The meeting was called to order by Thom Walker. Members present were Genny Reynolds, Charles Snustead, Sharon Sandberg, Jules Zimmer, and Victoria Hallin. Staff present were Jolene Foss (Comm. Dev. Director) and Mary Lou DeWitt (Comm. Dev. Assistant).

Absent was Troy Minske.

**AGENDA ADDITIONS / DELETIONS:**
Reynolds would like to add the PACE Program to Miscellaneous.

Sandberg would like to share the Initiative Foundation Magazine article in Miscellaneous also.

HALLIN MOVED, SECOND BY REYNOLDS, TO ADD TO THE AGENDA UNDER MISCELLANEOUS: ITEM D: PACE PROGRAM AND ITEM E: INITIATIVE FOUNDATION MAGAZINE ARTICLE. UPON THE VOTE, THERE WERE 6 AYES, 0 NAYS. MOTION CARRIED.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM REGULAR MEETING ON AUGUST 17, 2017**
HALLIN MOVED, SECOND BY REYNOLDS, TO APPROVE THE AUGUST 17, 2017 EDA BOARD MINUTES. UPON THE VOTE, THERE WERE 6 AYES, 0 NAYS. MOTION CARRIED.

**UNFINISHED / OLD BUSINESS:**
A. EDA Comprehensive Plan Chapter Review
Jim Gromberg, WSB Economic Development Coordinator presented the Economic Development Comprehensive Plan component. The SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis. There was four primary goals and visions that were identified that were in general terms to promote, develop, compete, and improve the community.

An overview of those broad goals and visions are as follows:
1. Promote – Maintain ongoing marketing of the community with local partners to create a destination for residents and visitors.

2. Develop – Plan for the continued development of the community for both commercial/industrial and retail through business retention and attraction activities focusing on job and tax base growth.

3. Compete – Create and maintain incentive programs to allow for the community to encourage growth and attraction of companies.

4. Improve – Maintain interconnected land use strategies to promote a healthy community and promote the development with regional groups.
Gromberg said the SWOT analysis is just support data. Demographics are what they are. The task have been broken down to steps. Gromberg asked the EDA Board what they thought of the objectives.

Reynolds asked on Objective One- Identify sites in the community for possible development/redevelopment and create a plan for the control and development process for sites that is in conformance with the comprehensive plan. What does the wording control mean.

Gromberg said it is a process for their development. For example, there is a site and you figure out ways what you want to go there and how you make it happen. Do it through zoning, comprehensive plan, and it does not necessarily mean buy the land. Cities do not want to buy land.

Reynolds said she does not like the word control and suggest they look at a different word. Princeton is known for not being business friendly so control might not be good.

Walker said if there is not controlled growth that could be a problem. He thinks the word is okay.

Gromberg will think of a lighter word.

Walker suggested appropriate development.

Reynolds said task number four on getting the policies together, Foss has done an amazing job.

Hallin questioned the review and amending for financial assistance.

Gromberg said yes, it is about putting information together on sites. Site selectors have said they want the uncertainty of information needed for a site upfront. Like what the city will assist with if they come here and cost of certain permit items.

Reynolds said Mille Lacs County just went through their Tax Abatement Policy and Foss should look at it.

Snustead said the City needs to do more with annexation.

Zimmer thought there was a policy for orderly annexation.

Walker said if someone wants to annex into the city then they go through the annexation process, but they do not go after land to annex in.

Gromberg said on task number five, review and what exist now. Forced annexation is not a good policy in his eyes. Everyone becomes adversary. Gromberg moved to the next task where it is about amenities of the community and the quality of life in a small town. You want to continue
the small town feel, but have growth. Identify businesses. If there is a perception that the City is not business friendly and you have to make that turn around. Look at what businesses we have and what we need to attract other businesses. How do you interact with businesses. Do you have a relationship with the businesses and not just the large ones. Create an environment downtown where people want to come there.

Foss said task number three “Complete a rate study to determine if fees (utility rates, development fees, tax rates, etc.) are competitive with the surrounding area.” This has created a lot of concern on the rate study.

Gromberg said look at the rates and do a study and see if it is true. It might not be. He does not believe they need to hire anyone to do it. Just have a spreadsheet of what it shows. Electric is harder to put on a spreadsheet. If the company has off peak programs that makes a difference to compare. Gromberg moved to objective number three and asked what do we want our community to look like.

Snustead said to abandon the airport and put it north by Long Siding.

Hallin said the airport is an asset.

Foss said task number four would be about the airport also.

Gromberg said that also is about housing. That is with task number three. On task number four it is how we get more workforce.

Foss said on tonight’s agenda item about an opportunity to have a website “Real Time Talent Exchange” that matches job seekers to jobs. That would belong in this area.

Reynolds asked if affordable housing would keep people to stay in the area.

Gromberg said yes, if the town is an active town, it will keep people to stay. There needs to be a balance of affordable housing and active downtown. If they think of another task emails the ideas to Foss and she can forward them to him.

