

Minutes

Strategic Planning Meeting

Thursday, April 29, 2004

1:00 p.m.

Ice Cutter Room, Holiday Inn, Detroit Lakes, MN

Meeting called by:	Mike Metelak
Type of meeting:	Special Meeting - Strategic Planning Meeting
Attendees:	Bob Bristlin (left at 3 pm), Harry Salminen, Gerald Schram, Mike Metelak, Dan Aune; Others present: Jon Thomsen, Stan Thurlow, Shawn Olson, Bryce Anderson (President of the Frazee EDA arrived at 3 pm), Vickie Gerdes and Nathan Bowe (DL Newspaper); Ben Winchester (Presenter) and Joe Egge (Facilitator)
Board Members Absent:	Paul Joyce, Terry Johnson

Agenda topics

- 1) Call Strategic Planning Meeting to Order:** M. Metelak called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.
- 2) Welcome and Introductions:** M. Metelak introduced Ben Winchester who would be presenting comparisons with economic growth in similar counties in Minnesota.
- 3) Recap and Overview:** The Board listened to M. Metelak's recap of the Chat Report and Comprehensive Plan, which provides long-term goals, vision and objectives.
- 4) Ben Winchester, Center for Small Towns:** The Board reviewed the two handouts and listened to B. Winchester's report on the demographics of Becker County and how Becker County compares to similar counties. B. Winchester advised the Board to put negative trends detailed in the reports into context when determining sustainability for future years. B. Winchester reported that Becker County is:
 - a) A Recreational County
 - b) The trend of population is 45 years or older
 - c) Median age of housing stock is 25 years
 - d) Median family income at lower third of state
 - e) #1 gross sales is from the auto industry, dealers and stations
 - f) Major industry is fabricated metals and that this is the area of projected growth
 - g) Average size of industry is 1 to 4 employees
 - h) Population has increased over 3% in the last three yearsDiscussion followed on the decline of agriculture and rise in service industry, gravel as a resource, water quality and loss of resorts (handout given to staff to copy and provide to Board at the next meeting).



- 5) **Exercise 1 and 2:** Omitted to allow the Board the opportunity to focus on the “how” and “who”.
- 6) **Review of EDA:** The Board listened to J. Egge briefly address the Chat Report and Comprehensive Plan, then he directed the Board to focus on the “how” and “who”.
- 7) **Rewriting the Vision:** J. Egge encouraged the Board to develop local strategies for:
- a) TIF, Abatements, JobZ and combinations of those
 - b) Business Subsidy and Developer Agreements
 - c) Use of Bonds and local Revolving Loan Funds
 - d) Site Inventory of public real estate listings
 - e) Working with existing businesses
 - f) Tax credit and SBA 504 loans
- Discussion followed. The Board agreed that collaborating with the Detroit Lakes EDA and obtaining input from Becker County City/Township leaders was an important part of continued discussions.
- 8) **Prioritize and rank top issues/challenges in Becker County:** The Board listened to J. Egge’s perspective on what community stakeholders envision. Discussion followed on Board unity, the power of positive press releases, usefulness of the County website, and full time versus part-time economic development staff. The Board listened to B. Anderson speak about the limitations small communities face in trying to access resources. B. Anderson felt that there should be some other form of measuring outcome of economic development efforts rather than rely on the traditional method of measuring outcome based upon tax base increases and jobs creation.
- 9) **Top three action items to be accomplished – next 12 months:** Board discussion followed on what the Board should do in the next 3 to 6 months. Discussion included meeting goals, strategic aligning, adopting a proactive approach and expanding the duties of the Housing Committee. D. Aune commended the housing staff efforts. The Board agreed that the next action item would be a Needs Assessment Survey. The Board requested that B. Bristlin work with staff in putting together a letter, a Needs Assessment Survey and inviting community members to the EDA Board Meetings. The Board requested that S. Thurlow draft a budget for the EDA Board to review at their next meeting.
- 10) **Review and reconsiderations:** There being no further business brought before the Board,
- 11) **Adjourn:** M. Metelak adjourned the meeting at 4:05 pm.

ATTEST:

Respectfully submitted:
/s/ Jon Thomsen
 Acting Housing Director

/s/ Mike Metelak

EDA Board

Vice President

