

Harmony EDA Minutes

November 6, 2014
7:30 AM

Community Center
Council Room

Present: Chris Skaalen, Deb Swenson, Steve Donney, and Kerry Kingsley.

Also present: Jean Ingvalson, Becky Hoff, Jill Fishbauger, Jerome Illg, and Chris Giesen.

The regular meeting was called to order at 7:35 AM by Steve Donney.

Minutes

The minutes of the October 2, 2014 meeting were reviewed. Motion by Swenson, second by Kingsley to approve the minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Financial Report

The status of loans were discussed. It was mentioned that the City Attorney had executed a confession of judgment agreement between the EDA and Harmony Plumbing and Heating for the businesses' defaulted EDA loan, but that payments under the new agreement had been received.

Skaalen entered the meeting at 8:15 AM. Donney turned the gavel over to Skaalen.

Motion by Kingsley, second by Swenson to approve the financial report as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

2015 CEDA Contract

Giesen presented the 2015 contract renewal for economic development staffing services with Community and Economic Development Associates. The contract would be for the full calendar year but can be cancelled at any time with 30 days-notice. The 2015 contract amount for one day per week plus one extra day per month, the same level of staffing as 2014, would be \$27,311 per year, billed quarterly. The board discussed. Motion by Donney second by Kingsley to approve the contract renewal as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Chamber of Commerce Report

Becky Hoff gave the chamber report. She gave an update on the progress of the fall and winter programs and activities. She said that the DNR would be funding the installation of a "bike fix-station" near the trailhead and that she would be participating in the Trail Town Association retreat. Also, the membership drive was underway and the 2015 visitor's guide was being created.

Experience Harmony Survey

Giesen gave the preliminary results of the Experience Harmony community survey to the board. He mentioned that the results would be discussed at the next community meeting on November 12th at the Community Center. The meeting would be used to identify local champions for individual projects determined important by the community and that the survey will help give direction not only to the Experience Harmony group but the EDA, Council, Planning and Zoning, service clubs, and other groups as they plan and work on future projects. The board discussed. Giesen mentioned that in early 2015,

either late January or early February, the Experience Harmony group would like to host a joint EDA/Council/Planning Zoning/Chamber/School District meeting to discuss projects and general direction of Harmony. The board asked for a follow up on this topic after the November 12th meeting.

Other Business

Jean Ingvalson of Generations of Harmony Antique Mall was present to inform the board that a tentative agreement had been reached to sell their business and property. The new owners plan to keep the business as it is today, and as a part of the sale agreement wish to live on premise as the Ingvalsons do. Staff noted that the new owners would have to apply for a special exception through the planning and zoning process to live in an industrial area since the current special exception that the Ingvalsons received only applied to them. Illg mentioned that the board had given a letter of support for the Ingvalsons when they had made the request in 2008.

Illg mentioned that the board would also have to transfer the tax increment development agreement to the new owners as a part of the sale. He said that it would be more of an administrative process required because of the TIF given to the Ingvalsons when they originally purchased the land from the EDA. The only active items left in the development agreement are that the owners must maintain a minimum tax value and must pay their real estate taxes, as detailed in the development agreement.

Ingvalson said that if the purchase agreement was finalized, the buyers would make a request for a special exception for zoning purposes and that a transfer of TIF benefit be granted.

Ingvalson also discussed marketing and signage downtown. She thought more signage and cooperative marketing between businesses would greatly help the downtown and community as a whole. The board discussed opportunities and options at length.

Ingvalson thanked the board, chamber, and City for its support over the past several years and was looking forward to her business continuing on under new ownership. The board thanked Jean and Terry for their investment in Harmony, and all of their work to make Harmony a better community.

Prospects

Giesen discussed prospects.

Adjournment

Skaalen adjourned the meeting at 9:04 AM. The next regular meeting is scheduled for December 4, 2014 at 7:30 AM in the Council Room at the Community Center.