

**THE MEETING OF THE EDA BOARD HELD ON JULY 16, 2015, AT 6:00 P.M.,
AT THE CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 P.M., by Thom Walker. Members present were Victoria Hallin, Charles Snustead, and Genny Reynolds. Staff present were Jolene Foss (Comm. Dev. Director) and Mary Lou DeWitt (Comm. Dev. Assistant).

Absent were Grady Clark and Cindy Riddle.

AGENDA ADDITIONS/DELETIONS:

REYNOLDS MOVED, SECOND BY HALLIN, TO ADD TO THE VERBAL REPORT, ITEM 5, EXPLORE MINNESOTA AD INFORMATION. UPON THE VOTE, THERE WERE 4 AYES, 0 NAYS. MOTION CARRIED.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM REGULAR MEETING ON JUNE 18, 2015

HALLIN MOVED, SECOND BY SNUSTEAD, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF JUNE 18, 2015. UPON THE VOTE, THERE WERE 4 AYES, 0 NAYS. MOTION CARRIED.

NEW BUSINESS:

A. Frontier Representative Speaker

Scott Ralph, Account Executive

Genny Reynolds introduced Scott Ralph, Account Executive with Frontier. Reynolds said Frontier has gotten a federal grant and it is substantial. Frontier's jurisdiction ends in Pease coming from the north. She will let Scott Ralph explain it.

Scott Ralph introduced himself and showed the EDA Board Frontier's map of where their service is located. He helps customers get a full package with the phone and internet. He has developed a relationship with businesses in Princeton for telephone and internet service. He has helped Erdmann's put a phone system in. That is something he does on his own time. This is not work with Frontier. In this area we have Centurylink and Windstream. He is looking for other companies that can bring services in the area where people have choices. It is good to have alternatives. He builds a relationship with people and it is about helping each other out. If he can help a community out, it gives him satisfaction.

Frontier cannot come into Princeton because they have jurisdiction of owning the wires underground and the State decided who gets what area for the telephone company. If a company is coming into the area and wants a different provider, they have to bring in the underground services which cost money. It would be up to them to put in the investment to make that happen.

Foss said competition is good. There is fiber optic in the ground with Windstream and Centurylink here.

Ralph said that is true that the business will look at competitors. Midcontinent is putting fiber optic in also to get services out there. He is not aware of Frontier doing that as of yet. A company will lease it in bulk where they are just paying for having the use of the wire from the primary carrier.

Snustead said with the short distance of what it would be to put the fiber down from Pease, you would think Frontier would want to extend it.

Ralph said it is the cost that stops Frontier from extending the fiber optic to Princeton. Erdmann was looking for an alternative and he hooked them up with another company for phone and high speed internet.

Hallin asked if Frontier does television service also.

Ralph said no, just internet and phone. Dish would do a connection with someone for the television service.

Walker asked if in the future if that will change where one system will provide all three.

Ralph said internet will do it all. It's a vision with using broadband to extend out there to provide service.

Reynolds asked what he knows on Skynet.

Ralph said what he has seen is they bring in a wireless transmitter. In Alexander when the weather got bad, the service did not work. Bad weather and even leaves in a tree can block the service. There needs to be a good line of site connection and they need to put in a lot of services.

Foss said they ended their conversation with Skynet because of the wireless connection problems with the weather and such.

Ralph said they would get the grant from Blandin Foundation for a portion of it and then the City would have to provide a portion to put down the wire fiber optics. It depends on the customers and if they want to spend the extra money to help pay for the wire connection to put down. Midcontinent and the other charters are helping provide now.

Reynolds said they were not involved in getting the grant and does he know how much it was for.

Ralph does not. It is Connect America that the grant is through. He gave Ely as an example of how it is expensive to improve services and it takes time for Frontier to put it in.

Reynolds said the EDA should send letters to Centurylink, Midcontinent, and Windstream, and ask these companies for improvements on our lines. They own facilities in this area.

Foss will draft a letter to all three companies and ask for improvements in this area for the internet services, and will show it to the EDA Board.

Ralph said he would like to see an improvement for this area.

Walker said it is more expensive to move services out to smaller towns. He said his internet services are good at home.

Foss said she heard that some local businesses have internet service problems.

Walker would like Genny Reynolds to work with Foss to draft a letter.

Reynolds said for a grant you need as much support as possible to be able to receive a grant.

Foss will ask Richard Baker and Dan Weber on what is happening with Mille Lacs County and Sherburne County.

Reynolds would rather that we just ask for it and not worry with the counties are doing. Just keep asking for better service.

Walker said instead of just looking at the City of Princeton internet services, reach out to help provide for the townships also.

Reynolds said Isanti County has a Princeton address.

Walker commented that we have three providers that have services in this area and how do we make this area work better for service.

Foss will look who the contacts are with those three companies and where they are at and what they are willing to do. Reynolds can email her thoughts of what should be in the letter.

B. Housing Incentives Options

The City of Warroad has housing incentives the Administrator had emailed Foss. She thought she would share it with the EDA Board. It was interesting to her what they receive for incentives for new homes and existing homes. Just something to look at in the future. Maybe focusing on the homes is not something we need to look at now.

Hallin said as a City or EDA we cannot justify these incentives.

Walker said for a long time Princeton focused on residential and now it is more commercial that we are looking at.

Reynolds would like this to be passed on to the Chamber and to the School District.

DeWitt suggested R.W. Builders and also Howard Homes still have residential lots available at their developments. They might like to see what other communities are doing to sell residential sites.

The EDA Board liked that idea.

Foss said she will pass this information on.

