

more engaged and willing to support and participate in activities or not. The Chamber of Commerce members in attendance related that they felt it would not be overly difficult to get volunteers from the community.

At the EDA meeting in January, Mr. Drager stated that the Extension Program was short staffed and a consultant for an East Bethel program would not be available until next year. Mr. Ahmed explained that his schedule was not clear at that time but he has since been able to make time available this year to be the consultant to East Bethel if the city would like to engage in the program.

Mr. Ahmed noted that it usually takes about 2-3 months to recruit a leadership team for the program. Mr. Voss asked what approach is best for recruiting. Mr. Ahmed suggested doing presentations at community meetings, articles in newsletters and on the city website. He noted that the leadership team then recruits the task force members and they in turn recruit the visitors for business surveys.

Mr. Wes Maack from the Chamber of Commerce asked what kind of materials might be available to assist in recruiting. He stated that people seem to respond more positively to actual data and facts. Mr. Ahmed replied that there are videos and multiple case studies available to help recruit participants.

Ms. Sharon Johnson, also from the Chamber, suggested it would be helpful to have the opportunity to talk with members of other communities who have already participated in the program. Suggestions included Blaine, Coon Rapids, Brooklyn Park, Forest Lake and Hugo.

Mr. Welter made a motion to recommend approval to the City Council for dedicating \$7,000 in funds for the BR&E program for the City of East Bethel. Mr. Mundle seconded the motion; all in favor, motion carried unanimously.

Open To Business

This program is designed to help entrepreneurs and small business owners grow in the communities where they live and work. As a community in Anoka County we are able to participate in this program at no cost to the City for the first year. Business service specialists are deployed out in the communities and are able to provide one-on-one assistance customized to meet individual business needs. Kathleen DuChene is our local contact. She has extensive experience both as a small business owner/entrepreneur and working for large corporations.

Ms. DuChene met with Ms. Winter to discuss the program. Ms. DuChene is the business advisor for the "Open to Business" program for Anoka County. She offered additional information to the members. Chamber of Commerce members were in attendance for this presentation.

The Open to Business program is an "extension of the EDA" for cities. The primary focus is to work with existing small or medium size businesses or new or budding entrepreneurs that want to start a business to provide them technical assistance. Ms. DuChene can help with creating a business plan and doing cash flow analysis. They also have funding and loans available including micro loans

and gap financing.

At the last EDA meeting, a question from one of the members was about how communication flows between Ms. DuChene and City Staff and City Council. Ms. DuChene reported that she tracks all her contacts and reports to the county and will continue sharing the information with Ms. Winter. Ms. DuChene has an office in City Hall as well as at the county offices and she is willing to meet anywhere as needed.

Currently Ms. DuChene is working to market the program across the county. Information about the program is already on the city website and members were asked to help get the word out about this free program. Mr. Butler suggested an article in the Anoka County Union. Mr. Mundle suggested presenting to the Chamber of Commerce as well. Ms. DuChene stated that an article from the Star Tribune about Dakota County and the program successes there.

Mr. Maack Stated that the Open to Business program was extremely instrumental in assisting his business to procure gap financing which allowed them to remain in business. Mr. Butler asked if Ms. DuChene might be able to help with businesses that might be interested in coming to East Bethel. She did not believe that it was part of her responsibilities at this time.

**Business
Development Report
– February 2015**

Ms. Winter reported the following:

- Met with MNDOT, Anoka County Highway Department, Met Council, and Ham Lake to discuss future service road options. Based on that conversation City has been meeting with individual property owners for the purpose of securing future right of way. MNDOT is in the process of completing a study along the Highway 65 corridor to determine future service road options.

Mr. Voss related that the discussions with MNDOT have seemed to be moving forward in a positive direction. Doug Fisher, the Anoka County Engineer attended the last meeting with MNDOT and was very supportive of the need for improvements of the roads in East Bethel.

- Assisted East Bethel Chamber with membership drive adding 18 members.
- Continue to work on BR&E project
- Met with Open to Business representatives

There is a Sunrise Business Breakfast meeting on April 9th at 7:30 AM in the Council Chambers hosted by the East Bethel Chamber of Commerce. This meeting will continue discussions regarding service road options. Jack Davis, City Administrator and Craig Jochum, City Engineer will be there to be part of the discussions.

Ms. Winter noted that she was asked and has become a member of the Anoka County Workforce Council. They are responsible for funds and activities related to Workforce Development. They are looking at the Apprenticeship program and

how to train for current job requirements.

Members reviewed the Piwik analysis for February (Attachment 6.1). Mr. Butler stated it appears that more visitors are accessing the website via mobile devices. The website has a mobile application but the full site can also be accessed via mobile devices.

Chamber of Commerce Report

Mr. Butler reported the invitations for the Sunrise Breakfast should be going out later in the week. They would appreciate RSVPs and are asking for \$5 to cover costs. Mr. Davis and Mr. Jochum will be presenting on the service road issues. Mr. Butler asked Ms. Winter to add a short presentation on the BR&E program to the agenda for the breakfast.

A golf event is being planned by Mr. Harrington and a Heart Safe City presentation will be given in May by Mr. Troy Lachinski.

City Council Report

Mr. Mundle reported that if the city is able to refinance the 2010 A bonds as planned they would save almost \$1,000,000. The Town Hall meeting that was to be held on March 17th with Senator Benson has been postponed to be rescheduled at a later date. The East Bethel Royalty is having a spaghetti dinner and silent auction fundraiser on March 19th from 5:30 – 8 pm at the Senior Center. An East Bethel town hall meeting will be held on April 23rd.

Other Business

Ms. Winter reported that the staff will review the new GIS with a presentation and familiarization. The website will allow many areas of the GIS to be viewed by the public.

The Permit Works program has all building permit information with the addition of a septic system tracking module and a complaint tracking module. The Permit Works program will have the ability to connect and interact with the GIS system.

The city is hoping to get mobile devices out in the field by 2016 starting with the building inspector. Permit Works is going to have a mobile application that can be used out in the field to access all information on a property on site.

Adjournment

Mr. Bezanson made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:35 p.m. Ms. Lux seconded; all in favor, motion carried.

Submitted by:
Susan Lori Irons
Recording Secretary