

## Harmony EDA Minutes

May 3, 2018  
7:30 AM

Council Room  
Community Center

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

Also Present: Jerome Illg, and Chris Giesen

The regular meeting was called to order at 7:31 AM by Chris Skaalen

### **Minutes**

Motion by Kingsley, second by Donney to approve the minutes of the April 12, 2018 as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

### **Financial Reports & Claims**

The status of the loan portfolio was discussed. All loans were current.

Giesen and Illg mentioned that they had received inquiries from two prospective businesses about each applying for a revolving loan. Because the businesses were of the same type and both indicated they wanted compete against each other, staff wanted to bring the issue to the board in case there would be any issues the board would have that the potential applicants should be aware of. The board discussed at length. Consensus of the board was that they would welcome applications from any eligible business and would carefully examine the business plan and financial projections to determine creditworthiness. The board agreed that the businesses should be aware that just because an application is made with a certain dollar amount requested, the board always reserves the right to lend less if it is in the best interest of the community or loan fund.

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

### **SMIF Entrepreneur Grant**

Giesen presented information on a grant opportunity from the Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation for entrepreneur support. The board discussed. Because a project hadn't been identified, the extent of other current active projects, and the likelihood of this funding being available in the future, consensus of the board was to not pursue this opportunity at this time.

### **Fillmore County Housing Study Request**

Illg and Giesen presented a request from the Fillmore County Economic Development Authority to participate in their county wide housing study. The county EDA had received a quote from Maxfield Partners, a consulting company specializing in housing studies, to conduct the work for \$19,000. Harmony was asked to contribute \$1,000 based on its population. The request noted that the other cities in the county were asked for similar contributions based on population. Giesen added that staff had discussions with the county EDA staff to ask several questions including the county's contribution, purpose of the study, among others. It was noted that Fillmore County had not committed financially themselves to the project as it would be to the benefit of the cities,

so the cities were asked for funding. It was also noted that the county did receive grants to reduce the total cost of the project. It was discussed that it seemed like it could be a good project but there were still outstanding questions that needed to be discussed before approval; currently Harmony didn't have direct need for such a study but it could be useful with the right parameters. Illg mentioned he suggested having a meeting with the other cities to discuss the project. The board discussed and agreed it seemed like a good project but that questions remained. Motion by Donney, second by Swenson to table the project until more information came forward. Motion carried unanimously.

### **Experience Harmony II Community Public Input Meeting**

Giesen reviewed the agenda for the upcoming final Experience Harmony II public input meeting. The meeting would take the ten themes identified in the community survey and first public input meeting and have participants break out in small groups to discuss solutions, projects, and next steps to accomplish those themes. The themes to be discussed were: new/future housing needs, rehab of existing housing, commuter issues, cost of living, environment/energy sustainability, attraction of a dentist, technology advancement, recreation amenities, dispelling "myths" about the community, and increasing hospitality options. Giesen said that he would be sending out a press release to local media, ask the Chamber of Commerce to post through their email blast and social media, and directly invite community groups and leaders.

### **Chamber of Commerce Report**

There was no chamber report, but director Becky Hoff had in advanced submitted a copy of the new Harmony postcards that were purchased by the chamber recently. The board agreed that the new postcards were very nice.

### **Prospects/Community Update**

Giesen reported that late the previous night the Minnesota House of Representatives Capital Investment Committee release their proposed bonding bill which included \$1.5 million for the Harmony Stateline Trail project. The board was excited see progress but Giesen cautioned that there were still several hurdles left before the project could become a reality. However, not being included in this bill would have been a blow to the project as it would be even more difficult and likely impossible to get included at that point. Giesen recommended that board members send a thank you note to Representative Davids for his work in getting the project included in the proposed bill.

Illg and Giesen briefly discussed that they were investigating adding the new city logo to the city website.

Giesen mentioned that Becky Hoff and forwarded the latest demographic report on trail users, which included information on the existing Harmony-Preston trail segment. Giesen asked board members to review the information and that the information could be leveraged for future projects.

### **Other Business**

There was no other business.

Hearing no objection, Skaalen adjourned the meeting at 8:55 AM.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for June 7, 2018 at 7:30 AM, at the Community Center.