

Economic Development Committee
Tuesday, May 26, 2015 – 4:30 p.m. - City Council Chambers

Members present: Morack, O’Connell, Romberg, Tate, Shaw, Bishop, Steinhorst, and Schirpke. Tate excused.

Also present: Mayor Henke, Administrator Hager, John Faucher, Julie Blohm and John Zehner.

1. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Morack at 4:30 p.m. O’Connell/Schirpke to adopt the agenda. Carried unanimously.
2. Chairman Morack asked Committee member Laurie Shaw to provide an update regarding the group of local business leaders that have been meeting regularly. Every Tuesday morning the group is meeting at Familiar Ground Coffee Shop. They have a vision to educate the local community about the importance of “investing in New London.” Beth Hutchison has pulled together a group to promote our community internally and externally. Their statement of “I Heart New London” can be combined with the new City brand of “We’ve Got It.” They are issuing a press release to better inform the public of their ideas. This press release will be coming out soon. They are an umbrella of local businesses combined together to gain more strength in our local downtown economy and to promote our area.
3. Chairman Morack brought up the Fox Cities Regional Partnership web page and reviewed what the web site offers and specifically how New London is marketed on the site.
4. The Committee continued the discussion about marketing the new City brand statement, “We’ve Got It.” The Committee considered the target audience that we would market our new brand to. People who want to start or relocate a business to our community are a target audience. As an example, we want the people who participate with the Small Business Assistance Center and in the Fox Valley Technical College E’Seed program to know that New London is interested in assisting them start their business in our community. We also need to assure people that have their business here in our community that we are here to help them grow and expand their business. Large industries and franchised businesses will find our community by themselves, but the smaller businesses need to be marketed too so we can provide them with direction and encouragement. We also need to target people and encourage them to move here and be a productive part of our employment base. We need to build and maintain an attractive community so that people want to move here and stay here. Another target audience is suppliers to our large local manufacturers. It may be possible to encourage businesses that sell a lot of their product to a local industry to move closer to that industry.

The internet is a major tool we can use to try and reach our target audiences. YouTube, Facebook, Google, Instagram all can play a role in reaching out to our target audiences. Production of locally produced videos to promote our community could be a worthwhile effort. Both the School of Enterprise Marketing and the DECA class could be utilized to assist us with this effort.

Our message has to be conveyed in a unique way. It has to be compelling and relevant. The idea of promoting our community as we did on the Highway 45 billboard of “Cut the Red Tape” is unique and certainly relevant for our community. We complement rather than compete with each other. We can get things done quickly and professionally. We have big cities amenities while maintaining a small town atmosphere. After all, New London was recently rated one of the happiest Cities in the United States.

The Committee needs to develop a list of what we want to achieve. We can then figure out what we can reasonably expect to accomplish with the current New London staff and what needs to be accomplished with other volunteers and paid professional assistance. We have a lot of resources to pull from locally, but in all likelihood, we will need some professional assistance. It was noted that it would be helpful if a list of what we want to achieve can be put together and distributed prior to the next meeting.

5. The Committee reviewed Administrator Hager’s activity report.
6. The next regular Committee meeting is scheduled for June 30th. Dave Thiel, Executive Director of the Waupaca County Economic Development Corporation will be attending the July 28th meeting to discuss the future of the Revolving Loan Fund program.
7. The Chairman asked for public comment. John Faucher addressed the Committee regarding some concerns he had about recent state initiatives including the right to work legislation and the minimum wage law. John suggested that it may be appropriate for the Committee to take a political stand regarding these matters.
8. O’Connell/Schirpke to adjourn. Carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 5:47 pm.

Kent Hager
City Administrator