

WASCO COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
THURSDAY, MARCH 3, 2016
9:30 am
WAMIC SCHOOL COMMUNITY CENTER
WAMIC, OR

ATTENDANCE

COMMISSION MEMBERS: Joan Silver, Kathy Ursprung, Mary Kramer, Frank Kay and Fred Justensen

GUESTS: Scott Hege (Wasco County Commissioner), Dean McAllister (EDC Applicant), Bill Arnio (Wamic School Community Center, Wamic Rural Fire District), Scott Stevens (Wamic Water), Nancy Martin (Wamic Water) and Elton Martin (Wamic Water)

EDC STAFF: Carrie Pipinich and Sherry Bohn

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Joan Silver called the meeting to order at 9:32 am. There was not a quorum present. A round the room of introductions took place.

Joan requested Bill of the Wamic School Community Center explain the history and background of the building. Bill noted that the building had been an elementary school that was eventually deemed surplus property by South Wasco School District. The fire foundation purchased it for \$100 with the agreement that they would not change the outside. They have installed a new furnace, new lights and windows as well as upgraded the commercial kitchen for use at functions. They also have a gym facility that is available to the members 24/7 with a swipe card. The facility is seeing an increase in use and is completely self-sufficient.

Discussion: Kathy Ursprung asked if the lawn mower races support the fire district. Bill noted that they do receive funds for the fire department to be on standby during events. Fred Justensen asked how the foundation found the money to upgrade the building. Bill stated that the Wamic Fire District Foundation managed the property and completed the upgrades with fundraisers, grants and donated labor. Bill also reported that the fire district recently purchased some new equipment and that they are looking for volunteers.

Joan Silver asked Scott Stevens, Nancy Martin and Elton Martin to give the EDC an update on the Wamic Water District. Nancy Martin reported that they had received a grant to conduct a water system assessment that will allow them to better understand the needs for a distribution system upgrades and replacement of the reservoir with one that will allow for fire protection. Nancy also noted that they were continuing conversations with Barlow Water Improvement District around opportunities to coordination. Nancy also thanked Carrie and Joan for the support the EDC has given to Wamic Water & Sanitary as they begin to address some of these long standing issues. Elton Martin reported that the current pipes are used iron steam pipes installed in the 1960s and that they are patching patches at this point. Scott Hege asked if it was gravity pressure. Elton stated that it was.

EDC COMMITTEE WORK PLAND & UPDATE:

Carrie noted who the members where for the existing EDC committees, explained that each committee had worked together to create the proposed work plans for the coming year. She noted that this would be the EDC's focus, but that staff would also continue to be responsive as action items occurred. She requested feedback on this proposal for the EDC's work for 2016.

Wamic Water – Carrie Pipinich, Joan Silver and Stan Kelsay are the committee members

- Strategy 1: Continue to support WWSA in implementation of their \$20,000 SDWRLF Planning Grant.
- Strategy 2: As the assessment is completed, work with WWSA to implement strategies identified during the assessment process.
- Strategy 3: Provide additional support to WWSA related to board and organizational development.

Dufur – Mary Kramer and Kathy Ursprung are the committee members

- Strategy 1: Continue to support the City of Dufur in efforts to better understand water system capacity and condition. Work with the City to support completion of a water system assessment.
- Strategy 2: Explore opportunities to provide technical assistance to Dufur Parks & Recreation District in identifying and seeking funding for their RV Park Restroom Replacement Project.
- Strategy 3: Identify opportunities to support business development in Dufur. Partner with the Port of The Dalles on these activities where appropriate. Explore working with the Dufur Chamber and City of Dufur on a community visioning process.

Discussion: Mary Kramer noted that accessing funding is and continues to be a significant issue for the community. Carrie noted that an additional opportunity was suggested to support business development was a community strategy session conducted via the chamber in partnership with the port. Scott Hege asked which of the strategies were likely to get accomplished. Carrie stated numbers 1 and 2 were likely to see progress this year, and that the third could be more opportunity driven. She also noted that the workplans were intended to be realistic ideas of what the committees could do to support progress in each of these areas during the coming year.

Mosier- Terry Moore and Gary Grossman are the members.

- Strategy 1: Continue to support City in implementing its priorities through technical assistance and letters of support as needed.
- Strategy 2: Continue to support City through its Transportation System Planning process and to leverage those funds to complete additional planning activities as appropriate.
- Strategy 3: Provide technical assistance for development of the proposal to incorporate City Hall and the Fire Station into a joint facility on Hwy 30 on the former Union Pacific parcel in downtown Mosier.

Broadband –Carrie Pipinich, Stan Kelsay, and Frank Kay are the members

- Strategy 1: Continue to support the Q-Life Maupin Broadband Fiber Project.
- Strategy 2: Explore additional opportunities to address broadband service challenges in South Wasco County. This strategy also incorporates efforts to further coordinate related to Connect America II funds provided by the FCC to CenturyLink.

Open for Business-Kathy Ursprung, Daniel Hunter, Nan Wimmers and Fred Justensen

- Strategy 1: Grow utilization of the Business Siting Guides Created. Update guides as necessary.
- Strategy 2: Work with local communities and partners to create a more robust web presence for those searching for information about Wasco County and its communities while locating or doing business here.
- Strategy 3: Continue to support coordination between entities working on economic development issues throughout the County.

Discussion: Scott Hege suggested contacting Wasco County regarding their webpage update plans. Carrie noted that this would be a great opportunity to leverage the work the EDC would like to do to further connect communities throughout the County online.

POSITION #8 RECOMMENDATION:

Joan Silver reported that EDC Commissioner Greg Johnson had resigned from a term in Position #8 that runs through December of 2018. She noted that this position is an at-large position, but has historically represented orchardists or other fruit growers. Carrie reported that at the February EDC meeting staff requested support from the commission for outreach around this open position, sent out a press release to local media, and publicized the information through the County's website. Carrie noted that the application process closed February 25th.

