

Harmony EDA Minutes

July 7, 2022
7:30 AM

Community Center
Council Room

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

Also Present: Erica Thilges, Becky Jones, Melissa Vander Plas, Devin Swanberg, 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 June 2, 2022 meeting. Motion by Sagen, second by Donney to approve the minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Financial Reports & Claims

The board reviewed the loan portfolio. Giesen noted one loan had missed a payment and he would follow up with the borrower. Schieber gave an update on the foreclosure process that had started in regards to the Tin, Rust and Harmony loan. A claim from the Harmony Area Chamber of Commerce for 2nd half 2022 funding in the amount of \$13,500 was presented. Motion by Sagen, second by Schieber to approve the financial report and payment claim as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

New Home Rebate Program

The board reviewed the status of the new home rebate program. Giesen presented a listing of the taxable values created and taxes paid because of the new homes the program created. Looking back to the beginning of the program the report shows that the average home values created were higher than originally estimated through the application process and the rebates paid was being repaid with new city property taxes within five years. In many cases, the rebates were being repaid slightly quicker. The rebate structure was originally created to allow for a 5 year payback relative to the price of lots in Harmony at that time. The board wondered if the rebate structure should be updated for current market conditions given the original matrix is nearly 10 years old and capped at a \$250,000 taxable value. The board asked staff to calculate additional rebate categories to accommodate higher market values within the same 5 year payback structure that currently exists. Giesen said he will prepare information for the next meeting and noted any program changes would require council approval.

Chamber of Commerce Report

Melissa Vander Plas was present to give the chamber report. She gave a positive report on the 4th of July activities noting that events were well attended and gave a special thank you for the extra efforts and assistance provided by city public works employees Terry Bigalk and Brian Johnson. It was reported that the city's water tower was struck by lightning on the 4th of July which caused an electrical short in the water level monitors, which causes a drop/loss of water pressure throughout town but was eventually restored.

Event sponsorships were good this year but they were not able to sell wristbands on Sunday because of a lack of volunteers.

The visitor center recorded 1,097 visitors in June which was up over May 2022 and June 2021. The chamber continues to distribute visitor guides around the state as needed/other areas run out. She was happy to report that about 85 people attended the first Alley Jam concert and that they are excited to host the upcoming second concert of the summer series. The chamber reported that they are working with Monster Bash to host a special entertainment event and are purchasing a full page community ad in the Driftless Journal. It was inquired if the chamber would be hosting a Harmony Day at the county fair; it was noted that the chamber board decided not to participate.

Kingsley asked about the commercial video that was produced to promote living in Harmony. Consensus was to re-energize digital marketing efforts and perhaps focus it on an updated housing rebate program, among other things. Becky Jones offered to extend her social media expertise to help get started. Giesen will work with Jones to develop thoughts for approval. The board thanked Jones for her help.

Prospects/Community Update

Giesen gave an update on several prospects. He reviewed the status of the industrial park development project, noted he is working with three potential loan applicants, he will be getting the word out about the upcoming downtown revitalization program deadline of November 1, is meeting with the new manager of an existing business, and there is a prospect interested in a downtown property.

Sagen noted that the electric car chargers are now operational.

There was no other business.

Hearing no objections, Kingsley adjourned the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 9:07 AM.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for August 4, 2022 at 7:30 AM at the Community Center.