



**MISSISSIPPI RIVER  
REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION**  
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*James Kuhn, Cashton, WI  
Chairman*  
*Margaret Baecker, Independence, WI  
Vice Chairman*  
*Vicki Burke, Onalaska, WI  
Secretary & Treasurer*  
*Greg Flogstad, Onalaska, WI  
Director*

**MINUTES**  
**MISSISSIPPI RIVER REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION (MRRPC)**  
**BIMONTHLY MEETING**  
**10:00 a.m., October 9, 2019**  
**Americinn, 1835 Rose Street, La Crosse, Wisconsin**

**Call to Order**

Chairman Kuhn called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and asked for the roll call. A quorum was present. There were several guests in attendance: Francis Schelfout WisDOT, Karl Green UW Extension Community Development Educator, Kaitlyn Lance UW-Extension Ag Educator, Brian Fukuda La Crosse County Community Development Specialist, Roxie Anderson, Monroe County Planner, Mark Tallman WEDC, Tim Hundt Representative for Congressman Ron Kind, and Steve Peterson Monroe County Economic Development Coordinator. The attendance roster is attached.

**Minutes of August 14, 2019 Bimonthly Meeting**

Chairman Kuhn asked for a motion on the August 14, 2019 bimonthly meeting minutes. Commissioner Twidt made a motion to approve the August 14, 2019 bimonthly meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Purdy. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any questions or comments and hearing none, the minutes were unanimously approved.

**Treasurer's Report**

Secretary-Treasurer Burke reported the July 31, 2019 balance in all accounts was \$313,285.89 and the August 31, 2019 ending balance was \$321,042.00. She reported the beginning balance in September 1, 2019 was \$321,042.00 and September 30, 2019 ending balance was \$301,780.23.

Ms. Burke reported the Business Capital Fund (BCF) began with a July 31, 2019 balance of \$116,035.52. Activity from August 1, 2019 through September 30, 2019 included loan repayments of \$8,491.53, interest earned of \$59.87, and administrative expenses of \$1,800.00 leaving a September 30, 2019 balance on hand of \$123,286.92. The Business Capital Fund (BCF) non-federal account began with a July 31, 2019 balance of \$132,003.05. Activity from August 1, 2019 through September 30, 2019 included interest earned of \$66.20 leaving a balance on hand of \$132,069.25.

Ms. Burke reported the Business Capital Fund 2 began with a July 31, 2019 balance of \$152,452.61. Activity from August 1, 2019 through September 30, 2019 included loan repayments of \$1,894.00, interest earned of \$76.53, and administrative expenses of \$1,349.00 leaving a balance on hand of \$153,074.14.

Ms. Burke reported the CMV Growth Development Fund began with a July 31, 2019 balance of \$17,704.81. Activity from August 1, 2019 through September 30, 2019 included loan repayments of \$6,200.16 and interest earned of \$3.47 leaving a September 30, 2019 balance of \$23,908.44.

The La Crosse County Economic Development Fund began with a July 31, 2019 balance of \$69,718.05. Activity from August 1, 2019 through September 30, 2019 included loan repayments of \$7,251.00, interest earned of \$13.10, and administrative expenses of \$3,057.00 leaving a September 30, 2019 balance of \$73,925.15.

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***Providing Planning and Economic Development Services to Improve the Environment, Economy and Quality of life***  
***• Land Use Planning and Zoning Assistance • Transportation Planning • Economic Development Planning • Recreation Planning • Business Lending • Grant Writing • Economic Data Dissemination • Assisting Local Interests in Responding to State, Federal and Private Programs • Advisory Services on Planning and Development Issues • Coordinator for Programs and Activities • Advocate on Issues Affecting the Region***

The Microloan Fund began with a July 31, 2019 balance of \$370,374.09. Activity from August 1, 2019 through September 30, 2019 included interest earned of \$29.25, loan payments of \$6,906.00, administrative expenses of \$20.00, and \$366,941.00 returned to WEDC leaving a September 30, 2019 balance of \$10,348.34. Chairman Kuhn asked for a motion to approve the treasurer's report as presented. Commissioner Borreson made a motion to approve the treasurer's report as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner McMillan Urell. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any questions or comments hearing none the Treasurer's Report was unanimously approved.

