

Pulaski County Economic Development
(Pulaski County Community Development Commission)

Tuesday, 7 October 2014
Pulaski County Public Library
Medaryville, Indiana

Meeting Minutes

Members present: President Bill Champion, Vice-President Lawrence Loehmer (Monterey), Secretary Dave Zeltwanger, Membership Officer Krysten Hinkle; County Commissioner Larry Brady, County Councilor Doug Roth, Amy Jo Cantu (Chamber), Medaryville Council President Derrick Stalbaum, Winamac Council President John E. Plowman; Greg Comoglio, Gregg Malott. Executive Director Nathan P. Origer.

Members absent: executive-board member Andrew Fritz; Jamie Bales (Francesville); Becky Anspach (work-related).

Call to Order

President Champion called the meeting to order at 7:01 *p.m.*

Consent Agenda

With no requests for extraction having been made, the Consent Agenda was adopted.

Community Reports

- Councilor Roth: Winamac Coil Spring is collecting its first contract for the Winamac plant; newly acquired machinery and tooling, along with another expected contract, are likely to increase employment at the facility.
- Mr. Malott: Pulaski Memorial Hospital recently approved its fiscal-year-2015 and capital budgets; Dr. Melissa Dawson was recently added to the staff of physicians.
- Commissioner Brady: The Commissioners are looking for a replacement for longtime recycling/transfer-station manager Ed Clark, who retires at year's end. Commissioner Brady has attended numerous conferences of late.
- President Champion: Fratco has returned to seven-days-per-week production.
- Mrs. Cantu: The Chamber's Germanfest was a success, and planning for Winter Wonderland, to take place on 6 December, is underway.
- Mrs. Hinkle: Nothing to report at this time.
- Mr. Stalbaum: Things are well in Medaryville; funding issues tied to the OCRA grant for the wastewater project are being straightened out, and the Town has been working with the County and the Pulaski Animal Center to address animals, especially dogs, in the community.
- Mr. Comoglio: The general manager of the Cold Draw having left, Plymouth Tube is seeking a replacement; an interim leader from Streator, Illinois, currently supervises the plant.
- Mr. Plowman: The Town recently met with an engineer to discuss the construction of a splash pad, which will probably cost significantly less than originally thought; a Community Foundation grant is being sought to aid the funding of this project. The Town is investigating partnerships that could allow for the construction of a new community pool.
- Vice-President Loehmer: Everything is wonderful in Monterey, the slow harvest notwithstanding.
- Secretary Zeltwanger: DK and Sons has been very busy, and the secretary has had some strong leads on masonry heaters. Things in Francesville are a bit unsettled, with the café having closed, AdaptaSoft probably moving into rural Jasper County, and the future of the IGA unknown.

Old Business

PC-CARE engineering study: Director Origer presented the report provided by Territorial Engineering for the third and final site, located south of Francesville. He explained that the layout examples provided encompass the entire 168-plus acres, but that pursuing the entirety of the site, rather than only part, would not necessarily be the course of action, either short- or long-term, if it were to be selected for development. Remarking that it offers more possibilities than the previous

sites studies, he noted that it also, by a significant margin, would require greater infrastructure costs, due its distance from existing municipal utilities. Discussion ensued regarding next steps and potential sources for financing the development of whichever site would be selected.

Pulaski County Young Professionals Network: The director had not devoted much time to this of late, but had presented it to the board of the Pulaski County Community Foundation for their consideration for funding as part of the Lilly Endowment GIFT Phase VI opportunity. Director Origer expressed hope that a new program from the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA) could potentially provide support for the sustainable development of the group.

2014 Summit: The Northwest Indiana Small Business Development Center's (NWISBDC) "Launch Your Own Business" workshop, sponsored by PCED and held at the Pulaski County Public Library – Winamac had been successful, with about twenty attendees; a business-marketing workshop could be hosted next. The director would be meeting with NWISBDC director Lorri Feldt to follow up on the results of August's Community Entrepreneurship Initiative community-assessment kick-off. Invitations had been sent, a caterer hired, and a location secured for the mid-October Non-Profits Summit; a handful of registrations had been received thus far.

Hometown Collaboration Initiative: Director Origer and Commissioner Brady had recently attended the OCRA regional conference in Valparaiso, at which had been debuted the Hometown Collaboration Initiative (HCI), a community-capacity–building program focusing on either next-generation leadership, entrepreneurship, or place-making; the director expressed eagerness at participating in the program, noting that all three foci fit into current capacity-building efforts, but that leadership probably would be the best starting point. Vice-President Loehmer and Commissioner Brady agreed, with Secretary Zeltwanger suggesting that marrying this with the young professionals network makes sense. Mr. Plowman expressed interest in the place-making focus, but suggested that it may be better suited for the town, rather than county, level, and concurred that leadership should be targeted.

Community Readiness Initiative: Director Origer continued by noting that OCRA had at the same conference premiered the new Community Readiness Initiative, an evaluation tool designed to help communities to prepare for growth. The director noted that he had not developed as complete of a grasp on this program as on the HCI and could not be certain of its value as much as he could HCI's. He was instructed to continue his research and to keep the members apprised.

Pulaski Online: Sam Maule of Crane + Grey had visited the office on the previous Friday, providing necessary instruction to Director Origer so that he could begin to add new content necessary to fill out the 'pages of the Website before it could be activated. The director expressed much greater confidence in managing the 'site than he had felt prior to Mr. Maule's visit and expected to dedicate significant time later in the week to this project.

