

Harmony EDA Minutes

August 1, 2019
7:30 AM

Council Room
Community Center

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

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

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

Minutes

The board reviewed the minutes of the June 27, 2019 meeting. Motion by Donney, second by Kingsley to approve the minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Chamber of Commerce Report

Deb Skaalen and Becky Hoff were present to give the Chamber of Commerce report. They presented their budget request for 2020. They requested a contribution amount of \$26,500 which was the same amount as last year and two additional amounts for a special one time contribution to the 125th Anniversary celebration; \$3,000 for commemorative tshirts and \$400 for a special commercial advertisement. The board discussed at length. Consensus was that the tshirts might be more appropriate for the city to fund itself.

Motion by Donney, second by Kingsley to approve the 2020 regular budget request of \$26,500. Motion carried unanimously. Motion by Donney, second by Sagen to recommend to the city council that the city contribute \$3,000 to the commemorative 125th Anniversary tshirts. Motion carried unanimously. Motion by Kingsley, second by Batstone to approve \$400 from the EDA marketing budget for the 125th Anniversary commercial advertisement. Motion carried unanimously.

The free bike program was also discussed, in particular how to proceed in light of the vandalism to the bikes. Consensus was that the chamber would sign bikes out and have users lock them up when returned. The chamber would check periodically to make sure everything was returned in good order and the city would help with maintained issues that arise. It was determined that if a major issue were to occur, the board could discuss how to handle it at that time as major issues were not anticipated.

Hoff announced that she had recently rented space downtown for a new business and would be phasing out of her role as chamber director. The board congratulated her on the news and thanked her for her hard work and good job at the chamber.

Harmony Telephone Update

Jill Fishbaugher was present to give an update on projects Harmony Telephone was working on. She announced that Harmony will have fiber optic internet service to the home by the end of 2020 because of a new funding formula the company accepted. She shared an early press release about this announcement and discussed with the board at length the project and potential impacts and opportunities for the community.

Financial Reports & Claims

Giesen presented a claim for \$10,000 to Kinzee and Spencer Hovey for their new home rebate. He said that the exterior was nearly done and that rather than waiting another month, the check could be approved now and held until the exterior, which is expected to be completed in mid August. Motion by Donney, second by Skaalen to approve the rebate payment. Motion carried unanimously.

Giesen gave an update on the new home rebate program and mentioned that one new rebate application was approved for 735 3rd Ave SE in the amount of \$5,000. He also mentioned the program continued to get national attention including an inquiry from Congresswoman Maxine Waters. Giesen reported that because of the timing of the meeting, no loan update was available but at last check all were current. Motion by Sagen, second by Donney to approve the financial report. Motion carried unanimously.

Donney left the meeting at 8:44 AM.

Dairyland Project Update

Giesen and Illg reported that they had met with Dairyland since the last board meeting and have another meeting set for this morning to review and discuss potential sites. Giesen said that Dairyland wants to work with the community and is still scheduled for 2020 construction, however that is subject to their board approval. The board asked to stay posted on any developments.

Commercial Rehab Requests

Giesen said that he had received a few requests for assistance to rehab downtown commercial buildings. The owners were looking for grant dollars from the city to help with items such as roof repairs, siding, and windows. Giesen said that because no dollars were currently available or identified as a possible source of a new commercial rehab program, he told the business owners that he would ask the board their opinion about starting a new one. The board discussed. A possible solution could include modifying the existing revolving loan fund to allow for streamlined loans for certain renovation projects. Consensus was to have staff discuss with the businesses to see if a streamlined program would be beneficial to them.

2020 EDA Budget

The proposed 2020 budget was discussed. The board reviewed the proposed budget worksheet and discussed. The total 2019 budget was \$123,612. The proposed 2020 budget is \$124,885 which includes expected annual cost increases. Consensus was that the budget would accomplish next year's goals. Motion by Skaalen, second by Batstone to approve the 2020 budget as proposed and recommend to the city council that it be adopted as proposed. Motion carried unanimously.

Experience Harmony Projects/Goals

The board reviewed quotes for recycling containers on Main Street and in the parks. There were several options to consider regarding labeling, materials, and color. Batstone said he would send an example of container labeling from another community. The board also discussed possibly working with Harmony Enterprises to see if they had any options. Before making a decision, staff will reach out to Harmony Enterprises and review Batstone's information. Illg mentioned funding for the containers should

probably come out of the EDA budget, the board agreed. The board will discuss next decisions at the next meeting.

Prospects/Community Update

Giesen gave an update on several prospective businesses that are looking at projects. He also reminded the board of the upcoming CEDA regional development tour on August 15, 2019.

Other Business

Kingsley asked about the residential house that the board was gifted and sold several years ago as it has remained vacant and the renovations were never completed. He wanted to know if the board put any covenants on the sale to require a renovation. Illg said that in hindsight some kind of renovation requirement should have been put into place but at the time the board was more motivated to flip the property and use the proceeds to donate to the community foundation. In future situations, some kind of use requirement would be put on similar projects.

Kingsley also asked about how the chamber of commerce was structured and assumed the chamber director reported to the chamber board. His assumption was confirmed.

Skaalen mentioned that there was a group of residents that were going to attend today's meeting but weren't able to. He said they are working on putting a splash pad project together somewhere in the community and that more information would be forthcoming.

Hearing no objections, Skaalen adjourned the meeting at 9:38 AM.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for September 5, 2019 at 7:30 AM, at the Community Center.