**Presentation on status of \$55 million CBD oil processing, bottling, and labeling facility with workforce housing and childcare facilities in Kendall, WI by Steve Peterson, Monroe County Economic Development Coordinator.**

Mr. Peterson presented information about the history of Industrial Hemp in Wisconsin and the two year process of developing a CBD oil processing plant in Kendall, WI by a family owned company. He said the company is building a new CBD oil processing, bottling, and labeling facility with workforce housing and a childcare facility in Kendall, WI. The project includes the construction of a 35,000 sq. ft. state of the art pharmaceutical grade hemp CBD oil manufacturing plant, purchasing an elementary school building and remodeling it into a research and development center, building a daycare center for employees with children, and a 60 – unit apartment building to assist with workforce housing. The project will create 302 short term jobs and sustain 88 permanent jobs. He also discussed the different varieties of hemp plants, the process of harvesting, the requirements for plant care, and the products that can be obtained from the plants.

**U.S. Department of Commerce – Economic Development Administration Performance Review Preparation for February 12, 2020 meeting.**

Mr. Bonifas reported that since the Commission was designated an Economic Development District of the US Department of Commerce – Economic Development Administration and has maintained this designation since 1977 and is the recipient of planning grant funds from EDA, a performance review of the commission is completed every few years to evaluate program impacts based on economic development knowledge, jobs and private investment. The last review was performed in 2014. In preparation of the evaluation that will be conducted at the February meeting, he provided information on EDA. He mentioned that EDA is the only federal agency exclusively focused on economic development. He said EDA is divided into six regions and our commission is located in the Chicago Region. He discussed the different EDA Programs that are available which include public works projects, economic adjustment assistance, planning, local technical assistance, university centers, regional innovation strategies, trade adjustment assistance for firms, and research and national technical assistance and how the commission and communities have utilized EDA grants. As an Economic Development District (EDD) of EDA the Commission is responsible for preparing a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). The MRRPC has updated its CEDS continually since 1977. It serves as an economic development plan for the region. The MRRPC will be evaluated on how it was developed, who is involved in the development process, and how this strategy has been implemented in the region to drive economic development. Other items that are evaluated are: Effectiveness of the Executive Director, capabilities of planning grant staff, the composition of the board and their involvement in economic development, the Commission's impact on the region, and the Commission's financial management. Commissioner Borreson asked if there will be someone from EDA at the February meeting. Mr. Flogstad responded that a representative from EDA will be at the meeting and probably someone from EDA's Chicago regional office will be on a speaker phone, and another peer reviewer from another planning commission will be part of the evaluation. At our last evaluation the commission was rated "Fully Successful".

**Update on submission of an EDA grant application to fund economic recovery planning, engineering and administration activities for the communities of Ontario, La Farge, Viola and Readstown with MRRPC serving as the applicant and grant administrator.**

Mr. Flogstad reported that the application for the EDA Kickapoo Valley Economic Recovery Assistance Grant was submitted online at the end of June. He said at this time there is nothing new to report and it is just a matter of waiting for a response from EDA.

**Report on Disaster Recovery Microloan Program lending to businesses.**

Ms. Ofte reported that the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) had been working to create an economic recovery program and hoped to roll out the program in 2019. With the flooding disasters in August and September of 2018 it resulted in the WEDC rolling out their program in September 2018 to help businesses economically recover. WEDC used the planning commissions across the state to deploy this program. She said the planning commission was given \$600,000 with \$5,000 for administration to begin making loans after the flooding disaster. She said the maximum loan amount was \$15,000 with 0% interest, 48 month payback period, and a six month deferral for the first payment. The first Disaster Microloan was made in

November of 2018. She said that since the beginning of the program \$233,059 has been loaned out to 16 businesses. She said that most of the loans have been made to businesses in Vernon County, one in Juneau County, and one in Crawford County. She said that the funds not loaned out by the July 31<sup>st</sup> deadline were returned to WEDC in August. Businesses have begun to repay their loans with \$10,002 having been repaid since July 15<sup>th</sup>. She said that three more loans will begin repaying their loans in October with the last two loans beginning repayment of their loans in January 2020.

