

Harmony EDA Minutes

December 1, 2022
7:30 AM

Community Center
Council Room

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

Also Present: Amy Bishop, Aaron Bishop, Michael Himlie, Becky Jones, Erica Thilges, Becky Meyers, Allison Whalen, and Chris Giesen

The regular meeting was called to order at 7:30 AM by Kerry Kingsley.

Minutes

The board reviewed the minutes of the November 3, 2022 meeting. Motion by Schieber, second by Sagen to approve the minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Financial Reports & Claims

The board reviewed the loan portfolio. All loans were current.

Downtown Revitalization Program: Review Proposals

The board reviewed three proposals for the Downtown Revitalization Program. Proposals were received from the Jem Theater, Aaron and Amy Bishop for their commercial building, and Becky Meyers for her commercial building. Giesen presented each application noting that all three meet the intent of the program and are eligible. The board discussed each application at length to gain a better understanding. Consensus was that it would be a difficult decision to recommend just one for funding. The Jem Theater proposed the first phase of tuck pointing for their building, the Bishop's proposed tuck pointing their entire building, and Becky Meyers proposed tuck pointing the brick façade and replacing an entry door.

The board ultimately discussed that the Bishop proposal, if approved, would complete the envelope of their building and allow for the completion of the interior, too. The Bishop proposal was for the full \$40,000 grant plus they would contribute a \$16,120 match from personal funds. Motion by Sagen, second by Donney to recommend that city council approve Aaron and Amy Bishop's proposal, as submitted. Motion carried unanimously.

The board agreed that it was a very difficult decision as each building clearly showed need and encouraged all applicants to reapply in the future, as the program goal is to make as big of impact on a building each year. Eventually getting to all downtown building with need.

Giesen noted that any awards under this program would have similar requirements tied to the use of the funds, as in past years.

Bike Trail Project

Giesen reported that there was no additional news to report on the status of the bike trail project at that time. He checked the status of the construction bid posting, noting that the Harmony project had been posted that morning. The bids would be opened on December 15, 2022 and the funds were still subject to expiration if the State can't encumber them prior to the end of the year. As previously discussed at earlier meetings, the City could choose to take the project over in order to avoid the project funding being cancelled. This would require entering into an agreement with the State. He noted the DNR was to send this agreement for review and consideration but he had not received it yet. The board discussed.

The board agreed that perhaps a special meeting should be called for next Thursday at 7:30 AM to consider the agreements if they come forward. Giesen will post the special meeting and keep the board posted of any developments.

2023 CEDA Contract Renewal

The board reviewed the proposed 2023 contract with Community and Economic Development Associates (CEDA) for economic development staffing services. Giesen noted that the service level was proposed to remain the same, at one day per week plus one extra day per month, as well as the standard terms that have always been in the service contract. He reported that the renewal rate was \$34,757 which was a 5% increase from 2022. He thanked the board for their many years of support. Kingsley thanked Giesen for his work. Motion by Donney, second by Batstone to approve the contract renewal as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Chamber of Commerce Report

Allison Whalen was present to give the chamber report. She was excited for the work accomplished the past three months she has been on the job. She reported that the decorative garland has been put up, thanking the Kingsley family for their help. Santa Day is ready and they are anticipating more kids this year because Preston cancelled its event. She reported raising \$1,200 for the downtown directional signage project at a recent fundraiser event, Small Business Saturday saw a good turn out, and several holiday events are being planned including sleigh rides around town and an outdoor lighting contest. They are also working on adding member/organization management software, rebranding, and a marketing plan.

Their annual meeting is planned for January 17, 2023 and the first annual golf tournament will be held sometime in 2023, more details to follow on both events.

Prospects/Community Update

Giesen gave an update on prospects. The board discussed consideration of larger EDA loans on a case by case basis if the project warranted more than the current \$25,000 maximum; noting that a few businesses have received more than that amount. No decision was made but consensus was to be flexible with the program and look to the application itself to determine need and feasibility.

There was no other business.

Hearing no objections, Kingsley adjourned the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 10:20 AM.

A special meeting will be held on December 8, 2022 at 7:30 AM at the Community Center. The next regular meeting is scheduled for January 5, 2023 at 7:30 AM at the Community Center.