

Economic Development Marketing sub-committee meeting August 6, 2013

Present: Sennholz, Wolf, Olson
Absent: Hendler
Others: Matt McLean, CVB Executive Director
Phil Venzke, IT Dept. Forward Financial Bank

Wolf called the meeting to order at 9:34 a.m. in MACCI conference room.

No Citizen comments.

The July 25th meeting minutes were reviewed and placed on file.

Recap and follow up of topics from July 25th meeting to determine any monetary request for EDB 2014 budget:

Technology: Olson mentioned an upcoming WI. Mobile Broadband Test Project Webinar through LinkWISCONSIN on Thursday, August 15th, 2:00-3:00. Scott Larson will join in and Wolf agreed to as well. Some discussion followed regarding the technology assessment done by the Chamber in 2006, which is quite outdated and to continue to assess the outcomes of the state survey study as it becomes available. McLean, having located here recently from Atlanta, reinforced that having reliable and affordable technology options is a driver for visitors, residents as well as new and existing businesses. He also mentioned the upcoming placement of a laptop-type kiosk in the Clinic lobby, a shared venture for MainStreet, CVB and MACCI/MEDA.

Venzke gave the committee some top priorities that would give communities a competitive advantage including:

- Cheap internet access
- Free Wi-Fi for citizens
- Reliable wireless service
- Ability to work from home

He also suggested checking out Chaska, MN. As they recently added free Wi-fi in their community.

Committee would also like to work with Marshfield Utilities in the future to explore enhanced technology options available through them.

McLean agreed to work on a plan to outline assistance to small businesses regarding the use of internet, Yelp, LinkedIn, Facebook and other social media for small businesses with particular focus on hotels, restaurants and retail. Suggestion to consider utilizing students at MSTC, UWSP or NTC to give one-on-one assistance to these businesses as it appears many do not attend social media training programs already offered through MACCI, SCORE & others.

Committee agreed to request up to \$20,000 from EDB to conduct a new technology assessment and form a sub-committee of IT professionals that could work on the RFI. Olson has requested \$8000 through the 2014 EDB budget request that was already submitted to Keith Strey, but can still be adjusted.

Community Image: Sennholz had shared information regarding the Kalamazoo, MI incentive, paying for further education to those who graduate. Committee discussed that it may not be necessary here (and we would also need to identify a funding source) but it would be good to insure there are \$\$ available for students that do not have the ability to do so. Industries may be able to assist particularly if there is a shortage of workforce (ie: to support current welding programs offered through MSTC & assist students if needed).

Discussion was held on the possibility of creating a lake in or around Marshfield, which would add greatly to the current tax base.

Discussion also focused on being sure we celebrate the positives and continue to get others to do the same; share community information and positive marketing efforts.

No funding is requested at this time.

CEO Network/Think Tank: Sennholz is working on details for an enhanced CEO network kick-off event to include a speaker on ESOPs and a dinner with networking time afterwards. Ideas and thoughts are being solicited from other CEOs.

Request to EDB of \$2000 towards this kick-off event.

Discussion was held regarding a possible revolving loan fund focused on the attraction of more restaurants and boutique type retail. This will be brought back to the entire EDB Board for their input.

Also would like to continue to pursue ways to connect those looking to sell or retire from a business with those interested in purchasing to keep them local and here in Marshfield.

Business Recruitment/Marketing: Committee agreed to not conduct a marketing study/assessment as a marketing/branding effort was recently completed. Suggestion was made to have a think tank to share and offer good ideas as to Marshfield's competitive advantage and how to continue to market that. Who do we need to compare ourselves to?

The new MACCI website with a strong section devoted to Economic Development will be completed this fall and will be a good marketing tool for the community.

Community Diversity: The committee felt there needs to be further discussion as to how this ties into economic development.

Another sub-committee meeting will not be scheduled at this time.

Meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Olson, Business Development Director