

## Harmony EDA Minutes

December 3, 2020  
7:30 AM

Community Center  
Council Room

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

Also Present: Greg Schieber, Melissa Vander Plas, Devin Swanberg, and Chris Giesen

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

### **Revolving Loan Request**

Giesen introduced Chelsey Clausen to the board. Ms. Clausen is requesting a \$25,000 loan to purchase 51 Main Ave in Harmony, the former Village Square and Falcon's Nest building, to move her restaurant "The Bite" to Harmony. The total project cost is \$140,000 and loan proceeds would assist with acquisition costs. The rate would be 3.25% fixed for a 10 year term. She anticipates creating 6 jobs at \$10-15 per hour and would like to be open around January 1, 2021. The board discussed the project. Motion by Skaalen, second by Sagen to recommend that the city council approve the loan as requested. Motion carried unanimously. The board thanked Ms. Clausen for bringing her restaurant to Harmony.

### **Minutes**

The board reviewed the minutes of the November 5, 2020 meeting. Motion by Sagen, second by Kingsley to approve the minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

### **Financial Reports & Claims**

The board reviewed the loan portfolio. All loans were current. Motion by Kingsley, second by Skaalen to approve the financial report as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

### **Experience Harmony Goals**

The board reviewed the Experience Harmony Goals. It was discussed that board members should keep thinking about which goals should be worked on next. Giesen noted that he had another conversation with MiEnergy about electric car charging stations. There may be assistance available to install chargers. The board directed Giesen to investigate further. Skaalen mentioned that there might be a way to leverage the splash pad project and utilize any electrical work needed for it to assist the cost of installing a car charging station.

Skaalen mentioned challenges with transportation options given that the commuter busses to Rochester are not operating due to the pandemic. The board discussed. Giesen will stay in touch with stakeholders and report back any opportunities or updates. The board also discussed potential opportunities for growth related to people relocating from urban areas, especially once fiber internet is installed. The board wished to continue the conversation at future meetings.

Giesen mentioned that the 2020 census results would be known soon and asked the board if they had any growth goals to set for 2030 – asking if there is a desired population goal for the city. The board discussed.

### **Chamber of Commerce Report**

Melissa Vander Plas gave the chamber report. The visitor center saw relatively good numbers this fall compared to earlier this year, although still much lower than last year due to the Covid pandemic. 250 people were served as a part of a pandemic-appropriate version of customer appreciation night. Haunted Harmony and the small business Saturday events were also successful. The chamber will also be conducting a shop local ad campaign throughout December.

Andy Batstone joined the meeting at 8:25 AM.

Vander Plas mentioned that the chamber will receive a \$17,000 grant from Explore Minnesota for marketing. Because it is a reimbursement grant and there were concerns about cash flow, there was discussion on whether the board could provide a line of credit for this activity. Consensus of the board was to have the chamber work with Giesen to make a proposal to utilize the loan fund to provide a short term line of credit so that the chamber can make use of this grant. Because of the very unique opportunity this grant poses, the board was agreeable to discussing a 0% loan especially if marketing for living or working in Harmony could be incorporated. The board would also like to be involved in reviewing the marketing plan if it were involved. Giesen will work with Vander Plas and bring forward a proposal to assist the chamber with this effort.

### **Prospects/Community Update**

Giesen reported on prospects, mentioning that there may be another loan application at the January or February meeting.

The board discussed the status of the trail extension project. Giesen reported that he had a conversation with the DNR about holding the required public hearing on the trail plan amendment in January or February 2021. He also reported that the DNR is anticipating completing the land transfer soon after the new year in early 2021. He is keeping the board chair and trail committee posted of any immediate updates.

Giesen gave an update on the Dairyland project and the anticipated timelines for action items. He reported that he and Swanberg had discussed the annexation process with Harmony Township and that they were supportive of the project and did not object to annexation. Giesen reminded the board that they have promised the current land owners that if the Dairyland land sale falls through, the annexation process would be stopped. Giesen said that the other required processes for setting up the city approvals are in motion and going as planned. Giesen also shared the land survey of the project site that was just completed earlier in the week.

### **Other Business**

The board thanked Skaalen for his 14 years of service on the EDA including several as the board chair. This would be his last meeting before his two full and one partial term on the EDA ends. Skaalen thanked the board members and Giesen for their work and said that he enjoyed working on projects with everyone and helping Harmony be successful.

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

The next regular meeting is scheduled for January 7, 2021 at 7:30 AM at the Community Center.