



CITY OF FITCHBURG

Planning Department

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MINUTES

Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee
Tuesday, July 14, 2015

Members Present: Ed Kinney, Tony Hartmann, Bill Horns, Tom O'Brien and Tom Thrall
(Excused absences: Roger Cohee and George Vroman)

Staff Present: Wade Thompson – Resource/Project Planner

Others Present: Patrick Reinsma, Wisconsin Department of Tourism

1. Call to Order and Approval of Minutes

Chair Ed Kinney called the meeting to order at 4:10 p.m.

Motion by Tony Hartmann, second by Tom O'Brien, to approve the minutes of May 19, 2015, carried unanimously.

2. Public Appearances – Non-agenda items

None.

3. The Power of Tourism – Patrick Reinsma, Wisconsin Department of Tourism

Patrick Reinsma, Regional Tourism Specialist with the Wisconsin Department of Tourism presented some general information related to tourism in the State of Wisconsin. Reinsma's presentation focused on the following components:

- Tourism as a business tool
- Tourism's impact on revenue and employment
- The relationship between tourism and marketing
- Department of Tourism support and resources available to local governments

Reinsma's presentation led to a general discussion of tourism amongst the Committee, including trends in vacationing/tourism habits, the potential of the City to bring in additional tourists and tourist revenue, tourist demographics, general areas in which tourists could be drawn from, the appropriate balance of tourism in a community, and potential support/resources available from the Department.

4. Fitchburg Agriculture Route (FAR) Presentation/Discussion

Wade Thompson gave a general overview and presentation on the Fitchburg Agriculture Route (FAR). Thompson stated the FAR is an example of a tourism concept that could reap many of the benefits identified in Reinsma's presentation, and that the City is in the initial stages of exploring FAR development. Thompson stated the FAR is envisioned as an "Agricultural Main Street", centered on a paved recreational trail corridor (Badger State Trail) running through the City's agricultural lands, and potentially home to inter-dependent, diverse local food production enterprises, agricultural-related value-added retail outlets, agricultural tourism destinations, and recreational opportunities.

Thompson gave an overview of the City of Fitchburg, agricultural clusters/agricultural tourism and relevant case studies, and status of FAR development. Thompson stated the City's Planning and Zoning Department will be working with the University of Wisconsin –Madison's Graduate Program in Urban and Regional Planning (URPL) to produce a preliminary study/report gauging the feasibility of development of the FAR concept. Thompson stated URPL students would work on the project through the Fall 2015 Semester (September – December), with completion of the study/report slated for December. Thompson also stated the report/study would then be presented to the Committee and other appropriate City officials/committees to determine next steps in development of the FAR concept.

The Committee discussed various aspects of the FAR concept. Chair Kinney stated the City could potentially "earmark" various industrial-zoned lands in the southern portion of the North Stoner Prairie Neighborhood for local food processing-type industries and incubators. Hartmann stated the University's business school could potentially be interested in the FAR concept, and offer additional resources/support.

5. Update on City of Fitchburg Comprehensive Agriculture Plan

Thompson stated the Common Council had approved/signed a resolution directing the Committee to develop the *City of Fitchburg Agriculture Plan*. Thompson reminded the Committee of the Plan development timeline, including a public information workshop/meeting to be held in early fall of 2015.

The Committee agreed to discuss workshop/meeting planning at the August Committee meeting.

Hartman requested a draft statement identifying the Plan intent and purpose be discussed at the August Committee meeting. Thompson stated he would bring a statement to that meeting.

6. Staff Report

None.

7. Announcements.

None.

a. Next Meeting Date

The next meeting was scheduled for August 25, 2015 at 4:00 p.m.

8. Adjournment

Motion by O'Brien, second by Hartmann, to adjourn at 5:50 p.m., carried unanimously.

Submitted by: Wade Thompson, Resource/Project Planner

Approved: August 25, 2015