

City of Battle Lake
Economic Development Authority
Thursday, February 14, 2019

The Battle Lake Economic Development Authority met for their annual meeting on Thursday, February 14, 2019. Randy called the meeting to order at 7:00 a.m. with Commissioners Don Maslow, Jeff Drake, Leigh Shebeck, Sara Boyum and Steve Young present. Absent was Gene Kelm. Also present were Val Martin, Clerk/Treasurer/EDA Director/Zoning Officer; Rick Schara, Jill Amundson and Rebecca Peterson from West Central Initiative along with Network Battle Lake members, business owners and community members in attendance for the annual meeting. Breakfast was served and the program followed.

- **Welcome** by Randy Dorn and a big thanks to all the members of Network Battle Lake for what they've done for the community. Randy introduced the panel from West Central Initiative and they each took some time to talk about programs.
- **Rich Schara**
 - Talked about the Live Wide Open Campaign and the joint Home for the Holidays project that was done in December.
 - He challenged the group to reach out to alumni as statistics show that 36% of the people moving to an area have lived there before.
 - He mentioned the videos they have on their web-site featuring people that have returned to the area or have moved here.
- **Rebecca Peterson**
 - Rebecca shared an idea that another community used – they gave a mailbox to each graduating senior with a congratulations card to let them know they are always welcome to come back home.
 - She presented WCI information on philanthropy, donor-advised funds, and component funds.
- **Jill Amundson**
 - She shared some statistics and general information related to retail shopping, especially local retail:
 - 70% of retail shopping happens after 7:00 p.m.
 - Keeping your Google listing updated is extremely important
 - 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Saturdays is the best money-making day and time
 - Doing events in the evening while stores are open helps bring in shoppers
 - Consider hosting an artist or home-based business during the evening on occasion
 - Competition is good – it helps increase sales
- **Year in Review**
 - Randy provided information on the Hatchery Row project:
 - Option to Purchase have been signed by all property owners
 - The developer has unique plan that will be a great fit for Battle Lake.
 - EDA and Council are negotiating with the developer on an agreement that will protect the City in case the project falls through.
 - The developer has met with community members to discuss some prospective ideas and is very willing to work with the community on needs for amenities within his development.
 - Leigh reported on the BR& E program:
 - He mentioned the Childcare Center and the efforts of Network Battle Lake. It's amazing what has happened and it's being talked about throughout the County.
 - He went through the list of priorities and updated the group on what's been done.
 - Customer service training was offered last spring, led by Leigh Shebeck, using curriculum he purchased from the U of M. It will be offered again this spring after the Job Fair/Career Expo. He has also taught this course in other communities and at several business locations.
 - Jeff reported on school-related items:
 - Reported on the Job Fair and Career Expo at school held last April. About 20 businesses had booths with students in grades 9 – 12 visiting the booths, getting career information and finding out about job opportunities for summer. It was very positive and

they will do it again this year. It's a good way to build connection with our business community.

- The information kiosk is being constructed by two students through a program at school called WIN – What I Need. They get 40 minutes a week to work on something they are passionate about. The plan for the kiosk was developed by the EDA after reviewing several models. Reba suggested we include a box for the chalk on the kiosk somewhere. This will be a better location than where it was as the kids were not only coloring the pavement but they were also coloring on the fish.
- Parking is available at the school for trail users which is only a couple blocks away from the downtown area. The EDA put together a Battle Lake brochure which includes a map of Battle Lake amenities, trails and features the public parking areas. There seems to be a perception that there is limited parking when in fact, we have numerous parking areas in parking lots and on side streets within a couple blocks of the downtown area. Some suggestions for the map were made to include when it is updated – add trailhead parking under the school, add the walking routes to the map, and add the childcare center to the map.
- Leigh Shebeck told the group a task force of business owners is being put together. This group will work on marketing and joint promotions with the EDA. Rich Schara suggested the EDA apply for the ChangeMaker Grant through WCI.

There was some time spent on answering questions or making comments:

- Rental space is needed – it sounds like all rental units have been filled and there continues to be a need even after the new apartment building and the Krenz rentals have been built. There are several empty homes in Battle Lake – how do you convince people to rent their home? There may be a business opportunity for someone that would be interested in rental management.
- Trying to capture the attention of people that are here visiting – how do we do this? Print material?
- Newcomers Meet and Greet will continue. It was well attended this last summer.
- The 2019 goals and priorities were reviewed.
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Adjourn 8:30 a.m.

Valerie J. Martin, Clerk/Treasurer/EDA Director/Zoning Officer