

MINUTES

BOARD OF DIRECTORS Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce March 26, 2007 – Forest Lake Restaurant

Present: June Johnson, Lilah Crowe, Karen Lindgren, Rick Utech, Kent Koerbitz, Margie Ritter, Mike Birkeland, Roger Hoyum, Linda Gibeau, Amy Trast, Judy Nesvold, Brandon Sharp, Sherry Frick, Mike Iaizzo, Jim Millis

Absent: Michelle Rossi, Cindy Feyder, Sholom Blake, Peggy Schagh, Shannon Benolken

Chamber staff: Bud Stone, Renee Thompson, Kerry Larsen, Carie Ann Olds, Jennifer Gooch-Harvey

Guests: Peter McDermott, Cory Jackson, Brian Sweeney, Becky LaPlant

Bud Stone, President, called the meeting to order and asked for a motion to approve the February 26, 2007 meeting minutes.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Rick Utech made a motion to approve the February 26, 2007 meeting minutes. Brandon Sharp seconded the motion. Motion carries.

ACTION: No further action necessary. .

FINANCIALS

Bud reviewed the February financials with the board and compared last years dues collected to this years dues collected.

Jim Millis made a motion to accept the February financials. Rick Utech seconded the motion, motion carries.

ACTION: No further action necessary.

GUEST SPEAKER- BECKY LAPLANT

Becky LaPlant explained the Itasca Area Employer Toolkit initiative that is a partnership between IEDC, the Grand Rapids Area Chamber and the Blandin Foundation.

The purpose of the Itasca Area Employer Toolkit is to provide employers the best practices on how to retain and recruit high quality employees. With the future expected workforce changes in the Itasca area, these practices will help businesses boost its competitiveness, and hire and retain top quality talent.

As well as being a good resource tool, the toolkit gives successful examples of benefits and options that work and are currently being used by employers.

ACTION: No further action necessary.

GUEST SPEAKER – BRAIN SWEENEY

Brain Sweeney, Legislative Counsel for BNSF Railway Company, gave the board some history and background on BNSF Railway. Brian then answered the board member's questions.

ACTION: No further action necessary.

BRANDING UPDATE

Judy Nesvold attended the Branding meeting and gave an overview of that meeting. She felt that the attendance was low and was not quite sure why. Judy explained that if the area hired BrandPrint to brand Grand Rapids, they would do 1 of 2 things. They would either do the research and then the area would brand themselves and be responsible to market it; or, they would do the research, help design and get the brand for Grand Rapids and then create a marketing plan for Grand Rapids.

Discussion took place regarding who owns the brand, who will pay to get it out there and where will the money come from.

The total cost of the BrandPrint project is approximately \$80,000. The Grand Rapids Area Chamber is being asked to contribute \$10,000 toward the project.

Mike Birkeland made a motion to invest the \$10,000. Roger Hoyum seconded the motion. Motion carries with Mike laizzo and Jim Millis voting against the motion.

It was suggested that an advisory team be organized to work with those already involved with the branding effort.

Sherry Frick, Linda Gibeau, Judy Nesvold, Roger Hoyum and Karen Lindgren volunteered to form this team.

ACTION: No further action necessary.

BIG BROTHER NEW MEMBER PROGRAM

Kent Koerbitz, Linda Gibeau, Judy Nesvold, Brandon Sharp, Roger Hoyum and Rick Utech gave updates regarding their Big Brother assignments.

ACTION: Kerry Larsen will continue sending the board new member to contact.

DEPOT COMMONS PROPERTY TAXES

Bud gave an update on the status of the Depot Commons having to pay property taxes.

Bud discovered that the original lease for the Burlington property is between the City of Grand Rapids and Burlington Northern. The Chamber then leases the property from the city. Somewhere along the line, the lease payments have been bypassing the city and going directly from the Depot to Burlington Northern. The original sales agreement between the City of Grand Rapids and Depot Commons for the Depot building states that the Depot can only be used for public purpose.

Bud and Karen met with Jerry Oppenheimer regarding the Depot paying property taxes. Jerry will be talking to Tom Gilmore, Itasca County Assessor.

ACTION: No further action necessary at the present.

NEXT MEETING

The next Board of Directors meeting will be at 11:30 a.m. on Monday, April 30, 2007 at the Forest Lake.

Margie Ritter made a motion to adjourn. Kent Koerbitz seconded the motion; motion carries. Meeting adjourned.