Carrie reported that staff received an interest form from Dean McAllister seeking consideration for this EDC position. Dean introduced himself and presented his background and interest.

Discussion: Scott Hege asked Dean which committee he was interested in serving on. Dean stated that he would need to learn more about the commission and do more research.

The consensus of all present was to recommend Dean McAllister to the Wasco County Board of Commissioners for approval to serve on the EDC.

STAFF REPORT

Carrie Pipinich presented the staff report highlighting the following:

- Wamic Water System Committee – Carrie reported that she and EDC Commissioner Joan Silver had been working with the Wamic Water & Sanitary Authority to address their upcoming system needs. Carrie noted that she is working with WWSA to support them through choosing an engineer to work with the community on their planning efforts and scope of work development for this project to ensure it meets their needs. Carrie also attended the Rural Community Assistance Corporation (RCAC) Board training with Wamic Water's Board to discuss best practices, and identify opportunities for additional training. She also shared that Joan was supporting Wamic in making changes to their bookkeeping that will make it easier for them to access funding.
- Dufur Water System Committee – Carrie reported that the Dufur Committee is focused on Dufur's water system needs, supporting the Parks & Recreation district in its restroom project, and business development opportunities. She noted that EDC Commissioners Mary Kramer and Kathy Ursprung are leading this project with support from staff. The group met with Mayor Wallace to discuss needs in Dufur and how they relate to the committee's draft work plan and as a result of that conversation, staff worked with Dufur's new engineer of record to submit a Letter of Interest for the SIPP program related to funding for a water assessment. Carrie also reported that the committee is reviewing information on the bathroom project, and will work with Parks & Rec to determine next steps. Additionally, staff has approached the Dufur Chamber about opportunities to have a community conversation around downtown and business development.
- Mosier Committee – Carrie reported that this effort is spearheaded by EDC Commissioners Terry Moore and Gary Grossman. She noted that EDC Commissioner Moore is engaged in conversations in Mosier related to exploring siting opportunities for their fire station, as well as support as they work to find the best way to move their TSP project forward.

- Broadband Committee – Carrie noted that one of the strategic priorities for the EDC has been supporting expansion of broadband in our rural communities and promoting adoption of those services for businesses and residents. She also reported that Q-Life continues to move down the path toward building the proposed fiber project in Maupin. Carrie reported that she continues to engage with Q-life to support as needed to continue this progress and that they have secured some planning funds from IFA to support engineering, and will be moving forward with that portion of the project. Carrie also reported that she presented on broadband efforts in the region to the USDA, Rural Development State Directors during their annual gathering. During that gathering on February 24, the group visited the Mid-Columbia Region to learn about USDA investments, successes, and challenges that still need to be addressed in the region.
- Open for Business Committee – Carrie reported that the Open for Business Committee includes EDC Commissioners Daniel Hunter, Nan Wimmers, Fred Justensen and Kathy Ursprung. She noted that these conversations have centered on providing tools to create a more robust online presence for communities around the County, developing a strategy for promoting the business siting guides, and enhancing coordination. She noted that the group did not meet during February.
- NORCOR Property Work Group – Carrie reported that the County has requested EDC support convening a group of identified stakeholders to determine the marketability and suitability for selling or leasing the additional acreage owned by NORCOR and located to the west of the facility. She noted that after the committee held its final meeting staff worked with Commissioner Hege to craft recommendations for the NORCOR Board on utilization of this industrial parcel. The group's recommendations centered around moving the land back into productive use that can bring the value and investment in the property back to NORCOR through revenue but also provide benefit to the community through putting the property back onto the tax rolls and creating jobs. NORCOR's Board accepted these recommendations on February 18th. This effort was part of a broader process convened through Regional Solutions and Association of Oregon Counties.

COMMISSIONER REPORTS:

Frank Kay – Frank passed around the architectural rendering of the Maupin library/city hall project. He reported that the local match fund raising was at \$106,000 and that they have launched the general public campaign. He also reported that they are working with one local family in order to provide a challenge match for the community to secure the final funds.

Fred Justensen – Fred inquired as to what was happening in Tygh Valley near the fairgrounds? Frank Kay stated that he thought it was a new alpaca farm that has located in the area that Mike Davis worked with. Fred noted that growing conditions were looking good for wheat but cattle prices were down. Fred also reported that they should have another festival this year happening the 3rd weekend of May. He also stated that he had recently stopped at Freebridge Brewery and they appeared to be doing very well.

Mary Kramer – Mary reported that things are slowly happening in Dufur. She noted that Wallace construction had purchased the un-finished store front in downtown from the Historical Society and was working to update it. She also noted that Azure Standard purchased the gas station and has reopened it. She noted that they will then move the hardware store across to that storefront and the old hardware store will become their call center.

Kathy Ursprung – Kathy reported that the regional general wetland permits are submitted to the Department of State Lands and the Corps of Engineers. Kathy noted that the food co-op is moving along

and have set October 31st to complete their membership drive. Kathy reported that they are planning for April 11 for a Souptastic Soupapolza at Wahtonka High school. She invited the group to attend.

Joan Silver – Joan reported that the School District Task force is working to gauge support in the community to upgrade the schools, and shared that the Task Force had presented several alternatives for the group. She noted that the general impression of the schools does impact economic development. Joan also noted that the Area Agency on Aging is receiving less money for a growing senior population and that several programs under the AAA are oversubscribed.

Meeting Adjourn at 11:35am.

Next meeting is Thursday June 2nd in Dufur

Submitted by Sherry Bohn, EDC Staff