

Harmony EDA Minutes

July 12, 2018
7:30 AM

Council Room
Community Center

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

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

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

Minutes

Motion by Swenson, second by Kingsley to approve the minutes of the June 7, 2018 as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Financial Reports & Claims

The status of the loan portfolio and past due loans were discussed. The new home rebate ledger was also reviewed. There were no claims for payment. Motion by Kingsley, second by Donney to approve the financial report as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Update from Harmony Telephone Company

Jill Fishbaugher of Harmony Telephone Company was present to announce that Harmony Telephone Company is currently designing the installation of fiber optic service in the industrial park. They will know by the August EDA meeting if the project has been approved or not and they may be able to start construction yet this fall. In addition to the industrial park they will also be able to serve Harmony Enterprises and will phase fiber optic service in as they are able to throughout Harmony. She also said that Harmony Telephone will be having a big announcement later in July and to stay tuned for more information.

The board was pleased to hear the news about the installation of fiber optic service and thanked Jill for her work to bring this service to Harmony. As a marketing strategy, consensus of the board was to install signage in the industrial park once installation is complete indicating the presence of fiber optic internet service.

Batstone entered the meeting at 7:41 AM.

Housing Rebate Program: Rehab Eligibility

Giesen presented a question on the new home rebate program that was presented from someone about utilizing the program for home renovations. Giesen said that the individual asking the questions didn't realize that the minimum increase in taxable value to qualify for the rebate was \$125,000 for a rebate of \$5,000 but Giesen said he would bring the question to the board for discussion.

The board discussed at length. The board was split in its feelings. Some members thought that providing funds to encourage renovations would help eliminate some of the issues some properties are currently having but other members thought that the city shouldn't reward or encourage properties to get to that state of condition in the first place.

Others thought that it might be acceptable to give a rebate similar to the existing program if the taxable value was increased by \$125,000. Some also felt that the new home rebate program was receiving great recognition now and would become too watered down if it was opened up too much. All agreed that something had to be done to solve the condition issues some properties are having, including getting tougher on enforcement of ordinances or strengthening existing ordinances. Consensus was that at this time no rebates would be given for home renovations.

Chamber of Commerce Report

Becky Hoff was present to give the chamber report. She said that the 4th of July festival had a good turnout given the hot and stormy weather, even though numbers were probably lower than usual. She reported that all of the buttons were sold and that they received good coverage on TV. Hoff also said that the Harmony Free Note project (which would have interactive musical pieces in the trailhead park) was moving forward; the park board was just deciding whether or not shelter was needed for the amenities. Now, the chamber is planning for National Night Out, Taste of the Trail, and Ladies Night. The board thanked Hoff for her work on the 4th of July.

Experience Harmony II – Public Input Meeting Results

Consensus of the board was to delay discussion on this topic until the next scheduled meeting.

Recycling Machines Discussion

Skaalen reported that Harmony Enterprises will donate a smart pack trash container for use at the Visitor's Center. He said that from the Experience Harmony project discussion at the last meeting he and Giesen had reached out to Harmony Enterprises and had several discussions. The donation would be made if Harmony Enterprises could also have some promotional pieces about their company and how the equipment works displayed with the machine. The board agreed that this would be a good amenity for the Visitor's Center and the community, as well as advertising for Harmony Enterprises. It was discussed that this project could potentially lead to other similar machines being installed elsewhere in the city, if it works out well and the city would be interested in such a project. The board thanked Harmony Enterprises for its commitment to the community.

Prospects/Community Update

Giesen gave a brief update on prospects around the community. He reported that the trail committee would be meeting at 9AM today and that the first meeting with the DNR would be held on July 24 at which discussions would start about trail construction. Giesen also said that the city will need to start looking at how to connect the trail through town from the existing trail head to the future extension.

Other Business

Hearing no objection, Skaalen adjourned the meeting at 8:52 AM.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for August 2, 2018 at 7:30 AM, at the Community Center.