

WASCO COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION  
THURSDAY, JUNE 2, 2016  
9:30 am  
DUFUR CITY HALL,  
DUFUR Oregon

**ATTENDANCE**

COMMISSION MEMBERS: Joan Silver, Kathy Ursprung, Mary Kramer, Frank Kay, Terry Moore, Gary Grossman, Daniel Hunter, Stan Kelsay, Nan Wimmers, Dean McAllister, Mary Kramer,

GUESTS: Scott Hege (Wasco County Commissioner), Steve Kramer (Wasco County Commissioner, Dufur Parks District Board), Robert Wallace (Mayor, City of Dufur), Jack Henderson (Superintendent, Dufur Schools), Ann Ferguson (Dufur Parks District), Martin and LaVelle Underhill

EDC STAFF: Carrie Pipinich

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Joan Silver called the meeting to order at 9:32 am.

**DUFUR COMMUNITY UPDATES**

Joan asked Mayor Robert Wallace to provide updates from the City of Dufur. Robert noted that since the EDC had been here last year progress had occurred on several fronts. The new Dufur Fire Station was completed, and the Fire District was able to purchase a used ambulance from Sisters that has enabled them to get the old ambulance serviced. The City is also leasing pasture land it owns to the FFA program at Dufur Schools for their calf program. Robert highlighted that many organizations in Dufur are working together to efficiently and effectively manage resources within the community. Mayor Wallace also noted that the City had hired Anderson Perry approximately 6 months ago as their engineer of record. He noted that they have been working on several projects include water and waste water master plans to create a clear understanding of upcoming system needs, and working on replacing a lift station in the waste water system at Dufur City Park to support additional use of the park. Robert also noted that there is a development proposal that has 50+ lots that is beginning to work its way through the planning process. This proposal puts additional pressure on the City to better understand water and waste water system capacity given uncertainty about both. Robert also noted that there have been significant changes in downtown Dufur including Azure Standard starting a hardware store as well as purchasing and re-opening the gas station, and the building the Historical Society purchased has been sold and is in the process of renovating. They are waiting to find a tenant to finish the space fully however. Robert also noted that Wasco County SWCD received several grants from Oregon Water Resource Department to do projects, one of which is to recharge groundwater in the Fifteen Mile watershed. Robert also noted that Dufur had gone back to the State to renegotiate the lease of their in-stream water rights in Fifteen Mile Creek and are now receiving \$10,500 in funding to support the City's water infrastructure. Lastly, Robert noted that the City and the Chamber are working with the EDC and the Port to support a visioning process for the community.

Ann Ferguson shared updates from the Dufur Parks District. She noted that they had submitted a Local Government Grant application to Oregon State Parks with support from the EDC Committee and staff for a replacement of the West End RV Park restrooms. She also noted that they had put in a new irrigation system with grant support from OWEB and the Wasco County SWCD. She noted that the Parks District had upgraded to a solar system that meant that the propane use at the pool has gone from a \$10,000

annual expense to none. Ann also noted that the Parks District is developing a fitness trail as well as exploring the feasibility of adding RV Camping spots.

Superintendent Henderson noted that Dufur Schools has about 306 students and is relatively full at that capacity. He noted that the district's students have done very well with testing in past years and expect that trend to continue for 2016. Jack also noted that the Club Calf Program through the FFA has expanded as a result of the accessibility of the pasture land for them, and that the proceeds of selling the calf at the County Fair reimburse the School District for costs associated with caring for the calves and then provide scholarship funds to the student. He noted that they are also working closely with Dufur City Park to provide support for turf maintenance and spraying in exchange for the use of the fields by school sports teams. Jack also noted that Dufur Schools has a total of approximately \$2.3 million in scholarship funds it manages, giving out many scholarships to students in various fields each year. He noted they are in the process of setting up a separate 501(C)3 to manage the funds as they are currently managed by the School District Board. Jack noted that this summer they are taking on some capital improvement projects including HVAC updates, in-ground irrigation and dry-scaping being completed with support from SWCD funding, and some roofing projects. Lastly, Jack noted that the ESD is working to provide a fiber line to the school.

Keith Mobley noted that LSN, a carrier that works closely with Q-Life in The Dalles and on the Maupin Fiber Project, will be the entity providing the fiber to the school. He noted that this could address some significant bandwidth restrictions that North State Telephone Company has had that have impacted local service. He noted that as a result of this investment there would be competition between internet service providers in the community. Lastly, Keith noted that his time on the Oregon Public Broadcasting Board is coming to an end this year, and that the Balch is hosting Steve Amen on June 21<sup>st</sup> to give a talk on Oregon Field Guide. There will also be an Oregon Field Guide show resulting from this visit on Dufur.

Commissioner Steve Kramer noted that the Dufur community has been involved in really great partnerships and that it has been a positive year for the community.

