

Draft

Washington Island Economic Development Committee

Minutes for August 23, 2011

6:30 pm – Rutledge Room

Present: Ron Overdahl, Tom Nikolai, Jerry Maiers, Carol Stayton, Randy Sorensen, Susan Ulm

Excused: Lee Engstrom

Guests: Robert Cornell, Lisa Gibson, Fred Hankowitz, Donna Benson, Larry Goodlet, Barry McNulty, Mary Lee Benson, Noreen Murphy, Ruth Gau

1. Call to Order by Maiers at 6:30
2. A. Minutes from July 26, 2011: Motion by Sorensen, Second by Nikolai to approve minutes; motion passed unanimously.  
B. Minutes from August 3, 2011: Motion by Nikolai, Second by Ulm to approve minutes; motion passed unanimously.
3. A. Death's Door Bar B Q 2012 (DDBBQ ' 12) presentation/update from Lisa Gibson.  
Gibson presented a general outline of the event scheduled for August 24 & 25, 2012; the dates have been approved by the KCBS, which is an established brand and oversees the location, dates and judging criteria for these events. An overview of the goals of the event include: this becomes an annual event on W.I., attract at least 15 contestants the first year, increase tourism on the Island which is currently a slow time (including Door County). DDBBQ is a subcommittee of the WI Chamber. Working committees are in development; work on securing sponsorships has started; WIFL (ferryline) is on board as a sponsor. An internship plan is in place for Sarah Schultz to work on webpage/site development with support from the Chamber.  
B. Rural Economic Development Grant Program – Glacierland Grant for Washington Island; presentation from Robert Cornell. Cornell reviewed the history of how this grant developed starting in June of 2010 from conversations with interested parties on W.I. Subsequently a \$40k grant was awarded to Glacierland in 2011 from Rural Development; Glacierland's previous experience is in agriculture and woodland management development programs. Previous surveys from W.I. have been sent on to Glacierland for review including the 1992 TOW, WIZAP, NWTC and WI School study. A future meeting will be developed between the WIEDC committee and Glacierland; the tentative date is 9/12/11 and time is TBD; location will be at the REA meeting room.

RECESS: Meeting was recessed from 7:20pm and was resumed at 7:29 pm by Maiers.

4. Old Business
  - A. NWTC:
    - Maiers reported that NWTC has developed a set of course offerings targeting the topic of gardening that includes both adult and children programs.
    - Preliminary draft of the NWTC survey this summer is underway.
    - Interviews of potential class teachers from Island candidates is in progress
  - B. Data collection in progress – goal is to collect/centralize information pertaining to Island economy, demographics, surveys not yet collected; contact Maiers with information.

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C. Economic Sector development: Maiers presented a plan to address various economic subjects on the Island in a format he titled "workshops". In contrast to sub-committees, a weekend workshop would address a specific subject in a set timeframe and the events would be open to public participation.

Motion made by Sorensen Second by Overdahl to have future Saturday Workshops; motion passed unanimously. Those workshops identified, and their point person assigned, at this first discussion included: Marine/Water Access – Ron Overdahl, Winter Tourism – W.I. Chamber, Silent Sports (Hike/Bike) WIEDC.

5. New Business

- A. DDBBQ '12 – the advantages of this event to the Island are utilizing times when tourism is low both in the County and the Island; increasing overnight stays, exposure to another market group who enjoy family/outdoor type activities. Work with the TOW to advance this project is encouraged.
- B. Rural Economic Development Grant Program – Motion by Overdahl Second by Ulm to table further discussion; motion passed unanimously
- C. WIEDC – Island Positives/Negatives (attachment/handout); brief general discussion between the committee and guests present regarding this topic:
  - Advantages included the low crime, natural surrounding; Disadvantages were costs related to living here and how we can attract younger residents. Cornell noted that the clinic was providing adequate service; Murphy offered that the Island needed a Pharmacy.
- D. New Economic Development: Anna Gibson opened a shop at the BP Amoco which will operate until mid October. Island related crafts/items is the focus.

6. Committee comments – none

7. Public comments:

- a. Approximately 900 people attended the Island Fair; a compliment to this year's event was the addition of new activities for children and the Cherry Train transporting visitors to/from the event.

8. Next meeting is September 27, 2011 at 6:30 pm at the Rutledge Room

9. Adjournment: Motion by Sorensen Second by Nikolai to adjourn at 8:37 pm.

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## Economic Development Disadvantages

### 1 Quality

Everything is for sale: Not a good image, People think 'what is wrong - why is everything for sale?'

There is no depth in service providers or competition.

Work ethic and entrepreneurial spirit -low

### 2 Demographics

Declining enrollment in the school

Loss of young families

Not enough full-time population: Need more kids at the school, -- population to keep businesses open, -- offseason jobs

Winter season: Too little people to keep businesses open, too little work to keep people here, Travel is difficult, Roads

### 3 Tourists

2 ½ month tourist season.

Lopsided tourist dependent economy

Loss of Hotel Washington.

No bike lanes on town line and Jackson harbor rd.

Our economy is based on a single industry. i.e. tourism, which therefore is paramount in any discussion of growth

Safe bike paths (Jackson Harbor Road, for example)

### 4 Costs

Cost of getting anything or anybody here and products off the Island.

Ferry line costs are high and have become the excuse for high energy costs.

High costs: fuel, ferry and food

Our taxes are increasing for services that we do not need and are generally not available

Transportation and energy costs -high

### 5 Health

Health care: Very limited services on the Island, Travel time and cost off Island can be a problem

Lack of Doctor.

Medical Services - low

### 6 Technical

Internet and phone access - low

Island "physical plant" -- consistent electricity, internet, septic, trash etc.

Marginal cell phone and internet service.

Technical and Educational training levels - low

## Economic Development Advantages

Quality of Life

Friendly people

Great sense of community

Low Traffic

Peaceful, relaxed atmosphere

Quiet

Scandinavian heritage: Stavekirke, Festivals, Icelandic community, Strong family connections and traditions

Strong Community: Good school w/ small class sizes -- community events -- Everybody knows everybody -- helpful

The school

The varied talents of community members are shared -- a strong sense of volunteerism w/ no concern for pay

There is no congestion-even in the height of summer

This is a supportive community that is also diverse. Status is not an issue

Washington Island is a lifestyle that is generational and timeless

We are not surrounded by box stores or inundated by consumer driven day tripping tourists

Nature

Beautiful, natural island setting. (promotes feelings of nostalgia, sentimentality)

Clean Beaches

Gateway to Rock Island

Scenic Beauty Destinations: Schoolhouse Beach, Jackson Harbor, Rock Island

Crime

Low Crime

Virtually crime free community

Economic Issues

2 Ferry trips a day in the winter.

Becoming a wedding destination.

Broad experience in the retired residents for business mentoring and advising

Broad range of skills in music, arts and crafts

Excellent sports fishing.

Lower real estate costs than Door County (At least they used to be)

Sophisticated community organization and organization skills

The airport

The resurgence in farming.

Town Parks committee working on CORP.

Well run ferry operation