

Pulaski County Economic Development
(Pulaski County Community Development Commission)

Tuesday, 10 January 2017

Winamac Municipal Utilities Complex
Winamac, Indiana

Meeting Minutes

Members present: President Gregg Malott, Vice-President Annie Scholz, Executive Secretary John Plowman (Winamac) [departed at 7:00p.m.], Past President Bill Champion; Doug Roth (County Council), Darlene Mellon (Francesville), Medaryville Councilor Suzanna Wilcoxon; Andrew Fritz, Beth Grund, Dave Zeltwanger. Executive Director Nathan P. Origer

Members absent: Membership Officer Larry Brady (County Commissioners) [other]; Aaron Paulsen (Chamber), Lawrence Loehmer (Monterey) [other]; Natalie Federer [personal]. Project Coordinator Krysten Hinkle [work-related].

Guests: None.

Call to Order

President Malott called the meeting to order at 6:02p.m.

Appointment of Secretaries pro tempore

In the absence of Krysten Hinkle, the director was appointed administrative secretary *pro tempore*, and Mr. Roth agreed to serve as executive secretary *pro tempore* in the event that Secretary Plowman would have to depart prior to adjournment.

Consent Agenda

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

Membership Action

Presented for membership were Ross Davis, BraunAbility operator, non-exempt-labor at-large vacancy, effective immediately; Samantha Williams, Purdue Extension – Pulaski County director, at-large vacancy, effective 1 March; President Malott, term renewal, effective 1 March; Secretary Plowman, reappointment by the Winamac Town Council, effective 1 March; and Mrs. Mellon, reappointment by the Francesville Town Council, effective 1 March. All were approved.

Motion: Mr. Champion; second: Vice-President Scholz; no discussion; approval: all.

Old Business

Hometown Collaboration Initiative: The final routes had been agreed upon, and all that remained to be done were numbering them and receiving INDOT approval for including stretches of State highways in two routes. Upon completion of these tasks, staff would proceed with the production of signs, bike-route-network brochures, and route-direction cards. Mrs. Hinkle would be contacting potential Tourism Advisory Council members in the coming weeks.

PC-CARE: At their first 2017 meeting, the County Commissioners rescinded a 2016 decision providing for the possibility of selling part of the County farm, eliminating that as a potential funding source for acquisition of the Medaryville property. On the evening prior to this meeting, Director Origer has presented a rough timeline for development and marketing of the property to the County Council, per Councilor Linda Power Nunez's request. He had also explained the benefits and detriments of including acquisition costs in a grant, as opposed to buying the ground with cash alone. (He reiterated this to the CDC, emphasizing that paying cash for the land would cost the County less money in the long run while also allowing for greater flexibility in proceeding.) Council President Jay Sullivan suggested that discussion regarding this project should continue at a Commissioners/Council joint session. Director Origer expressed immense frustration with elected officials' refusal either to commit to the project or to kill it. Mr. Roth suggested that the Council needs to have the urgency of moving forward pressed upon them more than had occurred thus far, and Mr. Zeltwanger contended that it would be wise to encourage supporters in the community to speak up to their elected officials about the need for this project.

Wage-and-benefit survey: The Pulaski County Human Resource Group's survey committee had met in December, Director Origer had been working on developing the survey document, and the Human Resource Group would be meeting and discussing this project on the coming Friday morning.

Francesville and Winamac Main Street organizations: The director reported that Wander Our Winamac! would be holding its annual general-membership meeting in the following week, preparing for 2017 projects, and working to build its membership. Mrs. Mellon noted that Francesville's UpTown Project had scheduled one or two events for each month to attract attention, to keep progress moving, and to bring positive change to the community.

Adopt-a-River program: Director Origer had passed this project on to Mrs. Hinkle, who would be resuming work in the coming weeks.