*Discussion: LaVelle Underhill noted she had questions about what type of capacity the community's water and sewer systems as well as the school system had to address the needs of a potential 50 home development in Dufur. Joan noted that every community faces these questions, and that as the process unfolds there are many points where issues will be addressed to ensure that there is that capacity. She also noted that a development this large could take years to build out. Daniel Hunter asked Robert about if Dufur had system development charges, and Robert noted that they were very low currently and that the City was looking at this. Frank Kay noted that the City should ensure it has SDCs rather than just hook up charges as in Maupin that has been key to supporting needed infrastructure. Frank noted that Maupin went through a long process with a Resource Assistance for Rural Environments (RARE) AmeriCorps participant to develop SDCs as well as capital improvement plans for city infrastructure. Frank also noted that he strongly encouraged Dufur to do a community Strategic Plan as it has been a great tool for Maupin in their efforts to support their community. Terry Moore noted that SDCs are allowed but not required for cities. He noted that cities can opt to charge less than the impact of a development to encourage growth.*

*Keith noted that if there was an economic development success story of the year in Wasco County this year it would be the fiber project coming to Maupin. He noted that Carrie played a central role in working with the Regional Solutions Advisory Committee to propose the Maupin project and that these funds were what broke the log jam in efforts to connect that community.*

*Joan noted the important role Keith played sitting on that Committee but also noted that his time on the EDC has had a lasting impact on economic development in Wasco County and this committee's role.*

### **FEBRUARY AND MARCH EDC MINUTES:**

Joan noted that we lacked quorum at our last meeting, so there were two sets of minutes to approve.

Kathy Ursprung moved to approve the February 2016 Meeting Minutes, and Mary Kramer seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

Frank Kay moved to approve the March 2016 Meeting Minutes, and Kathy Ursprung seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

### **EDC COMMITTEE WORK PLAND & UPDATE:**

Joan noted that the next item on the agenda was updates from each of the committees.

**Wamic Water** –Joan Silver and Stan Kelsay are the committee members. Stan noted that Carrie and he had worked closely with Wamic Water to develop a scope of work for their \$20,000 planning grant after meeting with the Board. He noted this was important because they need specific things in their assessment to ensure they can apply for funding to accomplish projects. Joan noted that she worked with Nancy to separate out their water and sewer accounting to ensure they can track expenses for each system separately as this will be required with grant funding.

**Dufur**—Mary Kramer and Kathy Ursprung are the committee members. Kathy noted that the EDC and the Port are supporting a strategic planning process for the community. After meeting with the Chamber the planning group decided to host the meetings in October to ensure the agricultural community is able to participate, but the Committee will bring the project to the City Council this summer. Kathy noted that this process would develop a vision for the community as well as a strategy to support community projects in Dufur.

*Discussion: LaVelle asked if there were resources to support maintenance of the old cemetery in town. She noted it used to be owned by the "Rebecca's." Scott Hege noted that a work crew from the jail used to tend the old cemeteries in the County, and that it might be a possibility again. Carrie noted that there might be resources from the State Historic Preservation Office, and that she would follow up with them.*

**Mosier**—Terry Moore and Gary Grossman are the members. Terry noted that the City has gotten four transportation related grants and one for their water system as well. There are a lot of projects in progress currently. They have TGM funding for \$100,000 in funding to support development of a Transportation System Plan (TSP), and will also incorporate some strategic planning efforts into that work. They also received a \$50,000 grant to from the TGM program to conduct a feasibility study related to locating a new facility to house the Fire Department and City Hall. This will also tie into the TSP process. There are also funds potentially allocated for the Mosier Gorge Hub in the 2018-2021 STIP Enhance Projects list. Lastly, they are working to develop a backup well for the water system and have a planning grant to support that project. Terry noted that the Council and City Manager are very busy with these projects, but are appreciative of the role the EDC has played in supporting their efforts and know to reach out when additional support is needed.

**Broadband**—Stan Kelsay and Frank Kay are the members of the Broadband Committee. Frank noted that the City, Q-Life and LSN are continuing to move forward with the Maupin Fiber project. He noted that originally the project to gain access to the fiber optics running near town was approximately \$1 million to build fiber down from the BPA transmission lines to the Point of Presence (PoP) located in town. However, LSN has won contracts to connect several cell towers in the area, and are willing to cover the costs of getting fiber to town as well as constructing the PoP as a result. This means that the Regional Solutions funding provided for the project will be able to be used to string open access fiber around the community of Maupin. Frank noted the project has moved through several required approvals from the Maupin City Council related to the franchise agreement and land leases. He noted that the City will also have to change the zoning of the PoP location to industrial, but that it is a “clean up” zone change as it is part of the public work and reservoir yard. Carrie added that the group is continuing to have conversations around addressing connectivity in additional areas in Wasoc County through potential the Connect America Fund II investments in eligible areas as well as conversations with other internet service providers.