**Report on the City of Mondovi and the City of Westby Federal EDA Industrial Park Grant Applications.**

Mr. Flogstad reported that both the City of Mondovi and the City of Westby are applying for grants to build new industrial parks. He said that the City of Mondovi is creating a new industrial park located on 210 acres of land on the west side of the city along Highway 10. He said the total cost of the project would be \$7.5 million. The application would be a regular EDA grant application and include road water, sewer, storm sewer, new wastewater treatment plant with an anaerobic digester. He said that there is an existing business in the city that would like to expand in the new park as well as other interested businesses and two farmers that are interested in using the anaerobic digester for manure disposal. Mr. Flogstad said that the City of Westby is also applying for funds to create a new industrial park that would be 74 acres in size with 50 acres dedicated for industrial and commercial use. There are six companies that are committed to expanding in the Westby Industrial Park. The total project is \$4.3 million.

**Decision on hiring policies and procedures for the Executive Director position and announcement on selection of person to fill Senior Planner position opening.**

Mr. Flogstad stated that there is a personnel policy that may need to be amended. The policy is the amount of annual leave days applicants for jobs with the MRRPC may receive. He commented, if we hired a new employee, that employee would start with two weeks of annual leave per year based on existing MRRPC personnel policies. This would also apply to the Executive Director position that the MRRPC is presently recruiting for. He stated this may be a problem if we have a quality applicant for this position with 10-15 years of relevant experience or more. This applicant may be receiving 4 weeks of annual leave or more at their current place of employment. Having to go back to two weeks of annual leave may cause a quality applicant to decline a job offer from the MRRPC. Mr. Flogstad suggested changing this policy so if a person has experience relevant to the job they are applying for this experience would count towards the earning of annual leave as if the person was working at the MRRPC. He thought this change would help in securing quality candidates for job vacancies at the MRRPC. A motion was made by Commissioner Borresson and seconded by Commissioner Ehrsam to give the Executive and Administration Committee the authority to count relevant work experience job applicants have towards the MRRPC's annual leave rate when hired.

Mr. Flogstad also reported that the Executive and Administration Committee interviewed 5 candidates on September 10, 2019 and selected Abbey Nicewander to fill the position of Senior Planner, Ms Nicewander will start work on October 21, 2019.

**Decision on Pepin County 2019 Contributions.**

Mr. Flogstad reported that he was contacted by the Pepin County Administrative Coordinator via email that the Pepin County 2019 and 2020 contributions had been approved for payment at the September Pepin County board meeting.

**Old, Business, New Business and Adjourn**

Chairman Kuhn asked if there was any old business, hearing none Chairman Kuhn asked if there was any new business, hearing none a motion was made to adjourn by Commissioner Schroeder and seconded by Commissioner Twidt. The motion was unanimously approved.

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Vicki Burke, Secretary/ Treasurer

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Date

## MISSISSIPPI RIVER REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

MEETING ATTENDANCE ROSTERDATE: 10-9-2019PLACE: AmericInn

	NAME	REPRESENTING
1.	Breg Flogstad	MRRPC Staff
2.	Mary Anne McMillan Urell	Buffalo County
3.	John S. Hesse (MRR)	Buffalo Co
4.	Del Twist	Buffalo Co
5.	James Ehrsam	La Crosse Co
6.	Phillip Barneson	Trempealeau County
7.	JIM KRAPP	PEPIN CTY
8.	ERNEST WIK	TREMP CO
9.	Sarah Ote	MRRPC Staff
10.	Dave Bonifas	MRRPC staff
11.	Tim Hurdt	Cong. Kind
12.	Ron Cammy	Jackson Co
13.	A. Brad Chown	Jackson Co.
14.	Rich Furdy	Pierce
15.	Beil Schroeder	Pierce Co.
16.	Joseph Kraus	Crawford Co.
17.	Herb Coyne	Vernon Co.
18.	Tommy Jack	Vernon
19.	Golden Nickelath	Vernon
20.	Vicki Burt	La Crosse
21.	James B Kuhn	Monroe Co.
22.	Francis Schelphaut	WisDOT
23.	Karl Green	UW Ext. Community Dev. Ed.
24.	Kaitlyn Lance	UW Ext. Ag Educator
25.	Brian Fukuda	La Crosse County
26.	Roxie Anderson	Monroe County
27.	Mark Tallman	WEDC