

Harmony EDA Minutes

October 1, 2020
7:30 AM

Community Center
Council Room

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

Also Present: Devin Swanberg and Chris Giesen

The regular meeting was called to order at 7:41 AM by Andy Batstone

Minutes

The board reviewed the minutes of the September 3, 2020 meeting. Motion by Kingsley, second by Sagen to approve the minutes as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Financial Reports & Claims

Because it was the first of the month, the loan schedule would not be updated with October payments yet. Giesen reported that two businesses had recently paid their loans in full and a third was scheduled to make their final payment in October. Batstone suggested advertising the availability of the loan fund online, noting that many businesses start during downturns in the economy similar to what is currently happening.

Industrial Park Phase III Property Maintenance

Donney entered the meeting at 7:50 AM.

The board discussed the property maintenance of the phase III industrial park property the board purchased last year. It is currently planted with corn but will likely not be planted with a crop next year. The board must decide how to maintain the property so that it doesn't become overrun with weeds next year. Consensus of the board was to see if a prospective park tenant might be interested in utilizing the property as a test crop plot for their business, which might help convince the prospect to buy a lot in the industrial park too. Giesen said he would reach out and discuss with the prospect. If the prospect is not interested, the board suggested that Giesen determine the cost of planting grass seed and see if the current farmer would be willing to trade this year's rent due for planting seed. The board agreed that this would be an ongoing discussion but that either option would be more efficient and beneficial than having to hire out planting grass seed or letting the property be overrun with weeds.

Dairyland Project

Giesen reported that Dairyland had informed him that they tentatively found a suitable location in Harmony for their maintenance facility project, although not in the industrial park. The business is currently conducting soil testing to determine suitability of the site and hope to build in the spring of 2021.

Giesen presented a memo outlining two documents that would act as a framework for moving forward with the numerous approvals required for the project to move forward. One document outlined the estimated timeline of governmental approvals for items including annexation, TIF, and engineering. The second document was to serve as a basis for a master development agreement that would be approved later this winter once the project is fully defined. The board reviewed the documents and discussed the project. Giesen explained that like the last iteration of the project the city would be extending

public infrastructure to the site and utilizing TIF to pay for the expense. He noted that he had discussed the documents with the board chair prior to sharing the documents with Dairyland, and that both the board chair and Dairyland were agreeable with the outlines. He also noted that MiEnergy was willing to honor the 0% loan it awarded for the project last year for the new project, and that depending on the new project layout the State of Minnesota may still be able to honor the BDPI grant that was awarded for the former iteration of the project, too.

The board expressed their excitement that Dairyland was still interested and found a potentially new location in Harmony. They agreed that this is a wonderful project for the community, that they are happy to be able to provide support. Motion by Donney, second by Sagen to recommend that the city council approve the estimated approval timeline and memorandum of understanding for the proposed Dairyland project, as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Experience Harmony Goals

The board reviewed the Experience Harmony Goals and noted that they had marked as “complete” the goal of creating a residential rehabilitation program.

Chamber of Commerce Report

There was no chamber of commerce report.

Prospects/Community Update

Giesen briefly discussed prospects. He said that there was still interest in the industrial park from a strong prospect and that he has been having some initial conversations on various projects related to downtown businesses. He noted that the conversations were still very preliminary and more fact finding, in nature on part of the business owners.

Other Business

There was no other business.

Motion by Donney, second by Kingsley to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:36 AM.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for November 5, 2020 at 7:30 AM at the Community Center.