

Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar **Economic Development Commission (EDC)**
JOINT OPERATIONS BOARD OF DIRECTORS (OB)
MARKETING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE
MINUTES
September 26, 2007
EDC Office, 312 Fourth Street SW, Willmar

Present: Beth Fischer, Jean Geselius, Nancy Miller and Deb Van Buren

Excused: Cameron Macht, Julie Redepenning, Diane Schulte and Heather Thompson

Staff: Steve Renquist, Executive Director and Kathy Schwantes, Assistant Director

Guest: Betsy Bonnema

Secretarial: Allison McGeary, Legal & Administrative Assistants, Inc. (LAA)

Co-chair Jean Geselius called the meeting to order at approximately 8:05 a.m.

MINUTES—

IT WAS MOVED BY Nancy Miller, SECONDED BY Deb Van Buren, to approve the minutes of the August 22, 2007 meeting as mailed and e-mailed. MOTION CARRIED.

(Agenda was taken out of order.)

Brochure proof/content. (See copy attached to original minutes.) Steve Renquist distributed his memo regarding the EDC brochure (see copy attached to original minutes) and made the following comments:

- he likes the wildlife picture but would prefer to have it split to show agriculture, business and industry to better show what Kandiyohi County has to offer
- the purpose of the brochure is to use it as an informational piece about the EDC
- take out the staff photo on the cover
- something better than the live, work and stay theme, by setting a tone of we are the best place to combine living, working and playing
- rather than having individual staff descriptions, the brochure could talk about the EDC's ability to find solutions to situations that prevent business and industry from achieving success
- In reference to the "Our Area" he would not say "aging population" as part of the second sentence
- for the last paragraph of the first column, include the private technology research and development center that has spurred an emerging high technology industry
- use the MinnWest Technology Campus (MWTC) because it is private, unique and big
- in the "Our Financing Resources" section the information currently displayed could make it seem that it is all the EDC has to offer and suggested it say: the EDC has programs available and options to meet your needs or the EDC staff has the experience and acumen to package financial solutions to your company's needs
- under the "Our Resources" section, include the EDC's local and toll-free telephone numbers.
- he likes a map as it shows where Willmar is in location to the Twin Cities, it makes Willmar look closer than it really is, almost as close as St. Cloud is to the cities
- have the county map on the back of the brochure

- in most cases when a brochure is being mailed out or given to someone, a cover letter is written including information they are seeking

Other comments by committee members:

- having the staff photo makes it a much more personal piece
- in place of the staff photo have a picture of the EDC building
- use words like bio energy and renewable energy
- take out the staff information and replace it with technology information
- there would be more space needed in the brochure to add the technology component and a bigger brochure was suggested
- the map is too small to be useful
- have a photo or star in the spot where Kandiyohi County is on the map
- like how the communities of Kandiyohi County are listed on the back
- the listing of all communities within Kandiyohi County is a necessity and suggested having just the shape of the state and a star where Willmar or Kandiyohi County are located, this way no community is left out
- in place of the map, put in pictures of agriculture or technology
- if pictures of agriculture or technology are used, they should be from other communities in Kandiyohi County than Willmar
- have pictures of Apol's Harley Davidson or Bushmills Ethanol
- put more pictures on the back of the brochure
- if the brochure lists the MWTC, it would be more of an advertising piece for them and they should have a separate piece as the brochure is to market the EDC, a cover letter can always be sent with the brochure referencing the MWTC
- four photos on the front cover are too many photos
- the brochure cover is balanced and flows well the way it is currently

(Steve Renquist was excused from the meeting.)

MONTHLY REPORTS/UPDATES

Agriculture/Small Wind update. Bonnema stated she met with Bob Meyerson, who wanted some updates made to the Small Wind booklet. The link on the website will be updated as well. Bonnema stated she made it easy for the Small Wind booklet to be updated to the website and is showing Meyerson how to take the file and update the information himself and then send LAA or herself the updates to upload it to the website or for him to upload it to the website himself. Schwantes stated Print Masters has the proof for Meyerson to approve before printing.

2008 Explore Southern Minnesota Travel Guide ad. It is the same format the EDC has used for quite awhile. Bonnema asked the committee if the snowmobile picture needs to be changed because it is hard to see if the snowmobiler is wearing a helmet. The committee agreed it did not need to be changed. Beth Fischer stated the ad runs for one year. Schwantes stated it is a very successful magazine for the EDC.

Bring Them Back Home newsletter. Cameron Macht stated, in an email to Schwantes, the newsletter will highlight two or three people from MWTC for the winter issue, with an expected publish date in the first week of December. Schwantes stated Jonathan Huisinga sent a list of seven individuals and Huisinga and Michelle Lippert are to pick two to three individuals and write the articles along with a list of job openings. Schwantes asked the committee for suggestions for

other items in the newsletter, for example, the Spicer Castle, Polar Bear Plunge or the Holiday Parade.

Willmar Area Multicultural Market (WAMM) brochure. Bonnema stated it is in the final proofing stage, one in Spanish and the other in English, and all photos have been switched to local photos. A website was added to the brochure, which is more like a blog for people to post suggestions and comments. Roberto Valdez has been promoting the website. Van Buren stated Valdez did a good job presenting the website to the local Kiwanis club. The club asked Valdez many questions to which he responded well. Bonnema stated WAMM is in the process of getting all the core marketing pieces it needs. WAMM is applying for a grant for the building. Schwantes stated the work Lourdez Schwab and Valdez are doing is working with the local businesses to help them market themselves and expand their businesses. Schwantes gave an example of a business with which Valdez has been working. WAMM is doing all the things it needs to do without having the building. WAMM can do exciting things on a local level once it reaches the \$5,000 goal. Schwantes explained her trip to Mexico and what it means for the community. Miller stated Accion is a nonprofit organization of Northwest Area Foundation that is offering business loans. Southwest Initiative Foundation can offer microloans to new businesses.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS—

Website updates. Schwantes stated the group had its first meeting and liked the basic layout of the website. The group will update the template by using the new EDC logo. The group is changing and updating different sections on the website. **LAA, Bonnema and Shelly Paulson** of Summerset Studio have been asked to help with the updates. Schwantes stated Nancy Birkeland has done a good job of keeping items up to date on the website. The next website update meeting is scheduled for Monday, October 1, 2007.

