

Harmony EDA Minutes

September 2, 2021
7:30 AM

Community Center
Council Room

Present: Kerry Kingsley, Steve Donney, Steve Sagen, and Greg Schieber

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

The regular meeting was called to order at 7:32 AM by Kerry Kingsley.

Minutes

The board reviewed the minutes of the August 5, 2021 meeting. Motion by Donney, second by Sagen to approve the minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Financial Reports & Claims

The board reviewed the loan portfolio and home rebate ledger. One past due loan was discussed. There were no claims for payment.

Review Development Agreement for Jeffery O'Connor Project

The board reviewed an outline of material terms for a to-be-drafted development agreement between the city and Mr. Jeffery O'Connor for his proposed project in the industrial park. The board reviewed the terms, namely to utilize TIF to buy down \$46,000 of the total \$65,000 purchase price. The board noted that the proposed development agreement would be approved by the city council but followed the terms of sale approved at the last board meeting. Motion by Sagen, second by Schieber to recommend that the city council approve a development agreement with the material terms as outlined. Motion carried unanimously.

Experience Harmony Goals

The board discussed possible updates to various Experience Harmony goals at length. It was noted that many good things are happening right now and in motion so attention should be paid to ensuring those effort's success, but that forward progress and momentum should be maintained. Giesen happily reported that the new 2020 Census information was received and Harmony grew from 1,020 to 1,043; about 2.25% increase. Harmony was also only one of three cities in Fillmore County to increase its population over the ten year period – the other two being Chatfield and Rushford. The board agreed that brainstorming should occur regarding needed business services or other amenities. The board generally discussed the need for a brewery, pie shop, auto parts store, and dentist. Additional discussion was held regarding how to attract and support those types of businesses. It was decided to continue the discussion and add business attraction with the specific business types discussed to the Experience Harmony II goals.

Sagen gave a brief update on the electric vehicle charging stations. The city is waiting to receive the charging units but is otherwise ready for installation.

The board also discussed reviving a discussion on holding events to explain opportunities related to utilizing solar power options in the community and local ordinances related to those activities, but no action was taken.

Chamber of Commerce Report

Melissa Vander Plas was present to give the chamber report. The chamber is pushing to develop its social media presence including recently having started an Instagram account. Visitor numbers are also back to pre-Covid rates. The chamber is also preparing for fall and winter events such as Haunted Harmony, the annual craft show, and small business Saturday.

Vander Plas also submitted the chamber's formal letter of request for its 2022 funding allotment of \$27,000 which was included in the proposed EDA budget and approved at the August meeting.

Prospects/Community Update

Giesen gave a report on additional prospects considering projects in the community. He also gave a brief update on the small cities block grant application survey effort; so far a good response has been collected.

There was no other business.

Hearing no objections, Kingsley adjourned the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 9:56 AM.

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