CAGIT-rate issue: Director Origer briefly reiterated the concern here, that Pulaski County has an abnormally high local income-tax rate because of the special-legislation levy to support maintenance and operations of the justice center, while the lease on that building is paid for annually out of the CEDIT Fund, thus limiting the economic-development resources. Having spoken over the previous months with all three commissioners and five of seven county councilors and secured some degree of support from all of them, he would be appearing before the two bodies publicly to solicit their formal support to ask local legislators to propose bills that would loosen Indiana Code language to allow the CAGIT moneys to be expended on lease payments. The director presented a proposal for changes to the language in the Code, and no-one objected to the verbiage.

New Business

2015 Summit: Director Origer reported that he should like to begin preliminary planning for the early-March event early, noting that it would be taking place in Francesville, if possible at Meadow Springs, a project financed in part by the Revolving Loan Fund. He asked the member to begin thinking of themes for the event and its keynote address. Mrs. Hinkle expressed interest in hearing a guest speaker address an agriculture-related topic; a number of members seconded this interest, with Commissioner Brady emphasizing the advances in agricultural technology. Secretary Zeltwanger suggested a broader view of the impact that technological advances have had on the local community and economy. Councilor Roth noted that, with the PC-CARE study have been completed, a return to this topic may be appropriate. Commissioner Brady mentioned the now-online Magnetation facility in Reynolds, and the secretary suggested that this may hold potential for rail-

based opportunities in Pulaski County, at the PC-CARE specifically. The director asked that members continue to consider this and to offer other suggestions.

Establishment of a Redevelopment Commission: Director Origer explained that a Redevelopment Commission (RDC) has powers and development tools not available through any other mechanism, specifically offering tax-increment financing (TIF; which the director explained with the aid of a bar graph) and quasi-governmental acquisition, improvement, and disposition of commercial properties toward the end of economic renewal. The director explained that an RDC could be established at the municipal level, but that a countywide RDC would probably be more effective, as well as easier to establish and to maintain. Suggesting that little funding would be required initially, Director Origer noted that staffing for a Pulaski County RDC could be provided by his office. He further noted that a recent prospect had, on a visit to Pulaski County, enquired as to the possibility of TIF.

Mrs. Hinkle enquired as to the problems that have plagued the TIF district in Cass County; President Champion explained that the problems had been entirely political in nature, also noting that Logansport had experienced success with its TIF projects. Conceding that political feuds could create problems anywhere, the president noted that as long as relations between the County and the Towns are positive, there should be no problems; he also seconded Director Origer's position that a countywide organization would be preferable.

Mr. Plowman noted that about eight years ago, Winamac had looked into TIF financing, but did not foresee projects that would require this incentive. It was suggested that with the moving forward of the PC-CARE project, it could become more useful for Pulaski County. Further discussion ensued regarding municipal annexation, property assessment, and related matters, culminating in the decision to authorize Director Origer to move forward with establishing an RDC.

Motion: Mrs. Hinkle; second: Mr. Stalbaum; no discussion; approval: all.

Career and Technical Education curriculum grant: Director Origer explained that he had recently been made aware of a funding opportunity from the State for the creation of new, or expansion of existing, career and technical programs in high schools. He noted that he had met with both superintendents, the Pulaski Alliance for Community Education, and Tom Barry, CEO of Pulaski Memorial Hospital, and would be meeting with Ryan Myers at West Central High School later in the week and discussing this opportunity with operations and human-resources managers in the following week. The director offered a list of potential courses that could be made available.

Mr. Plowman noted that he had just lunched with a friend whose school has its own radio station. Mrs. Hinkle asked why new avenues for technical education were under consideration when the Century Career Center, in Logansport, provides a number of opportunities. Director Origer noted that he still has much discernment to undergo, but also that Winamac and West Central are served by different cooperatives, and that he was not sure to what extent the technical-education opportunities currently available matched local-industry needs. The director noted that he could not be certain that a viable proposal would come out of his work, but that the avenue should be explored; he was instructed to offer a recommendation at the November meeting.

Assistant position: Terry Howard having resigned his position to take a full-time job, the director had advertised for the opening; to date, he had received six applications, five résumés, and seven other inquiries for the position. He lamented the overall quality of the submissions, noting, however, that a few had come from strong candidates.

Other Pertinent Business

Revolving Loan Fund: In light of concerns that have arisen regarding AdaptaSoft, which owes on an outstanding loan, Secretary Zeltwanger suggested that a committee be established to review the program and its guidelines. Discussion ensued regarding AdaptaSoft; President Champion remarked that the director had exhausted every option trying to keep the company in Pulaski County. Further conversation occurred regarding other borrowers and the program generally; no action was taken, but consensus favored a review of the program.

Hotel project: Councilor Roth enquired as to whether anyone had explored partnering with Tippecanoe River State Park and the Department of Natural Resources on a hotel/lodge project situated on or near the campus of the state park. Numerous members expressed support for such exploration, which had hitherto never occurred.

Public Comment

None.

Adjournment

Motion: Secretary Zeltwanger; second: Mr. Comoglio; no discussion; approval: all.
8:30 *p.m.*

Respectfully submitted,
Dave Zeltwanger, Secretary