

MINUTES

Jo Daviess County CEDS Committee

Tuesday, December 5 2006, 5:00 p.m.
Highland College West, Elizabeth
Conference Room

IN ATTENDANCE: Members Geoff Barklow, Dave Jansen, Pat Keleher, Elaine Klippert, Doug Riedl, Bill Wolter; Staff: Pat Leitzen Fye

ABSENT: Mick Arand

GUESTS: Seamus Ahern, Field Representative for Senator Barack Obama; Albert Griffiths, City Manager, City of East Dubuque; Marvin Schultz, newly elected Chair, Jo Daviess County Board; Helen Kilgore, Mayor, Village of Elizabeth; Amy Alderman, Galena Gazette; Don Schaible, Mayor, Village of Hanover; Dan Reimer, Administrator, Jo Daviess County; Tom Brusch, Mayor, City of Galena

MEETING CONVENED: 5:10 p.m. by Chairman Dave Jansen.

- I. Minutes of the October 24, 2006 meeting were approved by unanimous vote on motion by Riedl, second by Klippert.
- II. Old Business:
 - a. BRE Survey: will be presented to Planning & Development Committee at their December 27, 2006 meeting.
 - b. Data base upgrades: Leitzen Fye to report at next CEDS meeting what exists locally; CEDS to identify critical needs and priorities for data collection purposes with NIU's Center for Governmental Studies.
 - c. Greenways & Trails Plan: the application for grant funds was approved by the county board and sent to IDNR in Springfield.
- III. New Business: Members reported on economic development news and activities in their communities:
 - a. Elaine Klippert (Elizabeth) reported on the Open House held for the new medical facility associated with the Elizabeth Nursing Home (this project was a recipient of both the county's and the Community Development Corporation's revolving loan fund programs); Helen Kilgore added that Design Works in Elizabeth is looking to expand (Leitzen Fye had met with owners previously to discuss county assistance possibilities);
 - b. Geoff Barklow (East Dubuque) noted that there is a lot of activity in the City, but little that can be reported publicly. Barklow (Mayor) and City Council are working to clean up the image of East Dubuque through ordinance and zoning changes regarding bars and adult use establishments; are concerned about the status of the bridge project (Illinois and Iowa Departments of Transportation), it's impact has been and will be extremely difficult on residents and businesses being displaced by the bridge construction as well as the loss of revenues the City will suffer.

- c. Bill Wolter (Hanover) reported that the former Coyote property has some development occurring but is not finalized nor ready for public announcement.
 - d. Dave Jansen (Galena) noted that the new hospital's construction is well under way. The historic house on the property has been moved and will be utilized by a restoration company. Construction personnel and engineers will be moving into the area for 1-1/2 years or so. Mayor Tom Brusch added that there's movement on bringing passenger rail service back to Jo Daviess County (Chicago to Dubuque). He stated that the feasibility study is currently being conducted with a report due in January/February. Al Griffiths (East Dubuque City Manager) added that Dubuque also has an active committee working from their end. He would like to see East Dubuque once again serve as a tri-state regional rail depot. Don Schaible (Hanover) stated that petitions to support the rail project were being passed at the Illinois Municipal League conference and that the IML supports the project. Brusch also reported on the move towards creating a Grant Interpretive Center drawing on the Lincoln-Grant connection; looking for federal and state funds to assist in building this project.
- IV. Next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 6, 2007, 5:00 p.m. at Highland College West Campus in Elizabeth. Leitzen Fye will contact John Cox and Helen Schamberger to invite them to address the committee with an update on the Highway 20 project and a discussion on how CEDS might help. Mayors will also be invited to attend.
- V. Adjourned at 5:50 p.m for open discussion with Mr. Ahern.
- VI. Open Session began with an introduction of Mr. Ahern (who defines himself as the "eyes and ears" for the Senator in Northwest Illinois) and all those present, followed by each community, in turn alphabetically, discussing issues and concerns:
- a. East Dubuque – Geoff Barklow, Mayor & Al Griffiths, City Manager.
 - antiquated water & sewer system
 - annexation of Pioneer Acres which is experiencing serious well and septic issues
 - creation of three contiguous TIF districts for residential and commercial development
 - projects are all so huge that, despite the hard work on the part of the City leaders, federal and state funding assistance is required
 - former Silver Eagle gambling boat license loss was and remains a negative drain for both the county and the City of East Dubuque; the issue is before the Illinois Gambling Commission, though positive resolution is not expected; may yet be subject to future litigation.
 - b. Elizabeth – Helen Kilgore, Mayor
 - The Village is considering the feasibility of TIF district(s) as leadership believes that the cost is high NOT to seriously consider TIF's.
 - Receiving grant funds for water and sewer improvements
 - Considering annexing properties into the Village
 - Experiencing some small commercial development currently and looking towards residential development in the near future
 - Infrastructure costs remain the barrier for economic development.
 - c. Galena – Tom Brusch, Mayor
 - Looking to increase tourism via passenger rail and the Grant Center
 - Considering a new visionary plan but one that does not conflict with current projects such as rail and Grant

