

Harmony EDA Minutes

January 7, 2021
7:30 AM

Community Center
Council Room

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

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

The annual and regular meeting was called to order at 7:30 AM by Steve Donney

Election of Officers

The board discussed election of officers. Motion by Sagen, second by Kingsley to nominate and cast a unanimous ballot to approve Kingsley as President, Donney as Vice President, Batstone as Treasurer, and Greg Schieber as Secretary. Donney asked for additional nominations three times. Nominations ceased and the motion carried unanimously. Officers for 2020 are Kerry Kingsley, President; Steve Donney, Vice President; Andy Batstone, Treasurer; and Greg Schieber, Secretary.

Kingsley assumed the gavel.

Committee Appointments

Hearing no objections, Kingsley appointed the following members to serve on standing committees for 2020: Batstone and Donney to the loan committee and Schieber and Batstone to the bike trail committee.

2020 Annual Report

Giesen presented the 2020 annual EDA activity report. The board reviewed and discussed. Motion by Donney, second by Sagen to approve the report as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Annual Program Review

The board reviewed the business subsidy policy and the program guidelines for the revolving loan fund, commercial rehab loan fund, and new home construction and rehab rebate program. Increasing the revolving loan limits was briefly discussed but no action was taken. Giesen recommended that no changes be made to the guidelines at this time. The board concurred.

Giesen stated that the board should make a recommendation to the city council on whether or not to continue the new home and rehab rebate program. Consensus was to continue the program. Motion by Sagen, second by Donney to recommend to the city council that the new home rebate program be extended through the end of 2021. Motion carried unanimously.

Kingsley closed the annual meeting.

Minutes

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

Financial Reports & Claims

The board reviewed the loan portfolio. Giesen said he would follow up on two late loans. Claims for payment were \$75 for 2021 dues for the Harmony Area Chamber of Commerce, \$26,500 for the 2021 operating contribution to the Harmony Area of Commerce, and \$8,034.50 for first quarter economic development staffing services to Community and Economic Development Associates.

Melissa Vander Plas discussed a memo to the board requesting the full 2021 operations payment in order to help with cash flow. The chamber is receiving \$31,000 in grants but need to spend the funds first before the grant will reimburse them. As discussed at the prior meeting the chamber is requesting that the board provide assistance by paying the 2021 operations in full early, and by providing a \$25,000 line of credit if needed, to eliminate any cash flow issues. The board discussed. Motion by Donney, second by Sagen to approve the financial report, payment claims, and line of credit to the Chamber, as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Experience Harmony Goals

The board reviewed the Experience Harmony Goals. Giesen reported that he had spoken with MiEnergy Cooperative about possible opportunities to partner on an electric vehicle charging station project. He mentioned that MiEnergy was willing to attend a future meeting to discuss with the board. The board agreed that it would be good have MiEnergy attend a future meeting. It was also discussed that several options may exist so all opportunities should be explored.

Chamber of Commerce Report

Melissa Vander Plas gave the chamber report. The chamber received about \$31,000 in marketing grants and is exploring avenues to utilize those funds. They are considering new ad opportunities and formats, as well as highlighting various local businesses. The grants could also support community celebrations. She also thanked the board for their support of this effort by providing a line of credit and an advanced payment for 2021. She reported that the 4th of July planning is underway. The chamber is planning to hold the annual event but is considering possible changes that might make sense due to the lingering pandemic.

Prospects/Community Update

Giesen reported on prospects. He reported that he is working with two loan applicants currently. Also, there has been no date set for the bike trail plan amendment public hearing; state staff has been reassigned by the governor to assist with the COVID vaccine deployment limiting the ability to move projects like ours forward. He will keep the board posted. Giesen also reported that the Dairyland project is still moving forward. The annexation hearing is scheduled for the next council meeting and the business is in the final steps of evaluating the project site feasibility. There are many timelines and issues that are starting to converge, but the final approvals are still scheduled for the March council meeting.

Other Business

Kingsley asked that before the next meeting, members think of goals and objectives for 2021. He asked if Giesen could reorganize the Experience Harmony goals to better identify the goals that have been accomplished.

Trash and Treasure Day was discussed. Because of staff transitions and the pandemic, the event did not occur in 2020. Swanberg and Giesen said they would investigate moving the event forward in 2021 and coordinate with the chamber.

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

The next regular meeting is scheduled for February 4, 2021 at 7:30 AM at the Community Center.