

Harmony EDA Minutes

June 8, 2017
7:30 AM

Council Room
Community Center

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

Also Present: Becky Hoff, Mark Bishop, Aaron Bishop, Greg Schieber, Jerome Illg, and Chris Giesen

The regular meeting was called to order at 7:34 AM by Chris Skaalen.

Minutes

Motion by Swenson, second by Kingsley to approve the minutes of the May 4, 2017 meeting as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Financial Reports & Claims

Giesen reported all loans were current and the board reviewed the loan portfolio. There was a payment claim from MnDOT for \$60 for the annual downtown billboard sign permit. Motion by Donney, second by Kingsley to approve the payment as requested. Motion carried unanimously.

Chamber of Commerce Report

Becky Hoff was present to give the Chamber of Commerce Report. She discussed preparations that were being made for the 4th of July celebration and the Chamber's advertising plan. She noted that numbers at the Visitor's Center were about the same level as last year.

Hoff announced that the Chamber received a grant from the Harmony Area Community Foundation to purchase a community PA system that would be available for public events. The Chamber is also promoting trail towns at the RABRI stop in Cresco.

Bike Trail Project: Next Steps

Greg Schieber, Mark Bishop, and Aaron Bishop were present to discuss the bike trail extension project. Giesen noted that the City was able to apply for a \$235,000 LCCMR grant to acquire the trail route, but that grants wouldn't be awarded until mid 2018. The group discussed the strategy to protect the trail route if the option contracts near their expiration dates. It was discussed that in addition to the grant, the city should still consider working with legislators to move the entire project forward.

It was also discussed that an investor group could possibly be formed to acquire the trail route as a last option. That possibly the investor group could hold or donate the land to the city or Harmony Area Community Foundation. Another idea floated was to have an additional option for individuals interested in simply donating to the project. Consensus was that an action plan should begin to develop soon so that the various timelines and processes could play out. Skaalen suggested that a subcommittee meet to discuss details and bring a plan back to the board. Mark, Aaron, Greg, Donney, Batstone, and Giesen volunteered to be on the subcommittee. The subcommittee agreed to meet at 3:30 on Friday June 9 at the community center.

City Logo

The board reviewed the five final designs submitted by Tulip Tree Studios. The board was very pleased and discussed several variations at length. Consensus was that the “Living in Est. 1895” taglines were preferable, especially Design 4 (second to last), which had the tagline inside the circle with the stylized “Harmony.” Motion by Swenson, second by Skaalen to pick Design 4 for the city logo. Motion carried unanimously. It was mentioned that the next step is to discuss the logo color.

The board discussed officially closing the logo contest and how to distribute the prize money. Motion by Donney, second by Batstone to split the prize money evenly among the top five entries. Motion carried unanimously.

Industrial Park

Giesen reported that Paul Schriever called to inform him that he would no longer be able to mow the Industrial Park grass in the undeveloped areas. Giesen said that he had contacted Doug Hanson who previously mowed before Schriever, and Hanson was willing to take over again.

Giesen also mentioned that the EDA should begin to consider options for semi and trailer parking in the Industrial Park. He said that if the Vet Clinic project moves forward, a condition of the project would be that semi and trailer parking not be allowed on adjacent streets because it would block/congest entry and visibility. The board briefly discussed whether or not the EDA should worry about providing semi or trailer parking noting that it might not be the role of the city. Giesen said he would keep the discussion item on the agenda for future discussion and that he wasn't asking for any action but wanted to get the issue on the radar.

Swenson left the meeting at 8:48 AM.

Experience Harmony II

At previous meetings, the board asked to revive the community project input program that was done several years prior, which at the time was called “Experience Harmony.” Giesen suggested that the same format could be followed but wanted to get input from the board first. Consensus was to hold another input forum. Giesen suggested an early fall date for the meeting, perhaps in September or October. He said he would keep this on the agenda for future discussion.

Prospects/Community Update

Giesen mentioned that he had not had any response from the dentist mailing sent out a few weeks prior.

Giesen revisited the data center attraction project and reviewed information needed to aid the marketing/attraction of such a business. Consensus of the board was that it would be a good project but without knowing a location, and having a couple projects in the air that might make choosing a location even more difficult, that it might be difficult to move forward with the technical aspects of getting a site certified as ready for a data center.

Adjournment

Hearing no objection, Skaalen adjourned the meeting at 9:30 AM. The next regular meeting is scheduled for June 29, 2017 at 7:30 AM, at the Community Center.