C. Data Center Site Assessment Program

Foss said the last piece before certification is the rezoning of this property site from R-2 Residential to MN-1 Industrial. There have been comments from a resident that is not in agreement with this land being available for a possible data center. The concerns regarded wetlands and flood lands because the ground water is too high in this area. Foss looked into the wetlands and there is 60 acres that are wet and 140 acres that are buildable. This resident said he had reached out to the Governor and the Senator. Foss said she had contacted people that work in this field and gotten answers to support the land being used as a data center.

Foss said they will not be building on the wetland. Once someone wants to develop on that land, the issues are then looked at. City staff said this rezoning should go through without a hitch. The City Attorney will be at the Planning Commission meeting.

The final step is to complete the Great River Energy Economic Development – Data Center Site Assessment Program. This shows them that we met the requirements to get the Data Center certification.

HALLIN MOVED, SECOND BY REYNOLDS, TO HAVE STAFF MOVE FORWARD ON COMPLETING THE GREAT RIVER ENERGY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – DATA CENTER SITE ASSESSMENT PROGRAM APPLICATION. UPON THE VOTE, THERE WERE 4 AYES, 0 NAYS. MOTION CARRIED.

UNFINISHED/OLD BUSINESS:

A. Charging Station for Electric Vehicles

Foss said she did order from Ebay a charging station for \$760 with a \$100 shipping charge. She thought the Princeton Public Utilities and Public Works were going to install it, but the Public Utilities no longer have a licensed electrician. Foss got a bid from Rick Palmer (Princeton Electric) for the amount of \$1,955. Foss spoke to Princeton Chamber of Commerce to see if they will pay a \$1,000 towards the installation and we pay the remainder. Otherwise we can sit on the unit and wait till we have the money to install it.

Walker said his nephew is an electrician and he will see what the cost would be.

Foss said conduits and wiring the Princeton Public Utilities could install. She will see what the Public Utility guys can do without the connection. Then she will see what the cost would be for an electrician. She will get a new quote from Roger at Granite Ledge.

Snustead suggested talking to Crystal Cabinets and see if they would be willing to finance it.

Foss said there is not enough power at the clock tower. They would move it back by Rum River Auto.

Hallin said Rum River Auto had wanted it at their place and we wanted it at the clock tower.

Foss said she thinks by the library. Bob Gerold (Public Works) and John Brooks (Princeton Public Utilities) said there is not enough power by the clock tower.

Reynolds commented that the Chamber was going to kick in money to pay for it and let them do the foot work for sponsors to help pay for it. Maybe who sponsors the installation could have their name on a plaque attached to it.

Foss said she will talk to the Chamber on researching for sponsors to help pay for the installation. Vandalism would need to be looked at. Caution high voltage would be good to put on it.

MISCELLANEOUS:

A. EDA Balance Sheet

Hallin asked what the Net Income loss is.

Foss explained the expenditures such as; her mileage reimbursement, City Attorney fees, staff uniform reimbursement, and miscellaneous.

B. Verbal Report

1) Community Digital Sign Update

Foss said tomorrow Scenic Sign will be putting up the rest of the sign. Now that Princeton Public Utilities no longer has an electrician, we ran into the same issue. Rick Palmer (Princeton Electric) and John Brooks (Princeton Public Utilities) are looking at the electrical installation. Foss said she will not ask Palmer to do any digging work, but would ask the Princeton Public Utilities to do any digging if required. The imputing on the sign will be her and Julia Espe (School District).

2) Regional Destination for Parks & Trails

Foss said she did apply for the Regional Destination for Parks & Trails and had added the Riebe Park and Pioneer Park for the extra acreage.

Reynolds asked how many acres.

Foss said for the three parks it was 75 acres. That is not improving Mark Park.

Walker and Reynolds said that would be good to let people know of the amount of acreage for parks we have. Reynolds suggested the next time the City puts in an article in the utility bills that should be added to it.

Foss said she asked if she could put an article in the City newsletter the next time it goes out.

3) Underground Storage Tanks Removal for 809 & 903 9th Avenue North

Foss said they are removed and it went well. There was no contamination and that documentation will be sent to them at NSP.

Walker suggested that Habitat for Humanity could have these two lots.

Foss said she could contact Cliff and tell him that we are looking at giving our two lots next to his to Habitat. Maybe that would make him reduce the amount he is asking for his lot. The City's two lots would make it more appealing for a Developer. Wayne Eller wants to have a meeting in regards to the lot next to Triangle Park. There is confusion on the hook-up of sewer and water.

4) FAM Tour

Foss said the FAM Tour will be in September and she will be working on the metro one with Sherburne County and Richard Baker will be working on the north part for Mille Lacs County.

5) Explore Minnesota Ad

Foss said that Carol Ossell spoke with her before tonight's meeting. There is an 1/8 page ad and Ossell is claiming that it is \$560 for that ad. Ossell said she had talked with them on one design and it would only be \$75 for an ad. Foss said she explained to Ossell that an 1/8 page ad would get lost in the page and the EDA Board would like to wait until they can afford a half page or full page ad.

Reynolds suggested doing a regional ad with the surrounding Chambers.

Foss said this year the EDA does not have it in their budget.

Walker said we cannot do the ad now.

WALKER MOVED, SECOND BY HALLIN, THAT THE EDA BOARD WILL NOT SUPPORT TAKING OUT AN AD AT THIS TIME IN THE EXPLORE MINNESOTA MAGAZINE. UPON THE VOTE, THERE WERE 4 AYES, 0 NAYS. MOTION CARRIED.

C. City Council and Planning Commission Minutes for June, 2015

The EDA Board had no comments.

SNUSTEAD MOVED, SECOND BY HALLIN, TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. UPON THE VOTE, THERE WERE 4 AYES, 0 NAYS. MOTION CARRIED. THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 7:32 P.M.

ATTEST:

Thom Walker, President

Mary Lou DeWitt, Comm. Dev. Assistant