Frank Kay left at 10:30am.

**Open for Business**—Kathy Ursprung, Daniel Hunter, Nan Wimmers and Fred Justensen are members of this Committee. Daniel noted that the group has focused on refining the Business Siting Guides to support additional user friendliness as well as focusing on outreach around their use. Carrie noted she had a draft outreach plan to provide to the group and requested feedback. There was none at this time, but Carrie encouraged EDC members to get in touch if they had feedback at a later date. Kathy noted that in addition to the siting guides, the group is looking to support updates of the EDC’s web presence to create a more outward facing page that focuses on business support rather than the EDC as an organization. Kathy also noted that on the back burner for this group was hosting a website development workshop to support local community organizations in having a stronger web presence. She noted that this had been pushed off until after the siting guides were finalized.

*Discussion: Joan noted that with Dean McAllister joining the EDC to represent the agricultural sector, the EDC had an opportunity to think a little bit further about the economics of agriculture and their impacts on the County. She noted that thinking about market roads, basic infrastructure needs, and clearly expressing the impacts of this sector is important to the county’s economy. Dean noted that agriculture is central to the County’s economy, and noted that he did not want it to be overlooked. He also shared information on changes in the regulatory environment for agriculture as well as changes in crops, leasing land, and other trends in our local agricultural community. Joan asked the group if there was interest in exploring formation of a committee to discuss this. The group agreed that it should be further explored. Carrie noted that the next steps would be for her, Dean and Joan to get together to formulate an outline for this committee’s work to present the information to the EDC at its September Meeting.*

### **EDC LEADERHSIP ELECTIONS:**

Joan Silver noted that last year she shared with the group that she was ready to step down from her chair position after this term. She shared that she has been chairing this committee for many years, and looked forward to continued engagement but that it was time to have someone else take on the chair role. Joan opened the nominations for Chair of the Economic Development Commission.

*Discussion: Joan nominated Kathy Ursprung to take over as Chair. Terry asked if Frank Kay had expressed interest in moving up into the Chair position. Carrie noted that Joan and she had discussed this with Frank previously, and that he had indicated that he is unable to move up into*

*the Chair role at this time. She also noted that staff would like to begin to work on a process that supports moving the Vice Chair into the Chair position. Hearing no other nominations, Joan asked for a motion to close nominations. Dean McAllister moved to close the nominations and Daniel Hunter seconded the motion. The group unanimously elected Kathy Ursprung as the new Chair of the EDC. Joan opened the nominations for Vice Chair. Nan Wimmers nominated Daniel Hunter as the Vice Chair. Hearing no other nominations, Joan asked for a motion to close nominations. Kathy Ursprung made the motion to close nominations, Dean McAllister seconded the motion. The group unanimously elected Daniel Hunter as Vice Chair of the EDC.*

### **EDC CALENDAR FOR 2016/2017:**

Carrie noted that she was providing a tentative calendar to the group for discussion and planning purposes.

*Discussion: Joan noted that at the September meeting she was interested in incorporating a tour as part of the meeting. Carrie noted that this would likely result in a slightly longer meeting and that she would get a plan settled and information out to the group in order to get the longer timeframe on calendars soon. Terry noted that we had increased the number of EDC meetings after working to move to quarterly meetings and asked if this was needed. Carrie noted that for our current Community Enhancement Project Process, the additional meetings are needed. She also noted that the December meeting was tentative and would only be held if there was additional input needed for the CEP process. She also noted that the February meeting would be shorter to just incorporate the prioritization process but that to align with the regional process it could not wait until March. Terry suggested that making the February meeting longer and removing the March meeting could reduce one meeting. Carrie noted she would look to make this change and bring an updated calendar back to the EDC.*

### **FY2017 BUDGET AND SCOPE OF WORK:**

Carrie shared that EDC worked with the budget committee and submitted a request for \$45,000 of funding to support staffing. Carrie noted that she had provided an overview of the scope of work that the EDC would implement this coming year and requested any input into finalizing the scope to be presented to the Board of County Commissioners.

*Discussion: Kathy noted the addition of the agricultural committee.*

### **STAFF REPORT**

Carrie Pipinich presented the staff report highlighting the following:

- MCEDD adopted an update of the region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy at their March 16, 2016 Board Meeting. Several projects from Wasco County were highly ranked, including small city water system improvements, the Dog River Pipeline from the City of The Dalles, and ODOT's redecking project on The Dalles Bridge.
- Staff provided a letter of support from the EDC for the Dog River Pipeline's application to Oregon Water Resources Department with their application in addition to providing comments on the rankings after a draft was provided for public comment. Staff also provided comments in support of the Mosier Wells project submitted to OWRD as well.

- