

## WASCO COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Thursday, March 15, 2012

The Dalles City Hall, Council Chambers

313 Court Street, The Dalles, OR

### ATTENDANCE

COMMISSION MEMBERS: Chair Joan Silver, Dan Durow, Frank Kay, Donella Polehn, Carina Schmidt, Michael Zingg, Mary Kramer, Dan Spatz (via phone)

GUESTS: John Roberts, Tonya Brumley, Rod Runyon and Ken Polehn

EDC Staff: Jessica Metta and Anna Tompkins

### CALL TO ORDER

Chair Joan Silver called the meeting to order at 10:05 am. A quorum was present. Joan adjusted the agenda to accommodate commissioners calling into meeting.

### EDC Loan Fund Concept

Joan Silver shared to the board her concept idea of the EDC creating a revolving loan fund (RLF). The revolving loan fund would be available to projects on the Needs and Issues list that are important to the community but have very little funding opportunities. She has had preliminary discussion of the concept with Commissioner Rod Runyon and Amanda Hoey of MCEDD. The loan would be administered by MCEDD staff and follow similar structure and loan requirements. It would be the responsibility of the WCEDC to raise the funds for the loan and to approve loan applicants. The board asked how the money would be raised to start the revolving loan fund. Joan replied that they could raise it from private money, government funds and possibly apply for USDA grant to start a small revolving loan fund. She estimates that they will need to start with \$100,000 to \$150,000. MCEDD would be paid through loan fees and interest. More discussion followed on the process and logistics of a loan program opportunity for community projects. It was suggested that if the RLF goes forward than the Needs and Issues process be altered to gain more sufficient information. The board clarified whether the Needs and Issues process would be separate or a step into the loan program. It was agreed by the board that the Needs and Issues process be kept separate from the loan application process. Therefore, the order and rank of the Needs and Issues list will not equal the loan ability of each project. The loan application will be a separate application form and process. Frank Kay made a motion to begin the process of creating an EDC loan fund. Dan Spatz seconded, motion passed unanimously.

### Needs and Issues Priority List

Jessica Metta opened the Needs and Issues priority list ranking for review starting with the Technical Assistance scoring. Michael Zingg had a concern that a few of the projects required more information and despite a low score still made it to the top ten. He asked if next year there could be a second category for projects with incomplete information to be left off the scoring priority list all together. Jessica responded that every year the board reviews the forms

and makes necessary changes. The board reflected on reasons why the Technical Assistance program had only 13 project applications. Frank Kay made a motion to approve the order of the 2012 Short-term Technical Assistance projects as presented and scored. Dan Durow seconded, motion passed unanimously.

The board continued onto review the 28 projects scored in Infrastructure projects. The board saw no need for change in the rankings. Mike Zingg made a motion to approve the 2012 Short-term Infrastructure projects as presented and scored. Frank Kay seconded, motion passed unanimously.

#### Staff Report

Jessica Metta reviewed the staff report in order of goals set by the WCEDC Strategic Action Plan. She has compiled countywide and community-specific demographic and economic information for easy access on the EDC website and continued research on GIS gathering information. Jessica scheduled the annual Needs and Issues presentations and will present to the Board of County Commissioners for their final approval of the prioritization. She has attended The Dalles Chamber Government Affairs Committee meetings to present information about the EDC. Jessica attended the Stronger Economies Together training in Moro that provided information on the region's economy which included Wasco County. She announced that there is an opening on the Oregon Investment Board for Wasco County and the application is online. She gave the latest update that the Board of County Commissioners agreed to cover the costs of a 15-passenger van for the EDC to have its June 21<sup>st</sup> meeting at Young Life with a visit to Antelope and Shaniko. Jessica closed with a quick review of the seasonally adjusted unemployment rates for Wasco County and Oregon.

#### Online Information for Commercial/Industrial Property

Jessica Metta went onto the web and gave a review of the surrounding counties that provide GIS information online. She began with a review of the current GIS online interface for Wasco County, then continued review for Klickitat, Skamania and Hood River Counties. After the review Jessica proposed the following changes: include the National Scenic Area zoning, assessor map information and print map, measurement and identifier tool capabilities. The board discussed the two year timeframe given by Wasco County Assessors office as too long for economic development. John Roberts from Wasco County Planning Department stated that there are a couple intergovernmental agreements around the online GIS system that makes approval for even small changes time consuming. In addition, it will take a FTE to sustain the online interface.

Tonya Brumley from Northwest Natural shared that the current system is very cumbersome and difficult to get information. She noted that this is a big missing opportunity for land developers, engineers and others that could contribute to economic development because the information is not accessible. This hinders those seeking information after hours or living outside of the area. She suggested parcel detail, road layer, short plat maps and commercial, residential and industrial property information be made available online. Frank Kay made a

motion for Wasco County to embark on a more aggressive program to improve the GIS Online User Interface. Mary Kramer seconded, motion passed unanimously.

#### Regional Updates

Frank Kay presented updates and changes made to Maupin's Economic Development Strategic Action Plan 2012-2016. The City of Maupin also approved \$6,000 to contract professional services to implement the Economic Development Strategic Action Plan. The City is collecting applications for the RFP now through April 30, 2012.

Dan Durow updated the board that today was the last day of the in-water permit for The City of the Dalles' dock project which they were able to meet that deadline. There will be a celebration on July 14<sup>th</sup> for the opening of the riverfront trail, which they will plan to have an annual Riverfront Trail celebration to coincide with National Trails Day. The City has a memorandum of understanding for the Granada building hotel, is working to meet the fast growing expansion needs of the Sunshine Mill Winery, still going forward on the river connection project, and the new Marriot Hotel will begin construction this summer.

Donella Polehn shared that the pruning is wrapping up for cherry trees and getting ready for the new crop.

John Roberts noted that PGE has submitted their proposal for the Cascade Crossing to the State. It is a new transmission project that would connect electricity generated east of the Cascades to the Willamette Valley. The proposal includes 16 miles in Wasco County.

County Commissioner Rod Runyon shared briefly his thoughts on the GIS online user interface and suggested to review agreements with companies like Google to improve economic development with in the community.

Meeting Adjourned: 12:10 pm

*-Minutes submitted by Anna Tompkins*