Reynolds said on objective number four, the task number three is duplicated from objective number two.

Gromberg said it could be changed where it says to create an environment with shopping and where people want to stay in the city more. He could change it to create a hip environment. Create an environment that is a destination. People come to a community where it attracts workforce. What do they want the task to be.

Walker said get local investment into local businesses and institutions. Encourage that.
Gromberg said it is about a workforce and to create an environment that encourages the retention of current and former residents to have a greater investment in the community. Retention and attraction of former residents that have an investment in the community. Objective number five is about the downtown. Look at the City Ordinances and see what the parking regulation is. If you want it walkable, you cannot have it filled with parking lots. Look at the development standards. Do we have a bar or furniture store here. Looking at the downtown analysis, it is places to eat and places with alcohol that shows there is a market need for. Objective number six looking if we have the type of housing we are short of. Yes, we do. Workforce housing it should be called, not affordable housing.

Foss likes the last sentence of the conclusion, keep it in there.

Gromberg said when you succeed with of any of the objectives, then there is a change over, and if you show what was done, it shows what success you have made. Look in two years what task should change. What are the successes and the things that did not work.

Walker said it would be nice to create a document that they could use for an EDA cheat sheet.

Foss will do that.

Gromberg encourages that if the EDA Board have an item on the agenda that has been on the agenda a few times, bench mark it, and see why it keeps coming back on the agenda.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**A. Real Time Talent Exchange**

Community Development Director Memo:

The EDA has indicated that workforce development and improved communication between employers and job seekers is a priority. Staff has communicated with the Princeton Area Chamber of Commerce and Central MN Jobs and Training Services and it seems that holding a traditional job fair may not be the best use of time or resources.

A representative from Real Time Talent Exchange, an online job platform that uses statistically-validated questions for specific positions and sophisticated matching to create high-quality connections, contacted the City regarding a talent portal that other communities are working with to create a place for employers to post open positions and for job seekers to upload their resumes.

Real Time Talent Exchange has offered a grant in the amount of $5,000 for the City of Princeton to get this program up and running. The funds can be used for some web design, logo and branding, kickoff event, marketing, intern and other expenses involved in getting this portal up and running.

The program “matches” job seekers to jobs. Real Time Talent Exchange never charges the
administrating entity. There is a $40 per post cost to the employers, but part of the grant will cover the cost for the employer to get started with free postings. Also, if there is no match for the employer, they get their $40 back.

Real Time Talent Exchange uses the best innovative data tools available to gather billions of data points on talent supply and demand, including information on more than 11,000 employers hiring in Minnesota today on more than 25,000 websites to see who is hiring and what they’re looking for.

Staff is requesting that you move to accept the $5,000 startup grant with Real Time Talent Exchange to implement a Talent Portal for our community.

Foss said the EDA Board spoke of a job fair and does not think a job fair would work here. They do not always have the best turnout. This is a job website that can link with the City and Chamber. The person post their jobs and they match it with a person. Crystal Cabinets could post on it that they have a job opening, and it would be prepaid, so no cost to them. The City has been preapproved for the grant funds of $5,000. It is similar to the Job Spot in St. Cloud.

Walker asked if this is unique to Princeton.

Foss said our job seekers would be looking at jobs close to our region and the jobs posting would be in our region. If no matches they get refunded. Promoting it she would do newspaper, digital sign, Chamber, and the Princeton High School. It does internships also. They could talk to Julia Epse at the District Office and see if they would like to help promote this.

Snustead liked the idea.

Foss said there is no match needed on this grant. We just use the $5,000 funds on this. There would be a business event and telling them about the site. We link up to their site and the Chamber and Foss would administer our site. She does have a contract she has been holding onto until she told the EDA Board. There is no timeframe on the contract and we use the grant funds.

Reynolds asked if we use the funds up, can we cancel the contract.

Foss said yes.

SNUSTEAD MOVED, SECOND BY HALLIN, TO APPROVE THE REAL TIME TALENT EXCHANGE AND THE STARTUP GRANT OF $5,000 TO IMPLEMENT A TALENT PORTAL FOR OUR COMMUNITY.

Foss said she will do a promotional kick-off event, and a meeting with the business owners for
what the site is about.

Zimmer said she should meet with the Human Resources Department at the School District and let them know what the site is about.

UPON THE VOTE, THERE WERE 6 AYES, 0 NAYS. MOTION CARRIED.

B. Amazon Headquarters Location (HQ2)
Amazon announced that it is seeking a second North American headquarters location. Amazon has two operations in our region and has been a great employer to thousands of employees. The project is estimated to create as many as 50,000 new, full-time jobs with an average annual compensation exceeding $1,000,000. The positions will be added over a 10-15 year period. The project could be over $5 billion in capital investment over the initial 15–17 years of the project.

