

Harmony EDA Minutes

July 6, 2023
7:30 AM

Community Center
Council Room

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

Also Present: Amy Bishop, Aaron Bishop, Allan Dahl, Erica Thilges, Cindy Ofstedal, Becky Jones, Sam Grabau, and Chris Giesen

The regular meeting was called to order at 7:30 AM by Kerry Kingsley.

Minutes

The board reviewed the minutes of the June 8, 2023 meeting. Motion by Donney, second by Himlie to approve the minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Financial Reports & Claims

The loan portfolio was reviewed. Because of the 4th of July holiday and weekend, the loan schedule was not 100% updated, but no issues were foreseen. There were no new home rebates issued.

Giesen reported that the Monster Bash loan (which was approved at the last meeting) may need the closing delayed as the seller of the real estate wished to push the sale closing back several months. Monster Bash thought that if the sale was delayed late enough in the year they may not need the EDA loan after all as other funding may be available at that time.

Semi Annual Development Agreement Compliance Review: Follow Up

The board reviewed follow up information from the compliance report discussed at the last meeting. Giesen reported that On the Crunchy Side was now in compliance and that Twin City Trimmers was still late on paying property taxes. He also reported that in discussions with Twin City Trimmers, the original late payment was likely just a simple oversight mistake and that he would stay in touch with the owner. In addition, Twin City Trimmers reported that they would not need the construction deadline extension as offered as they intend to begin construction this summer and finish the building this winter. The board agreed that they would not be interested in extending the construction deadline indefinitely/year after year; that the purpose of selling this lot was to see activity/a building constructed on it. Giesen reported that the Bishop downtown revitalization grant was recently paid and that now he would need to work with the owners to determine a timeline for finishing the interior of the building and filling the storefront with a tenant in accordance with the agreement.

Chamber of Commerce Report

Erica Thilges was present to give the chamber report. She said that the 4th of July celebration was a success, including the new events that were held this year. The chamber is also excited about the upcoming 1st annual chamber golf event scheduled in August (more information to come!). Kingsley thanked the chamber for their work and noted that people seemed to stay in the park longer than usual this year, which was a great thing. The board thanked the chamber for their hard work on this celebration.

Bike Trail Project

It was reported that no new news was available on the bike trail project. The project is still anticipated to be bid out in the fall of 2023 for construction in 2024. The DNR is working on finalizing the details and the board will continue to work with them moving forward.

Schieber inquired about maintenance on the trail as the board received requests to manage weed growth in past years. Giesen reported that no such requests have been made so far this year but that a motion had been approved previously giving the board chair the authority to approve such routine/minimal requests (past maintenance costs were around \$250 or so) as they see fit, or to otherwise bring them back to the board for further review if needed. The board concurred this was still a good approach and hoped this would be the last year of ownership of the property given the status of construction funding.

Housing Rebate Digital Marketing

Becky Jones was present to give a report on the digital marketing being conducted for the new home rebate program. She reported that so far there are 68 followers on Facebook and 266 on Instagram. 80% of followers are women and 20% are men. She has not yet utilized any of the paid ad budget. The board discussed various ideas and thoughts. Himlie offered to help Jones with posts.

Workforce

The board discussed local issues surrounding workforce and housing. In particular, affordable housing was discussed – what is considered affordable? Affordable to whom? Who would invest? How can Harmony help? One suggestion was to hold a roundtable or open house to bring stakeholders together. Another idea was perhaps the board could make strategic investments in land or infrastructure to allow for future development and growth. The board wished to continue discussing this topic in search of actionable projects. Giesen will plan a housing discussion to bring community stakeholders together.

Prospects/Community Update

Giesen noted that he was currently working with two potential prospects in the industrial park.

There was no other business.

Hearing no objections, Kingsley adjourned the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 8:33 AM.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for August 3, 2023 at 7:30 AM at the Community Center.