

Harmony EDA Minutes

August 6, 2015
7:30 AM

Council Room
Community Center

Present: Chris Skaalen, Steve Donney, Deb Swenson, Andy Batstone, Kerry Kingsley

Also Present: Becky Hoff, Jerome Illg, and Chris Giesen

Meeting was called to order 7:34 AM by Chris Skaalen

Minutes

Motion by Swenson, seconded by Kingsley to approve the minutes from the July 9, 2015 meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

Financial Reports and Claims

The status of loans were discussed. It was noted that Wild Cat Properties and KNR Properties was significantly behind; the board requested that staff continue to work with the owner but to report back next month. There were no payment claims.

Chamber of Commerce Report

Becky Hoff gave the chamber report. She said that the national night out was a great success this year with about 325 people served. The board discussed whether the Chamber should consider separating national night out and customer appreciation events. The 4th of July event was also recapped; it was great success this year.

Klip Joint Building Update

Illg and Giesen said that there were no proposals submitted and that the advertised deadline had passed. The board discussed how to move forward. Consensus was that the advertisement should be sent out again, and the individuals who previously expressed interest should be contacted.

Trail Extension Update

The board briefly discussed the status of the state trail extension project. Skaalen mentioned that Vicky Tribbon and Greg Schieber continued to work on acquiring the needed properties and that they had met with a state organization to get the project included in the next legislative bonding bill request.

2016 EDA Budget

Illg asked the board to consider its proposal for the 2016 EDA budget. He said that the loss on Heritage Grove was nearly paid off and it might be possible to utilize those dedicated funds for other EDA projects. The board discussed at length possible uses of those funds including prioritizing future improvements to the industrial park or other redevelopment projects. Consensus was that the EDA shouldn't budget dollars merely for the sake of having extra funds, but that if future projects could be planned for so that the city could avoid dramatic dips and spikes in its tax rate, it might make sense to develop an EDA capital improvement plan.

Possible Downtown Mural

Giesen reported that he had looked into the mural project discussion further and would work with the Arts Board to develop the idea further. He said that one of the people he talked to cautioned him about the surface and materials used as a lot of issues can arise if not done properly.

Experience Harmony Projects

Giesen reported that he continued to work with the school to hold a career fair in the fall. He also discussed created special incentive programs, possibly a microloan or grant, to incent highly desirable projects like daycares, dentists, and the like.

New Business Ideas

Board members reviewed the submissions they made for businesses that were not currently in Harmony. The board discussed at length ideas that might succeed or that would be nice amenities or services to have for residents. Consensus was to promote the fact that the EDA was discussing the needs of the community and services not currently provided, and to continue the discussion at the next meeting.

Kingsley left the meeting at 8:12 AM.

Member Open Forum

Batstone mentioned that he had read articles about rural, smaller cities in Canada that were installing broadband internet infrastructure as a public utility, he wondered if there was anything that could be learned from those city's projects. Also discussed was business succession planning. The board thought it would be good to let businesses know what help is available in those transition situations. The board also discussed opportunities around a having a call center and what types of ideas or concerns might need to be addressed. One example given was that as businesses like Mayo expand they will likely need additional space in outlying areas for transcriptionists and other support employees. Staff would investigate opportunities further.

Prospects/ Community Update

Giesen mentioned that Crop Production Service had requested tax increment financing (TIF) to assist with extending sanitary sewer service to its property. Illg and Giesen were exploring whether or not this assistance would work for the project and Giesen asked the board if they would be open to assisting. The board discussed at length. Giesen said that the expected new tax base from the project could be as much as \$1.2 million as well as create a few full time jobs. He also mentioned that if the city was able to extend sewer service, it would make surrounding properties able to be developed, including properties adjacent to the east side of the golf course. Consensus of the board was to work with the business and move forward with the TIF review process.

Giesen also mentioned that Tri-County Electric is still considering a construction project in the industrial park. He said that he would keep the board posted.

Adjournment

The next regular meeting is scheduled for September 3, 2015 at 7:30 AM, at the Community Center.

Motion by Skaalen, second by Swenson to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:40 AM.