

Harmony EDA Minutes

January 4, 2024
7:30 AM

Community Center
Council Room

Present: Kerry Kingsley, Steve Donney, Greg Schieber, and Michael Himlie

Also Present: Amy Bishop, Aaron Bishop, Erica Thilges, Allan Dahl, Stuart Morem, Sam Grabau, and Chris Giesen

The regular and annual meetings were called to order at 7:30 AM by Kerry Kingsley.

Election of Officers

The board discussed and considered nominations to select officers for 2024. Motion by Donney, second by Schieber to cast an unanimous ballot to elect Kerry Kingsley as President, Steve Donney as Vice President, Michael Himlie as Treasurer, and Greg Schieber as Secretary. Motion carried unanimously.

Committee Appointments

Kingsley appointed Donney and EDA appointee Stuart Morem to the loan committee and Schieber and Himlie to the bike trail committee.

Annual Report

The board reviewed the 2023 annual activity report. Motion by Schieber, second by Himlie to approve the report as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Annual Program Review

Giesen gave a brief overview of the city's business subsidy policy and each established assistance program offered by the board. The board discussed several questions. No changes were recommended at this time. Motion by Himlie, second by Kingsley to recommend that the city council preliminarily approve the downtown revitalization program for the 2024/25 cycle, dependent upon next year's budget, so that the program can be advertised this year. Motion carried unanimously.

Minutes

The board reviewed the minutes of the December 7, 2023 meeting. Motion by Himlie, second by Schieber to approve the minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Financial Reports & Claims

The loan portfolio was reviewed. There was an invoice for \$200 for digital marketing services from Farm Charm, \$390 quote for the annual visitor guide advertisement. Becky Meyers had requested six months of interest only payments for her EDA loan to accommodate the winter season; the loan committee recommended approval. Motion by Himlie, second by Kingsley to approve the payments and payment modification as requested. Motion carried unanimously.

Bike Trail Extension: Land Acquisition

Giesen updated the board on the bike trail project. He noted that the DNR had recently provided drawings to show the areas needed for additional land acquisitions to avoid a particular parcel of land. He noted that he had spoken with three adjacent landowners

that were very gracious and willing to help by selling additional small pieces of land to route the trail correctly and avoid issues on a particular parcel. The board reviewed the preliminary drawings and Giesen will continue discussions with the landowners. Once purchase agreements are negotiated, it will be brought forward for consideration but additional conversations are needed with landowners, first. Staff will proceed.

2024 Goals & Objectives

The board reviewed current project goals and objectives with the purpose of revising for the upcoming year. Schieber suggested that the board review the city's newly approved Comprehensive Plan and discuss development projects that the board can assist with to achieve the plan's goals. Staff will send the plan to board members and have a follow up discussion item on the February meeting agenda. Giesen suggested the board look at the new home rebate digital marketing efforts for ways to utilize that information to reach out to new or more specific audiences that may be interested in developing property as opposed to simply building new homes. Kingsley suggested the board should continue to look at opportunities the community has for new or missing businesses. The board discussed and concurred with the suggestions. The discussion will continue at the February meeting.

Development Agreement Compliance

Schieber and Giesen updated the board on the action to remedy the defaulted development agreement with Jeff O'Connor of Twin City Trimmers for their project in the industrial park. It was reported that the summons has been served and there is a twenty-day period for a response to the complaint to be given. If a response is given, court proceedings or further negotiations to resolve the matter can proceed. If no response is given the board can request a default judgement from the court to recover the property and damages as listed in the complaint. No further action is needed at this time.

Chamber of Commerce Report

Erica Thilges, Amy Bishop, and Aaron Bishop were present to give the chamber report. Erica gave several updates on past and upcoming community events including the chamber's annual meeting on 1/16 at 5:30 PM at Harmony Sprints. Amy Bishop reviewed the proposed 2024 chamber budget, which will be put forward to the membership at the annual meeting. The board reviewed and discussed. It was noted that the discussion between EDA/chamber board/council mentioned a few months back would be appropriate. The purpose of such discussion would be to refresh communication and look for the best ways in which to work together as organizations for the benefit of the community. Schieber and Kingsley volunteered to represent the board in such discussions. Giesen will invite two council members, and two or three chamber board members will attend as well. Giesen will coordinate an agenda, time, and date. Once the subcommittee is done with their discussion, it was agreed that a joint city/EDA/chamber meeting would be in order to discuss further as a whole group. Consensus was to have the subcommittee meet in late January or early February, with the joint meeting tentatively scheduled for March.

Prospects/Community Update

Giesen gave an update on prospects. The solar energy developer discussed at the last meeting anticipates presenting further details of their project idea at the February or March board meeting. Giesen noted that the city's utility committee has also discussed more details about the electric use side of this project with MiEnergy. Giesen noted that while the board's discussion will center around the land use side of this project, there will

be a need to include the city's utility committee and MiEnergy as discussions with this developer progress and become more detailed.

There was no other business.

Hearing no objections, Kingsley adjourned the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 9:40 AM.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for February 1, 2024 at 7:30 AM at the Community Center.