



## EAST CENTRAL REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

100 Park Street South

Mora, MN 55051

December 19, 2016

7:00 P.M.

### Commission Members Present:

Karen Amundson – Kanabec Co. Public Interest  
Greg Anderson – Isanti Co. Commissioner  
Loren Davis – Isanti Co. Public Interest  
Carla Dunkley – Tribal Representative  
Kathi Ellis – Kanabec Co. Commissioner  
Linda Evans – Mille Lacs Co. Public Interest  
Tim Franklin – Pine Co. Municipalities  
Gordon Gullixson – Kanabec Co. Municipalities  
Steve Hallan – Pine Co. Commissioner  
Richard Hansen – Isanti Co. Townships  
Steven Kimmel – Chisago Co. Public Interest  
Diane Larkin – Chisago Co. Townships  
Tom Lawlor – Southern School Board  
Ben Montzka – Chisago Co. Commissioner  
Dave Patenaude – Kanabec Co. Townships  
Genny Reynolds – Mille Lacs Co. Commissioner  
Thom Walker – Mille Lacs Co. Municipalities  
Glen Williamson – Pine Co. Townships

### Commission Members Absent:

Jeanette Kester – Pine Co. Public Interest  
Kirsten Kennedy – City of North Branch  
Bill Schlumbohm, Sr. – Chisago Co. Municipal  
Barb Welty – Mille Lacs Co. Townships  
Steve Odegard – Northern School Board  
Marlys Palmer – Isanti Co. Municipalities

### Staff Present:

Bob Voss – Executive Director  
Bob Bollenbeck – Transportation/TZD Program  
Jordan Zeller, Economic Development

1. **WELCOME:** Chairman Montzka called the regular meeting of the East Central Regional Development Commission to order at 7:00 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
2. **AGENDA APPROVAL:** Davis moved to approve the agenda as presented. Hansen seconded – motion carried.
3. **MINUTES APPROVAL:** Hansen moved to approve the minutes of the October 24, 2016 meeting. Davis seconded – motion carried.
4. **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:** Executive Director Voss reported on a number of items including:
  - a. **MILLE LACS LAKE AREA ECONOMIC RELIEF PROGRAM:** Mille Lacs County received \$3.6 million from the State to implement the Mille Lacs Lake Area Economic Relief Loan program to assist businesses that are suffering economic hardship as a result of the downturn in Walleye fishing. ECRDC was approached to assist the County with preparing/processing the necessary closing documents for loans approved by the County. Voss stated that a draft technical assistance (TA) contract was developed and the ECRDC has begun assisting the County with this project. Individual loans cannot exceed \$100,000. The ECRDC will collect an origination fee amounting to 1.5% of the loan amount plus other related expenses (i.e. legal, UCC Filing, mortgage registration, mileage, etc.) from the borrower of each loan. The opportunity for businesses to access the loan program will continue through June 30, 2017. Reynolds indicated that the Mille Lacs County Board approved the draft TA contract as presented at a recent meeting. Voss requested that the Commission consider approving the agreement as well. Evans moved to approve the TA agreement with Mille Lacs County as presented. Dunkley seconded – motion carried.

