack of people living in the City who can provide government leadership and agency boards of directors' roles, the role of the City's inspections department, and the burden on the business community that makes up the tax base.

SKIPPERLINER INDUSTRIES CHAPTER 128 BUSINESS LIQUIDATION

Dave Lange reported that there is no update since the October 7, 2010, meeting.

UPDATE ON 2011 BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

Steve O'Malley reported that the public hearing on the 2011 County budget begins at 6:30 p.m. on November 8, 2010. Deliberations will follow and continue on November 9, 2010, at 9:00 a.m. He expects there will be a motion from Supervisor Feehan to eliminate the Economic Development budget. He expects there will be discussion, also, about eliminating the Economic Development staff position and contributions to community development agencies in lieu of eliminating the entire budget. He reported that Economic Development has been taken off the tax rolls and is funded with sales tax, and that staff has brought in \$3.5 million in grant money.

NEXT MEETING – DECEMBER 2, 2010, AT 7:30 A.M.

Since the Collaboration Conference follows the next meeting, staff will look into moving the meeting to the Lunda Center.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- Two-year goals for Economic Development Fund
- Greg Flogstad gave a brief update on loan status and reported job growth among all employers; loan payments are current except Skipperliner and Airborne Data.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Manthei/Ingvalson to adjourn. **Motion carried unanimously.** Brenengen, Gasterland, Johnson, Richards excused. Meeting adjourned at 8:50 a.m.

Approved, December 2, 2010, Margaret Norden, Recorder