

Director and Senior Advisor's Bi-Monthly Report

March 15, 2019

Maquoketa Hometown Pride: The Maquoketa Hometown Pride group continues to meet monthly with many of their subcommittees working in between those times. From their first project, Maquoketa Clean Up Day, the committee has moved on to several additional projects. They have subcommittees working on:

- Spring Clean-Up
- Summer Concert Series
- Youth Engagement
- Property Beautification
- Dog Park
- Skate Park Improvements
- Maqtoberfest/Taste of Jackson County

Stephanie has been an incredibly helpful partner in making their Hometown Pride group move things forward. The committee has established a Housing taskforce which includes realtors, contractors, City representatives, and our office. Dave presented an update on this committee's work to the Maquoketa City Council at their January 21 Council of the Whole meeting. Stephanie has been a part of two presentations to Maquoketa City Council related to the Dog Park. Stephanie also presented at Maquoketa's Kiwanis group on Hometown Pride, and specifically the efforts of the local committee's Housing Taskforce.

Conferences/Trainings: Dave and I attended a meeting on Opportunity Zones put on by Greater Dubuque Development Corporation to learn more information on the benefits surrounding Maquoketa's Opportunity Zone designation.

Stephanie and Dave attended a presentation on "Workforce Stability" focused on strategies to increase employee engagement and retention. This conference was held in Clinton.

I presented at a Maquoketa Area Chamber Lunch and Learn on the Grant Wood Loop and the Parks to People pilot program that the JCEA facilitated. This pilot program focused on taking a regional approach to increase recreation opportunities by leveraging public private partnerships wrapped up at the end of 2018.

Maquoketa CDBG Façade Grant: Our office continues to assist the City of Maquoketa, ECIA, participating property owners, and 563 Design as we progress on the CDBG Downtown Façade project. We have had one property owner withdraw from the program, and our office has worked to find two potential participants to utilize the freed up grant monies. The final construction documents are being put together, so that the City can go out bid for the project in April or May. Then after the bids are awarded, construction will begin in June. This program will have a truly transformational impact on the downtown's appearance. I was contacted by a television reporter who intends to do a story on what

termed “Maquoketa’s downtown revitalization” at the end of May. This is a good example of the knock on benefits related to these revitalization efforts, the perception and profile of the community is being elevated.

Regional Career Training Center: In late October we were made aware by an economic development colleague that a discussion had begun around a regional Career Training Center for the Eastern Iowa Community College region. We were able to connect with the Jackson County Superintendents to join them at this meeting. The vision described at the meeting was that this center would provide high quality CTE programming to all Jackson/Clinton County students and provide the skills needed in the workforce. This model has been successfully deployed in other community college regions. There seem to be some barriers in our region due to travel time depending on where the CTE Center is located. It now appears EICC intends to move ahead with a regional center in Clinton County. It is unclear what this will mean in our area of the EICC region. We will continue to work with our Superintendents, employers and community college partners to ensure their needs for students and workforce are being heard. In an effort to learn from existing initiatives focused on workforce skills, we have partnered with Prosperity Eastern Iowa to organize a visit to Western Delaware High School’s Weld Lab in Manchester on March 25th. All those interested should contact Stephanie Sagers (sagers@theicea.org) by March 21st.

Other Industrial/Commercial Prospects:

- We continue to work with two Maquoketa industries that need additional space for potential local expansions. Both of these industries have advanced manufacturing facilities that required a skilled workforce.
- We continue to work with a developer on the 110 S. Main St. (Maquoketa) property rehab, and securing a commercial tenant on the first floor commercial space. We’ve been in contact with 3 different potential tenants. This would go a long way to ensuring that project can move forward. Previously the City of Maquoketa was awarded a Catalyst Grant for this project, which they matched with a TIF grant. The developers were awarded the Iowa Economic Development Authority’s Redevelopment Tax Credit. This is a critical step forward in the financing package. They also are working through the Part 2 process for a Historic Tax Credit award. These tax credits programs are integral to making this project work.
- Working with a childcare provider on succession/transition opportunity. We believe that childcare opportunities are critical components in our rural communities, and ensuring the continuation of this business is integral in the sustainability of our smaller communities. We hope to find resources to support the potential new owner’s professional development.
- Working with an existing commercial business who is considering a major business expansion and relocation within Maquoketa.

- Meeting with potential housing developer related to subdivision development in Bellevue. Dave has been helping the Bellevue City staff align resources and strategies to encourage private development, and because of that has been called upon to assist in development meetings.
- Met with existing institutional broadband provider in Maquoketa on options related to expanding fiber access with the City and strategies to encourage fiber to home/business provider to come to this market.
- Met with development construction firm interested in a number of Jackson County opportunities.
- Working with four separate start-ups related to beginning or expanding operations substantially in Jackson County.
- We continue to work with Water Street Partners LP on the Old Button Factory. Previously the City of Bellevue was awarded a Catalyst Grant for this project, which they matched with a TIF rebate. This project will be addressing a truly blighted building on Bellevue's river front on the edge of their downtown.

