

Harmony EDA Minutes

September 6, 2018
7:30 AM

Council Room
Community Center

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

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

The regular meeting was called to order at 7:32 AM by Chris Skaalen

Minutes

Motion by Donney, second by Kingsley to approve the minutes of the August 9, 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 payment claims from the Harmony Area Chamber of Commerce: \$13,250 for second half 2018 funding, 2019 dues of \$60, 2019 visitor guide advertising of \$365, and three “Harmony-opoly” games totaling \$96. Motion by Donney, second by Batstone to approve the payment claims as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

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

Update from Harmony Telephone Company

Jill Fishbaugher was present to give an update on the fiber optic installation project. She said that the project was on track to start yet this fall but that they were waiting on permits from the state highway department because work would be done in highway right of way.

Once the project is complete, the board agreed that a sign or wording should be placed on the industrial park signage indicating that the lots are “fiber ready.”

Skaalen asked if the board should reach out to current industrial park prospects to make sure they know that fiber optic cable will be installed so that they could plan accordingly. The board concurred.

Chamber of Commerce Report

There was no chamber report.

Experience Harmony II – Prioritize Potential Projects

The board discussed the findings of Experience Harmony II at length. Reviewing each of the twenty items identified, Skaalen suggested grouping the items together as several were similar. The board concurred. The board discussed each item and grouped them into six categories. Batstone suggested marketing opportunities in the community be the top priority, but that marketing shouldn't take away from the tourism marketing. The board agreed. The board discussed the prioritization of the six categories as follows, with the highest priority first: 1) creating awareness of opportunities (jobs & housing), 2)

housing, 3) transit, 4) environmental sustainability, 5) lodging/amenities, and 6) technology. Giesen said he would reorganize the project list under the six new categories for final discussion and approval at the next meeting.

SMIF Small Town Grant Opportunity

Giesen gave an overview of the Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation's (SMIF) Small Town Grant application that was submitted for the "Free Notes" park equipment project led by several volunteers in the community. He had included the grant application in the packet to show the board the process that goes into applying for such grants as an informational item for the board.

Donney reminded the board that last year the board suggested to the city council that a donation be made on behalf of the city to SMIF and that he would suggest the board do the same and offer to contribute \$1,000. The board concurred. Motion by Donney, second by Skaalen to offer \$1,000 of EDA funds to the city council to donate to the Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation on behalf of the City of Harmony. Motion carried unanimously.

Prospects/Community Update

Giesen gave several updates on projects. He said that the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources determined that the bike trail extension project would require an update to the existing trail master plan. DNR officials would work on an update over the upcoming months and the process would include gathering public input and feedback.

Giesen reported that the LCCMR grant contract had also been signed and submitted to the DNR for the bike trail project.

Giesen also reported that he had received an inquiry from a potential new Main Street business and is assisting them with their business plan and finding a location.

Other Business

Hearing no objection, Skaalen adjourned the meeting at 9:11 AM.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for October 4, 2018 at 7:30 AM, at the Community Center.