- b. EDA DISTRICT EVALUATION: Lee Shirey of EDA's Chicago Regional Office notified us that we will have to go through an Economic Development District (EDD) evaluation on January 12, 2017. The EDD evaluation was conducted in December of 2014. These evaluations typically occur every three years but ours was moved up on year in order for EDA to maintain their 3 year cycle. Donn Winckler, Executive Director of the Mid-Minnesota Development Commission in Willmar, will be our Peer Reviewer. Voss was asked by EDA to be the Peer Reviewer for the Region 5 Development Commission out of Staples.
- c. MILLE LACS SCENIC BYWAY STUDY: MnDOT's Scenic Byway Office finalized the contract for the Lake Mille Lacs Scenic Byway Designation Study project on December 1st. Consequently, the ECRDC has been given the "go-ahead" by MnDOT Staff to start and are planning a kick-off meeting with stakeholders tentatively on January 20th in Wahkon. Voss is working with Andy Hubley of the Arrowhead Regional Development Commission (ARDC) to develop a technical assistance subcontract to compensate ARDC for their portion of the project which, out of the total \$76,550, will amount to \$18,450 plus \$12,500 for a landscape architect to prepare drawings during the planning process, etc. The remaining amount (\$45,600) is for ECRDC technical assistance time (\$44,700) and other project related expenses. Voss requested the Commission grant him permission to enter into a subcontract with ARDC as stated. Gullixson moved to approve a subcontract with ARDC. Reynolds seconded – motion carried.
- d. 5 YEAR ASSESSMENT: The ECRDC's statutory 5-year assessment report is complete and due to the State's Legislative Library no later than December 31, 2016. The report contains information on various economic development, community development, and transportation projects the Commission has been involved over the past five years. It also included the results of a customer satisfaction survey along with historical financial data. Voss stated that it is necessary for the Commission to adopt a resolution indicating that, based on the report, the Commission is fulfilling the purpose of the Regional Development Act. Davis moved to adopt Resolution No. 2016-4 INDICATING FULLFILLMENT OF THE PURPOSE OF THE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACT. Walker seconded – motion carried.
- e. GRANTFINDER WEBSITE: Voss reported that he purchased a one-year subscription to GrantFinder which is a comprehensive real-time, online, searchable database of federal, state, foundation and corporate grants. GrantFinder has a strategic partnership with the National Association of Regional Councils (NARC) so it is recognized by several regional development organizations across the country. The subscription cost \$1,495 and a total of 5 licenses are available for the ECRDC. In addition, each of our 24 boardmembers (or designees) can have a GrantFinder login and password for their respective organizations. Voss has begun contacting some commission members already with information on this.
- f. EDA PLANNING GRANT: Received word on December 5th that federal Economic Dev. Administration (EDA) received additional funding in their latest allocation and will increase our 3-Year Partnership Planning Grant from \$157,884 to \$210,000 beginning with our new grant cycle starting April 1, 2017. The ECRDC was, therefore, invited to submit an application showing a 50% grant rate for up to \$210,000 in EDA funds. With the ECRDC match, the total budget for the three years would be \$420,000. Annually, this amount has been about \$53,000 since the mid-70s so this increase is long overdue. The ECRDC has exceeded the required match for many years so it is anticipated that matching the new amount will not be a difficulty. On a related item, Davis moved to approve Resolution No. 2016-5 entitled RESOLUTION COMMITTING LOCAL

MATCH AND DESIGNATING THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AS AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE FOR EDA PLANNING GRANT. Evans second – motion carried.

