

Harmony EDA Minutes

April 6, 2023
7:30 AM

Community Center
Council Room

Present: Kerry Kingsley, Steve Donney, Andy Batstone, Greg Schieber, and Michael Himlie

Also Present: Allan Dahl, Erica Thilges, Amy Bishop, Aaron Bishop, Joy Kiehne, Ralph Beastron, Allison Whalen, and Chris Giesen

The regular meeting was called to order at 7:31 AM by Kerry Kingsley.

Minutes

The board reviewed the minutes of the March 2, 2023 meeting. Motion by Donney, second by Kingsley to approve the minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Financial Reports & Claims

The loan schedule was not updated/available for the meeting but it was reported that all loans were current. Giesen will distribute once updated by the office.

Giesen reported that it was likely the Hammel House development agreement would be paid in full early, yet this week. As such, the lots in the subdivision would be eligible for the new home rebate program. He noted that the payoff amount would include payment for the 2023 obligation, so a recently sold lot (835 3rd Ave SE) would be eligible for the rebate. He also noted that a complete application was submitted showing an estimated building taxable value of \$292,500 which would translate into an \$11,500 rebate. Motion by Kingsley, second by Schieber to approve the rebate as requested once the agreement is paid. Motion carried unanimously.

The board considered payment of the first half 2023 chamber stipend in the amount of \$14,000. Motion by Donney, second by Batstone to approve the payment as requested. Motion carried unanimously.

Bike Trail Project Update

Giesen reported that he and Batstone recently testified in the House Capital Investment Committee for the trail bonding bill request and it received good response. The committee did not take any action on any bills that day, however. The politics between the Senate and House will play a factor in the outcome of any bonding bills this or next session. Giesen noted that the city now has two bills in both the House and Senate to secure \$4 million in funding for the trail; one through a bonding bill and another through the DNR parks and trails budget. Only one bill is needed but on the advice of local legislators, we should seek funding through both sources.

Giesen also reported that he had completed and submitted the LCCMR grant. Because funding wouldn't be available until July 2024, projected costs to complete the project, and that the availability of the current bonding funds (~\$1.4M) beyond this year is

unknown, it was decided to apply for \$5.5 million which would account for future inflation and contingency should current funding be forfeited.

Industrial Park Maintenance

Giesen noted that a prospective buyer is still considering a purchase of a lot but is still exploring options.

It was reported that the board chair gave the approval for Randy Barnes to proceed with removing the tree line and fence in the industrial park, as approved at the last meeting. He was the low bid at \$4,200 and could also complete the project more quickly.

Giesen discussed on-street parking in the industrial park. He noted that with the construction of Twin City Trimmers' building this summer the board should revisit the discussion regarding semi truck parking within the industrial park. The board discussed at length. Because of access and congestion concerns it was felt that the industrial park was no longer a good place for such parking. Motion by Batstone, second by Schieber to recommend that the city council eliminate all on-street parking in the industrial park. The board discussed further. Batstone and Schieber amended the motion to recommend that the city council eliminate only semi truck tractors and trailers from on-street parking in the industrial park; with exceptions for loading/unloading of deliveries for tenants of the park. Motion carried unanimously.

Chamber of Commerce Report

Allison Whalen gave the chamber report. She thanked the board for their continued support. The chamber is looking at opportunities to freshen and better use the space at the visitors center. The countertop on the main desk and carpet is showing its age with stains, cracks, chips, and wearing. They are working with the historical society to look at options for reorganizing the space and displays; as well as replacing the carpet and countertop in the visitors room. The question was posed as to the responsibility for those items; noting that they are gathering more information on the cost. Ralph Beastro discussed the opportunities and need; both noting that the first impression of the community for visitors is important and we should be proud of that impression. It was suggested that more information on the scope and cost be gathered and presented to the city council for discussion at a later date.

Motion by Himlie, second by Schieber to recommend that city council consider the improvements requested by the chamber and historical society. Motion carried unanimously.

Whalen noted that the first quarter of 2023 has gone well, they are getting ready for the tourist season, and they are restarting a "business afterhours" event for networking. She also reported that the new way finding signs have been delivered and will be installed soon.

Experience Harmony 3

Giesen presented information to the board regarding the third edition of a community strategic planning/place making process to set common community goals for projects,

needed businesses, etc... The board discussed and agreed to continue the discussion as the first topic of business at its next meeting.

Prospects/Community Update

No additional prospects or updates were discussed.

There was no other business.

Hearing no objections, Kingsley adjourned the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 9:07 AM.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for May 4, 2023 at 7:30 AM at the Community Center.