

**Town of Presque Isle**  
**Economic Development Committee Meeting Minutes, Tues. 2.27.2018 2:30PM**  
**Location: Community Center Room**

- I. Call to order by President Bonnie Byrnes at 2:33pm. Present were committee members: Bonnie Byrnes, Chuck Hayes, Sarah Johnson, Mary Watkins, Christine Wolter; and Town Liaison Carl Wolter. Absent with notice: Brenda Dyre and Beth Marohn
- II. Recognition of guests: WEDC/Connect Communities Representative Jim Rosenberg; Town Supervisor Cathy Weber; and Presque Isle Citizens, Barb Peck and Steve and Debbie Smith.
- III. A motion to approve the agenda as posted was made by Chuck, second by Mary. All aye.
- IV. A motion to approve the minutes of 1/30/18 meeting made by Chuck, second by Christine. All aye.
- V. Chair Remarks: None
- VI. New Business: None
- VII. Old Business
  - A. Connect Communities Program:** Jim Rosenberg, WEDC and Connect Communities Program Representative provided insight in the program's benefits. Key points:
    - A.** This is a "Main Street Lite" program. No need for staffing, but needs 1-2 committed volunteers to carry forward, along with engaged members on a Connect Communities group. There are 68 communities in Wis.
    - B.** Primary focus: assisting towns with resources (educational and networking) for downtown revitalization efforts.
    - C.** Commitment from Town is \$200 and the committed volunteers need to attend two trainings per year (webinar-based).
    - D.** Connect Communities show a commitment to improvement, this may provide some clout with legislators and/or grant applications.
    - E.** Presque Isle would be one of (if not) the smallest community in the program. Jim indicated benefits still great as ideas are scalable. Boulder Junction is a CC town, Land O and MW are exploring the idea.
    - F.** Chuck asked Jim to provide responses to two questions: Does WEDC have certain set of guidelines to help guide downtown revitalization projects? And When do needs assessments come into play with downtown planning and revitalization efforts? How does CC assist with these questions.
    - G.** Additional items/discussion centered around: new revolving loan funds for businesses (provide loans for businesses that need capital for bank loans); and PI's differentiation as far as lack of "storefront" main street,

and more emphasis on assets like green space, parks, bike trail connection, welcoming signage, historic/cultural connections.

**H. Christine Wolter** spoke with the BJ CC representative, Colleen Swanson, and will be sharing at next meeting the results of a homeowner survey they carried out in BJ.

**B. Community Development Block Grant:** Angela Davis is administrator of the grant program, from WI Department of Administration. She indicated that PI may be eligible for up to \$500,000 and that application in May 2019 would be best. There is work to be done to determine eligibility, as well as what projects funding would be best for, and how to come up with the matching funds. This program would likely need a separate grant administrator if received to manage project, finances, etc. for the town (and could be funded within the grant funds).

**C. Downtown Planning** - The Room Tax Committee voted unanimously to recommend the Town disperse \$10,000 to fund the Ayres & Associates planning proposal. The issue will be on the agenda on Thursday, March 1. The committee reviewed the Room Tax guidelines and noted the request comes from the municipality's 25% of room tax funds -- set aside for community upgrades. If the Town approves the disbursement, the EDC will need to come up with the remainder ~\$1300 and will need to determine start time for the work to begin. It is an approximately 3-month process (consultants suggest starting in April or May and running through June or July).

**D. Broadband** - Cathy Weber, Town Supervisor, is presenting information to the Town Board at this week's March 1 meeting regarding PI becoming a Broadband Forward Community. The Town would have to adopt an ordinance (there are samples online). Cathy will let the EDC know if anything further from our committee may be needed as this moves forward. SonicNet is still looking at applying for a tower grant for Presque Isle residents, specifically for those that are not experiencing positive results from the CenturyLink upgrade. They need to know where the gaps or poor service are in order to see if a tower makes sense. The EDC can send out a postcard with the Chamber's early May mailing to gather information. This same survey can be filled out online as well. Lori from SonicNet will present a few sample questions to the EDC for consideration at the next meeting. Cost to EDC would be printing + stuffing but no additional postage.

**E. Panfish Project Update** - No word from WDNR Secretary Dan Meyer. Have a call in to see about final decision.

**F. Committee Member Terms** - We will reach out to Brenda and Beth to see who would like to be moved to 2019 expiration. The Procedures will be revised to assure 3-year terms moving forward.

#### **VIII. Public Comment:**

A. Mary Watkins shared that **Geocaching** is something new coming to Presque Isle, that may help to engage residents and visitors. Bill Rutherford is working with the Chamber, Friends of Library, etc., to set these up for this coming season. They will have historical/cultural emphasis.

- B. Steve Smith suggested the Town pursue **Kayaks/Canoes at Sensebrenner Park**, so that people have ability to go onto a wilderness lake and panfish (rather than just the ponds). He indicated he has been in the bait shop in town and often hears people asking where they can fish for panfish.
- C. Steve and Debbie Smith shared a map of **Logging Roads near South Crab Road**, that are on NHAL lands. Brought up the idea of further exploring these as a recreational amenity for our town. Mountain biking in the summer/fall and x-country skiing in the winter were a couple of ideas. Two contacts are Jeff Olson and Joe Fieweger, WDNR.
- D. Chuck Hayes attended a presentation by Quita Sheehan, Conservation Specialist with Vilas County titled "**Valuing Vilas County's Water Resources**". He suggested this may be an interesting presentation for the EDC to host for the community. The presentation is about the importance of protecting our waters, and explores how closely our waters are to the economics of the area.

V. **Next Meeting** - Tues., March 27 2:30pm.

**VI. Adjournment** - Chuck made a motion to adjourn. Mary second. All aye. Meeting adjourned at 3:45pm.