5. **TREASURERS REPORT:** Ellis presented the Treasurer’s report. Kimmel moved to approve the Treasurer’s Report to include the checks written (#9113 through #9170) along with ACH payments from October 1 to November 30, 2016. Hansen seconded – motion carried. Ellis also commented that, since the written report, the tax levy payments have all arrived and the balance remaining on the revolving line of credit has been paid back at Neighborhood National Bank.
6. **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:** Zeller reported on the following:
  - a. 5 YEAR CEDS RESOLUTION: An overview of the six month process used to develop the 2017-2021 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) which must be submitted to the federal EDA by the end of the year. The process involved a survey of cities, counties, post-secondary institutions, and the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe in the region. It also made use of input from local business and the ECRDC’s CEDS Strategy Committee. The CEDS was made available for a 30-day public review and comment period as required by federal EDA. On December 7, 2016, the CEDS Strategy Committee met to review/consider comments. The Committee then voted to recommend approval and submission of the CEDS to EDA. Lawlor moved to approve the Resolution 2016-6 entitled “COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY RESOLUTION” approving the CEDS and authorizing submission to EDA. Ellis seconded – motion carried.
  - b. CEDS WORKPLAN: On behalf of the CEDS Strategy Committee, Zeller brought forth for consideration an ambitious work plan for the upcoming calendar year 2017. The plan includes a “Barnstorming” marketing effort for the Revolving Loan Fund; major events/forums around childcare, tourism, financial resources & business networking, and workforce housing. Also, a focus on business succession planning to be incorporated with BR&E visits in the region. The plan further included possible activities for 2018 including a legislative forum, a broadband internet event, a workforce event, a veteran focused entrepreneur fair, etc. Amundson moved to approve the work program as presented. Davis seconded – motion carried.
  - c. ECRDC LIAISON TO RLF: Patenaude moved to accept Karen Amundson’s (Kanabec Public Interest) resignation and appoint Glen Williamson (Pine County Townships) to represent the Commission as a voting member on the Revolving Loan Fund Committee. Davis seconded – motion carried.
  - d. KANABEC RLF VACANCY: Term limits have resulted in vacancies for two Kanabec County RLF seats. Two applications were received by the deadline. One from Doyle Casavant and the other from Gordon Heitke. Chairman Montzka called a short recess to allow the Commission’s Kanabec County delegation an opportunity to caucus and come back with a recommendation. After reconvening, Amundson moved to appoint Doyle Casavant as the Kanabec County RLF representative. Gullixson seconded – motion carried.
  - e. RLF RE-APPOINTMENTS: The RLF Committee has four board members that have terms expiring in 2016. These members were contacted and are all willing to serve another term. They are Wayne Bekius, Mille Lacs County; Nancy Hoffman, Chisago County; Frank Christopherson, Pine County; and Bruce Montgomery, Isanti County. Hanson moved to approve these re-appointments. Williamson seconded – motion carried.

7. **TRANSPORTATION:** Bob Bollenbeck reported that the region will have extra money to distribute to current projects in the STIP due to an increase in federal funds. The Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) will, therefore, have a recommendation on the use of the funds at the February Commission meeting. Bollenbeck also noted that MnDOT is working on changes to the contracting and reporting process for our annual planning agreement.
8. **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: Voss provided the following updates on Community Development planning projects including:**
  - a. TAYLORS FALLS SRTS: The Taylors Falls Safe Routes to School (SRTS) planning project is nearing completion. The City plans to apply for the current round of federal infrastructure funding which is for program years 2021.
  - b. REGIONAL TRANSIT COORDINATION STUDY: MnDOT announced that the ECRDC will receive \$26,000 to conduct the next regional transit coordination study. The ECRDC facilitated the last two planning efforts in 2006 and 2011. Penny Simonsen has been and will continue to be the lead staff person on this project.
  - c. LAKE MILLE LACS SCENIC BYWAY STUDY: Penny Simonsen has started the initial work for the Mille Lacs Scenic Byway Designation Study planning project. A kick-off meeting with area stakeholders is being planned for January.
  - d. US BIKE ROUTE 41: The U.S. Bicycle Route 41 designation application was approved. The trail will route north/south through Chisago and Isanti Counties and hopefully bring economic development opportunities to the area.
9. **TOPICS OF REGIONAL INTEREST:** Gullixson commented on information he received about a possible alternate route for Enbridge Inc.'s proposed oil pipeline which could impact our region. Hallan reported that there are also environmental concerns/issues about the potential pipeline route in the Big Sandy Lake area to our north. Amundson shared information on upcoming Mora Vasaloppet including that 2018 is an "exchange" year with representatives from Sweden, Japan, and others traveling to Mora to participate in festivities. Will keep RDC informed on how this showcase the area.
10. **PENNY SIMONSEN:** Evans moved to acknowledge the excellent work Penny Simonsen does for the ECRDC and wish her a speedy recovery from injuries sustained from an automobile crash earlier in the month. Williamson seconded – motion carried.
11. **ADJOURNMENT:** Montzka wished everyone a Happy Holiday season. Davis then moved for adjournment of the meeting at 8:45 p.m. Williamson seconded – motion carried.



Robert L. Voss, Executive Director



Ben Montzka, Chairman