CDBG Upper Story Housing Pilot Program: Assisted the Maquoketa Art Experience and the City of Maquoketa application to a pilot program focused on rehabilitating vacant upper story spaces in downtowns. The Maquoketa Art Experience saw this as an opportunity to fully utilize the building, and provide a more sustainable future for their organization. As one of the largest single parcels in the downtown, this property's sustainability is very important to the downtown's viability. Additionally, the ability to leverage both the State and private investment – potentially amounting to \$900k – for a \$40k investment by the City of Maquoketa is a great return on investment. A program that can leverage this level private investment, while helping to address the quality rental housing shortage, is certainly worthy of investigation.

The City of Maquoketa approved the application on Monday, January 21st. We were notified the City was awarded on March 11th. Maquoketa was one of two communities awarded statewide.

Maquoketa Opportunity Zone: The Opportunity Zone program was created as part of the most recent Federal tax reform legislation. The mission is to revitalize economically distressed communities using private investments. To stimulate private participation in the Opportunity Zone program, taxpayers who invest in Qualified Opportunity Zones are eligible to benefit from capital gains tax incentives available exclusively through the program. Opportunity Zones are census tracts generally composed of economically distressed communities that qualify for the Opportunity Zone program. The State of Iowa sent notification out to eligible communities earlier in 2018 to consider applying for this designation. We assisted Maquoketa in applying as they had the only qualifying census tracts in Jackson County. One of their census tracts was given this designation (east half of Maquoketa).

Dave and I attended an informational meeting hosted by our partners Greater Dubuque Development Corporation in Dubuque on January 24th. We invited some of our financial institution and financial advisor partners to attend with us.

Pocket Neighborhood: Our office continues to work with the many partners involved with this proposed project. We have attended Maquoketa City Council, Maquoketa Municipal Electric Utility, and Board of Supervisor meetings. We have also met with and talked to many local elected officials to make sure they see the value that this project can offer to Maquoketa and to Jackson County. Based on 2010 census data, 55% of Maquoketa residents are at or below 80% of the median income level. Because of that reality, it is important to investigate these innovative approaches to creating workforce housing targeted to the current population.

We received a message from a local employer expressing his strong support of efforts like this. They said, "This is a smart idea and even without a housing shortage should be looked at in most communities." They also expressed a willingness to partner on more efforts like this to connect their workforce with quality, affordable housing as a workforce retention and attraction strategy.

The development agreement between ECIA's nonprofit arm, ECDC, and the City of Maquoketa was approved on March 4th allowing this project to move forward to final design and a spring bid letting. There will be an open house on April 4th targeted to realtors, employers and then the wider community.

Urban Renewal Amendments: Our office has been working with Bellevue, Maquoketa and Preston on amendments to their urban renewal plans.

Bellevue and Maquoketa have approved amendments. Preston Council has agreed on the proposed changes. Our office is working with staff and bond counsel to formalize the amendment.

In Bellevue the amendment included funding for acquisition of a 50 acre parcel of land from the Stamp estate for future residential and possible commercial growth. It also included funding for a suite of downtown incentive programs. We worked with an advisory committee to develop the program specifics for these incentive programs which include seven elements:

- Acquisition Assistance
- Blade Signage
- Commercial Interior
- Consultant Assistance
- Façade Improvements
- Upper Story Residential
- Conversion – First Floor Residential to Commercial

These programs are modeled after similar programs in Dubuque, Manchester, and Maquoketa. The Council approved the recommended programs and established a Design Review Committee to review applications. Our office will be facilitating an informational meeting for realtors, financial institutions, and other interested property or business owners on March 28th.

The Bellevue plan included the matching funds committed as part of the Catalyst grant for the former Button Factory. Work has begun on this \$1.2 million rehabilitation project. Our office worked with the City's bond counsel and staff to write the development agreement for this project.

Maquoketa's updated plan includes funding for continuing their downtown incentive program. We recently submitted proposed revisions to their programs in an effort to simplify the application process and add a new upper story residential grant. This Maquoketa amendment also includes matching funds for the Catalyst Grant project (110 South Main).

The Preston draft amendment would include funding for downtown incentive programs, assistance for a local industrial expansion, funding for new residential development's infrastructure, and potential funding for reuse of the former middle school property.

Housing: This continues to be a priority issue in Bellevue, Maquoketa, and Preston.