Raymond strategic marketing planning session. Macht stated, in an email sent to Schwantes, he thought it went well and suggested if the committee does another one, it be laid out differently so it flows better. Macht suggested switching the date of the next meeting to before October 22, 2007 so that a couple of influential Raymond citizens can attend before they go on vacation. Macht's overall impressions of the session were positive and suggested being able to brand Raymond for its friendly appeal, wholesomeness, close proximity to Willmar and safe neighborhoods. **Miller** will work with people in the Raymond community to find a new date and make sure Renquist is available. Schwantes suggested having three or four groups do a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis and put their thoughts on a board. Bonnema suggested the committee do a quick survey of people outside the community to find out what they think of Raymond. Schwantes stated she likes that Raymond always has an updated sign of what is going on in the community. Miller stated Apol's Harley Davidson's business brings in about 30,000 tourists to Raymond each year, and suggested the community do something with Apol's Harley Davidson. The committee suggested having something on the Apol's Harley Davidson website when it has its hog roasts and brat feeds or having every business on those days wear a Harley Davidson shirt. It was suggested to have an event in Raymond like Celebrate Art, Celebrate Coffee, but have a Harley Davidson theme or go hog wild theme. Another suggestion was to have Rand Johnson do community illustrations like he has done for Apol's Harley Davidson in the past. There is a lot of opportunity for Raymond to do anything it wants.

Star Tribune ad. The Community Marketing Coalition (CMC) was contacted by the *Star Tribune* for information to do an article about living and working in the Willmar Lakes area. The article will be in the Jobs section Sunday, October 7, and in the Twin Cities Region section

Thursday, October 11. Schwantes stated she thought the rate for advertising was very reasonable and four units in color were bought for a total of \$1,682.95 (see copy of a draft ad attached to original minutes). The Tourism Committee decided not to do an ad as they do not have funds allocated in their budget. Schwantes stated this should be more of a business ad. Schwantes suggested taking out the willmar.com and add www. in front of kandiyohi.com. Beth Fischer stated she believes the information Ken Warner filled out was a beginning point and a reporter is coming out to take pictures of the community. Discussion was held on where the exact location of the ad would be as described by the Live and Work in Willmar advertising information (see copy attached to original minutes). The committee agreed to use the proposed ad, but add more information about the EDC.

MWTC. Schwantes stated she, Steve Salzer and Vicki Melbye of Ridgewater College met to start the project of researching businesses to attract to the MWTC. It was discovered while looking for other information through the James J. Hill library that the information is not completely correct and, therefore, Melbye's students were asked to help with research. Schwantes went through the time line with the committee, which was distributed (see copy attached to original minutes).

Future meeting dates. Geselius stated the committee is looking at the first Thursday of every month at 8:00 a.m. **LAA** will send out a request to committee members, who are not in attendance today, to find out if the meeting time will work for them beginning with Thursday, November 1, and cancel the October meeting. If the first Thursday of every month will not work, new meeting times will be suggested.

NEW BUSINESS—

Budget update. Geselius stated the committee has \$4,000 left in its 2007 budget. Additional costs will be for RedStar Creative, *Star Tribune* ad and website updates.

Minnesota Technology Enterprise. Schwantes stated Salzer agreed to be a partner. Schwantes distributed information on *Minnesota Technology* magazine (see copy attached to original minutes). The new magazine will be *Enterprise Minnesota* with an expanded circulation and distribution. A copy of the email sent to Schwantes was distributed for the committee to review (see copy attached to original minutes). The committee decided not to advertise in the *Enterprise Minnesota* magazine unless it is a host site for a technology or bio theme seminar.

New London marketing meeting. Perry Nelson, with Renquist's help, is starting to work on what the committee has done for the New London community. Schwantes stated the meetings are ongoing.

Kandiyohi County Tobacco Coalition/James J. Hill research. The Tobacco Coalition contacted the EDC about a list of businesses in Kandiyohi County to inform the businesses about the smoking ban. The EDC searched the James J. Hill library for business names and passed them onto the Tobacco Coalition. Schwantes stated because of this project, the EDC now has all businesses in Kandiyohi County in a database for use with other projects. Discussion was held on how the committee should deal with requests for this type of information. The committee agreed to charge for this service in the future.

Other. Schwantes stated the West Central Tribune is doing an advertisement for Women in Business. Schwantes stated her picture is outdated and the cost to replace her photo on file at the West Central Tribune would be \$50.00.

IT WAS MOVED BY Deb Van Buren, SECONDED BY Jean Geselius, to do a Women in Business advertisement in the West Central Tribune and update the Assistant Director's photo.
MOTION CARRIED.

Schwantes stated an organization called Helman put a bid in to do marketing and advertising for the EDC by redoing the EDC portfolio. The organization would do a tri-fold portfolio at a price of \$12,500. The committee felt no need to move forward with Helman at this time.

NEXT MEETING—The next regular committee meeting is **8:00 a.m., Wednesday, October 24, 2007** at the EDC office, 312 Fourth Street SW, Willmar.

ADJOURNMENT—There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:21 a.m.