Term renewals/new members: Director Origer noted that Mr. Roth had one year remaining in his term, and the County Council had elected to retain him as its appointee through 2018; whether Larry Brady would finish his term or be replaced by a sitting county commissioner remained to be seen; and one vacancy remained to be filled, that being created by Mr. Fritz's forthcoming departure, and replacing him with someone else in agriculture would be preferable, though not necessary, and that continuing to close the gender balance with another female would be ideal, but also not a requirement.

Pulaski County Industrial Leadership Certificate program: Discussions would continue at the February meeting of the Pulaski County Industrial Forum.

Leadership-seminar proposal: The leadership trainer whose proposal had been presented at the November meeting would be speaking to attendees of the January Human Resource Group and February Industrial Forum meetings.

New Business

2016 financial review: Director Origer presented an expanded version of the month-end report usually provided as part of the consent agenda. He highlighted that about 55 percent of the 2016 budget had been returned unexpended, the CEDIT Fund had a current balance of nearly \$2.1 million (including 2017 departmental appropriations, which he estimated to be between \$600,000 and \$650,000, and \$580,000 invested in a certificate of deposit), and that all active Revolving Loan Fund borrowers were up-to-date on repayment. Discussion ensued following Mr. Zeltwanger's remarks regarding the healthy balance of the CEDIT Fund and apparent stinginess on the part of the County with respect to spending this money for investment in growth and whether or not this represented questionable stewardship of tax revenues. President Malott added that a cause for concern is that development costs are likely to increase with each passing year, making money held so tightly less valuable as time elapses.

2017 Summit: The annual Summit would take place on 14 March, the second Tuesday of the month, in Medaryville. Director Origer solicited input regarding facility, caterer, and guest speaker and topic. At Mrs. Wilcoxon's suggestion, he would investigate using Pulaski County Human Services' West Side Center, the former Medaryville library branch. Two names were offered for potential caterers. Potential guest-speaker topics included industrial development, agricultural economic development, generational trends, and Tippecanoe River State Park or Jasper-Pulaski Fish and Wildlife Area. The director would follow up on these and asked for continued input prior to the February meeting.

2017 tourism marketing: Noting that the marketing budget for 2017 is \$45,000, the director emphasized staff belief in the need to continue and to amplify tourism-marketing efforts. A proposal for 4,074 television-commercial airings across Chicagoland, plus online impressions, from Comcast Spotlight for \$22,022.45 was presented with the director's and Mrs. Hinkle's blessing. A number of options from WCIU-TV were also presented; Director Origer expressed reservations about the narrow scope and fairly low viewership, but did note that WCIU-TV offered the opportunity for an in-studio live conversation about Pulaski County in addition to the airing of commercials. Print and digital marketing opportunities in the Fort Wayne region through *Fort Wayne Magazine* were also reviewed. The consensus opinion was to move forward with the Comcast proposal, to continue discussions with WCIU, and to move forward with a pared down version of the Fort Wayne plan.

Mrs. Mellon suggested investigating Indiana Beach's marketing strategies and avenues and piggy-backing off of those if possible; Mr. Fritz proposed movie-theater ads, perhaps in Valparaiso, Rensselaer, or both; and Mr. Zeltwanger proposed revisiting discussions about billboard advertising.

2017 strategic visioning: Given the apparent apprehension on the part of elected officials toward the west-side rail-served industrial park project; that this project is the keystone of the 2010

strategic plan; that often staff work on projects as they come, without always having a neat framework for setting priorities; and that efforts may be required to ensure a positive relationship between the CDC and Commissioners, the director suggested that engaging in a strategic-planning process would be advisable. Further discussion was tabled until February, but the consensus agreement was that a visioning committee should be established.

Other Pertinent Business

Membership: The director again requested assistance in finding a replacement for Mr. Fritz.

Public Comment

None.

Adjournment

Motion: Mr. Roth; second: Mr. Champion; no discussion; approval: all. 7:02p.m.

Nathan P. Origer, Executive Director/Administrative Secretary *pro tempore*

John Plowman, Executive Secretary

Doug Roth, Executive Secretary *pro tempore*