Priority for consideration:
1. Existing buildings of 500,000+ sq. ft., meeting the core requirements and that are expandable or have additional options for development nearby.

2. Shovel-ready greenfield site of approximately 100 acres with utility infrastructure in place. Sites do not have to be contiguous, but should be in proximity to each other.

3. Other infill, existing buildings, including opportunities for renovation/redevelopment and greenfield sites. This can also be a combination of the above.

Foss said this is just information only. It was an exciting opportunity, but we do not fit the requirements. Rick Olseen had emailed Foss the information and he would recommend to Congressman Nolan if she believed Princeton would be a site for Amazon. Princeton does not fit with this. We would not be in the running with this.

Walker said it would be appropriate to send a letter to Nolan and Dayton’s office and say we support Amazon coming to Minnesota.

Foss said when she went to the site selector last week and they spoke of this. She will write a letter to Nolan and thanking him and also to Dayton and supporting this.

Snustead suggested to the senator also.

C. GPS 45:93 Annual Meeting
The annual meeting will be held on Wednesday, October 11, 2017. It will be held at the Lakes Region EMS site in North Branch. Check-in is at 8:30 -9:00 A.M. You can RSVP for this event at the email address or phone number on the flyer.
MISCELLANEOUS:
A. EDA Balance Sheet
There were no comments from the EDA Board.

B. Verbal Report
1) MN Investment Fund and Job Creation Fund
Foss said that Crystal Cabinet Works Inc. received a letter that they were approved for the Job Creation Fund. Crystal Cabinet Works Inc. is expected to have $1,350,000.00 in eligible capital expenditures and create 30 new jobs. Based on those and other factors, the Department of Employment and Economic Development will provide up to $160,500 in a Job Creation Fund award to Crystal Cabinet Works Inc., consisting of up to $93,000.00 in a job creation award and $67,000.00 in a capital investment rebate. The contract will have a five (5) year term. Crystal Cabinet Works Inc. has also received a loan of $450,000 from the MN Investment Fund.

2) Upcoming Events
   a) Community Mental Health Forum
      October 17, 2017 from 5-8 P.M. at the Grand Casino, Hinckley. Congressman Nolan and other speakers will be there.

   b) Autumn Lights Roundup
      This is a fundraiser for Sherburne History Center and will be held on September 30, 2017 at 5:30 P.M. The event will be held at Carousell Works in Big Lake.

   c) Free Food Tasting
      Ojibwe Healthy Eating is celebrating native foods of Mille Lacs. The event will be held on September 27, 2017 from 4:30 – 6:30 P.M. at the Farm Market Care in Onamia.

   d) Regional Financial Resource Summit
      This event is to connect business, lenders, local units of government, economic/community developers, elected officials, and others to financial and technical assistance to make business expansion happen in East Central MN.

      This event will be held on September 27, 2017. The summit will be held 8:00 – 10:00 A.M., at Springbrook Golf Club in Mora. Networking golf scramble to follow.

   e) Hometown Hero Spaghetti Feed
      This is a fund raisers for two Princeton Firefighters who were recently diagnosed with cancer and undergoing treatment. Event will be held on September 30, 2017 from 4:00 – 7:00 P.M. at the Princeton Public Safety Building.
3) **Central MN Partnership and MN Housing Finance Agency**
Foss said for the appeal for MN Housing she got a call from Representative Daudt and he is looking into getting the points higher for the low income housing application that Central MN Housing Partnership has been trying to receive for the old Arcadian Homes site.

4) **PACE Report**
With zero capital cost to owners, clean energy financing brings investor money to pay for upfront costs of proven, cost-effective, energy improvements. Reynolds said Mille Lacs County has been doing this for a year and a half. This is a way for businesses in Princeton to upgrade heating, air conditioning, and such. This is administered through Mille Lacs County Port Authority. They loan the money based on the energy savings and the energy savings exceed the loan payments. They put a lien on your property until the loan has been paid back. This is a low interest loan that can be paid back over a 5 or 10 year time period.

Gromberg suggest that this is a great way to start a relations with the local businesses. This is a way for the City and businesses to interact and develops a relationship with the business.

5) **Initiative Magazine**
Sandberg said there is an article in the Initiative Magazine on their Aviation Program. The article also shows the 60 kids in the Aviation Program and they have received a letter from MN State Transportation for Excellence and they want to come tour their business. This is great news for their business. They need to do a Workforce and Educational Program.

Gromberg asked how they are going tell people about their program.

Sandberg said through emails and newspaper. They plan to get it out with the kids and social media.

C. **City Council Minutes for August, 2017**
The EDA Board had no comments.

SNUSTEAD MOVED, SECOND BY ZIMMER, TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. UPON THE VOTE, THERE WERE 6 AYES, 0 NAYS. MOTION CARRIED. THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 7:57 P.M.

ATTEST:

Thom Walker, President

Mary Lou DeWitt, Comm. Dev. Assistant