Preston acquired land on contract a couple years ago for residential development. Our office is working with IIW, the City Council, and the Housing Task Force to look at options for development of this property located near the Catholic Church.

Bellevue has entered into a development agreement, that our office helped prepare, with BETA. They hope to close on the 50 acre acquisition in early April. BETA and our office are looking into a possible land trade. If that does not materialize, we will work together in developing a master plan for this property.

Our office, along with Bellevue City staff, have met with Delbert Jackson to discuss the development of his 16 lot subdivision. The property was previously platted, but never developed. It is our hope that this subdivision could provide available housing lots until the Stamp Farm can be developed.

In Maquoketa, we are working on multiple fronts to address housing needs. Much time has been dedicated to working with City staff and ECIA in finalizing the details for the Pocket Neighborhood project. Several informational meetings and an open house are scheduled for April 4th to begin marketing these homes.

We have also spent considerable time on the State's Upper Story Pilot Project application to create 4 apartments above the Maquoketa Art Experience. It was all worth it when we received word earlier this week that the \$500,00 grant was approved. This is exciting for the downtown and is a way to address the quality rental need.

Our office also met in the past several days with representatives of Clover Ridge, trying to find a partner who will help develop independent senior housing. This could be free standing units or possibly duplexes or townhomes.

Preston: The City of Preston has many ongoing projects including a major wastewater upgrade, downtown renovation, reuse of the former school building, a residential subdivision and management of municipal utilities (water, sewer, electric, and gas). Councilmembers and the Mayor do not have the time or expertise to manage all these ongoing needs. Because of this, our office has been working with the City of Preston as they consider hiring a City Administrator. We have prepared a job description that

is being used as they advertise for this position. They are accepting applications and resumés through March 27th.

Keep Iowa Beautiful Awards: Keep Iowa Beautiful is the statewide organization that helps support and sponsor our Hometown Pride program.

Each year they give 5 scholarships for \$1,000 each to Iowa High School seniors. We encouraged all of our high schools to participate. We are pleased to share that Kyle Guenther of Bellevue High School was selected as one of the 5 students selected this year.

We are also honored to be informed that Ohnward Bancshares/Maquoketa State Bank was selected as KIB's corporate citizen of the year. This award was based on the many volunteer hours and financial contributions Ohnward and Maquoketa State Bank make in the communities they serve.

Governor Reynolds and KIB will be hosting an awards ceremony on March 28th in the Governor's office to formally recognize the scholarship winners and the corporate citizen of the year. As our regional community coach, Dave plans to attend this ceremony.

Investor Appreciation Event: Our office held our fourth Annual Investor & Partner Appreciation Event on Tuesday, February 19, 2019. The reception was hosted by Water Street Partners and sponsored by River Ridge Brewing, Moore Family Farms, Blue-9 Pet Products, and Simply Parker's. There were approximately 60 attendees including Board members, investors, and other partnering organizations.

Thank you to all the board members who were able to attend and help make the night a success. I've attached the Annual Report that was presented at the event. I just want to reiterate that the success of our office depends on private/public partnerships and I can't thank our investors and you as our board members enough for their investment in the future of our county. Economic Development is all about collaboration and partnerships. We have made great strides in the past year and I am excited for the future.

Other meetings/events that we attended:

- Maquoketa Betterment Corporation
- ECIA Council
- Bellevue Downtown Property/Business incentive subcommittee meeting
- Maquoketa Leadership Team
- Hometown Pride Coaches Conference Call (2)
- Prosperity Eastern Iowa
- Preston City Council (2)
- Business Growth
- Bellevue City Council (2)
- Maquoketa City Council (2)
- Interviews with Sycamore Media, Telegraph Herald, KWQC, Radio Dubuque, KDTH, KMAQ
- Bellevue Housing Taskforce (2)
- Maquoketa Layers Committee (2)

- Congresswoman Finkenauer visit
- Jackson County Board of Supervisor meetings (3)
- PDI Legislative Conference Call (2)
- JCRHC Communication Plan meeting
- Conference call with IDOT, Maquoketa, and Federal Highway officials
- Maquoketa Hometown Pride meeting (2)
- Career and Hiring Fair meeting (5)
- Meeting with State Representative McKean
- Jackson County Manufacturer's meeting
- RPA 8 Tech & Policy Board
- Meeting with Councilmember Clausen and Carrie Weaver
- Opportunity Zone informational meeting
- Rural Community Transportation Program Training
- IISC Downtown Façade conference call
- Maquoketa Urban Renewal Amendment consultation
- Bellevue Urban Renewal Amendment consultation
- FBLA Practice Day – Bellevue High School
- Meeting with Loras College to discuss rural community outreach initiative