

LA CROSSE COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FUND, INC.

County Administrative Center, Room 3220

Thursday, February 2, 2012

7:30 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Steve Doyle (exc. 8:00 a.m.), Jill Billings (exc. 8:00 a.m.), Vicki Burke (7:34 a.m.), Dirk Gasterland, Gary Ingvalson, Tara Johnson, Dave Lange, Dennis Manthei, Steve O'Malley (7:33 a.m.), Michael Richards (7:39 a.m.), Joe Veenstra, John Wettstein

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Don Brenengen

MEMBERS ABSENT: Steve Burgess, Audrey Kader

STAFF & GUESTS: Brian Fukuda, Charlie Handy, Karl Green, Margaret Norden, Greg Flogstad, Sharon Hampson, Jenny Kuderer, Jim Speropulos, Amy Peterson, Nathan Patros

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

None requested.

APPROVE MINUTES OF JANUARY 5, 2012

MOTION by Manthei/Veenstra to approve the Minutes of January 5, 2012. **Motion carried unanimously.** Brenengen, Burke, O'Malley excused; Burgess, Kader absent.

REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATION ON LA CROSSE COUNTY SIGN ORDINANCE

Charlie Handy provided a summary of size, placement, and illumination requirements in the proposed sign ordinance that is currently under consideration by the County Board, and explained it was referred to the Economic Fund Board for any comments or recommendations regarding impact on the business community or development.

MOTION by Manthei/Veenstra to receive and place on file. **Motion carried unanimously.** Brenengen excused; Burgess, Kader absent.

REGIONALIZATION OF REVOLVING LOAN FUND

Greg Flogstad reported that the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation has had a pilot program since 2005 to consolidate local revolving loan funds in regional non-profits (RNP's). The purpose is to promote collaboration for more effective and efficient economic growth. La Crosse County would belong to a nine-county RNP. Advantages of combining resources would be to allow more flexibility, reduce funds that are unutilized or underutilized, encourage local governments and development agencies to work together, increase capacity of funds available, reduce administrative burdens, and spread risk. Flogstad reviewed the background and requirements for regionalization. Each region would determine its own structure and define its own investment strategy. There is no mandate to join a region, but the state is encouraging joining. Region boundaries are pre-set by the state. Brian Fukuda stated that one of the biggest benefits is that it de-federalizes funds and makes funding more flexible. One of the challenges is ensuring that funds are equitably distributed across the region. Discussion was held about job creation and reporting requirements, options for setting goals for the regional fund, and relationship with the Economic Development Fund Board, La Crosse Area Planning Commission, and other regional partnerships in which La Crosse County has an

interest. The topic will return to committee for further discussion in March and/or April, 2012.

NOTE: Chair Doyle was excused, and Vice-Chair O'Malley took the Chair.

COUNTY FORECLOSED PROPERTY PROCEDURE

Brian Fukuda reported on meeting with Corporation Counsel, County Treasurer, and Facilities Department to discuss ways of adding value to foreclosed property. Their recommendation is to enhance value before posting a property for sale, and work with housing and economic development partners to make a project more viable if there is not early interest. Fukuda stated that if properties are not sold through the bid process, partners such as CouleeCap, Habitat for Humanity, et al., would be pulled in to look at opportunities to get the property on the tax rolls. He stated that Information Technology is working on the website to highlight county-owned properties.

HOUSING TASK FORCE UPDATE

Brian Fukuda reported that the Housing Task Force will be making its final recommendations to the City of La Crosse Common Council and La Crosse County Board. There will be a formal presentation after the recommendations are finalized.

LAKEVIEW BUSINESS PARK FINANCIAL REPORT

Brian Fukuda noted a negative fund balance. He stated that if there is no further development or infrastructure cost, the TIF will be paid off in 12 years, a year earlier than anticipated. There are 12 acres of improved land ready for development

SKIPPERLINER LOAN UPDATE

Dave Lange reported that it appears there just needs to be a closing scheduled.

NEXT MEETING – MARCH 1, 2012, AT 7:30 A.M.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Econowatch report
Tracking of Economic Indicators
Arts Board impact on economic development
CEDS report
March 14, 2012, public presentation on DOT recommendation regarding Exit 3

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Ingvalson/Richards to adjourn. **Motion carried unanimously.**
Meeting adjourned at 8:30 a.m.

Disclaimer: The above minutes were approved on April 5, 2012.
Margaret Norden, Recorder