- Still considering the concept of the “Gateway Park” on the east side of Galena; a private development that could include a visitor’s center, planetarium, park space, and private business. See it as another way to connect Highway 20 with Stagecoach Trail (for tourism and emergency traffic as well); has been in conversation with Illinois Senator Todd Sieben, Illinois Representative Jim Sacia, and IDOT Secretary Tim Martin.
- d. Hanover – Don Schaible, Mayor
- Looking to different approaches to growth from tourism
 - Concerned with the under-utilization of the former Savanna Army Depot¹ and the naysayers and “nimbys” (not in my back yard) who tend to slow down or stop progress; views renewable energy, wind, ethanol, etc. as great possible uses for the property. Fiber optic cabling is being laid to bring internet access in, and he sees tremendous potential for the property. Al Griffiths who lives in Hanover noted that some early decisions influenced what can take place in the depot, such as ownership of the riverfront by IDNR and US Fish & Wildlife; Seamus Ahern stated that he has been in conversation with the leadership at the LRA, to which Schaible requested federal assistance/intervention in getting through some of the red tape caused by the existence of four owners on the property – the US Army, Fish & Wildlife, DNR, and the LRA. Schaible also noted that another drawback of the property is the lack of natural gas. He also informed the committee that there is a new executive director in place.
- e. Scales Mound – Pat Keleher, CEDS committee member
- Added a US Cellular tower to the village, greatly enhancing the reception in the area (Doug Riedl informed those present that this had been an early project of the CEDS committee – researching and encouraging internet and cellular technology)
 - Village of Scales Mound is currently considering annexations and TIF districts for mainly residential growth, but also commercial development. Mayor Tom Brusch noted that the City of Galena’s experience with TIF has been overwhelmingly positive.
- f. Jo Daviess County – Marvin Schultz, Board Chair and Dan Reimer, Administrator
- County experiences trouble with sales tax payments from the State of Illinois
 - Highway 20 and the Galena bypass remain to priorities, though a better interchange is needed to connect Scales Mound/Stagecoach Road to the bypass
 - Renewed the contract with Freeport Area Economic Development Foundation (FAEDF), completed budget updates and reviewed and revised the county’s Revolving Loan Fund process and application package
 - Lots of highway improvements coming in 2007
- g. Additional comments:
- CEDS asked the community representatives their opinion on holding quarterly meetings with the Mayors (or their designees). All favor the option of attending these meetings and believe it will enhance communication and cooperative development between communities in the county.
 - Tom Brusch announced that the Galena Rotary will present its annual Roundtable discussion (topic: Tourism) on January 10th at Eagle Ridge.

¹ Director's note: The former Savanna Army Depot, now known as Eagle's Landing LRA, is comprised of over 13,000 acres, the majority of which is in Jo Daviess County

- Elaine Klippert asked what the CEDS committee can and should do to influence progress for the Highway 20 and Galena bypass projects? Seen as an absolute necessity for economic development, how can CEDS spark the flame? She stated that it's essential that young people stay in, or return to the county, and that land that is purchased by wealthy urban interests are unlikely to ever produce jobs. So, how best to influence the project in order to create an economy that retains and attracts young workers and families?
- Doug Riedl suggested that there is no "Plan B", i.e., what's the next best alternative, the next best focus, if the four-lane expansion doesn't happen? Pat Keleher suggested that a good second focus is technology – broadband high speed commercial grade internet as an attraction for business and families alike.

Respectfully submitted by Pat Leitzen Fye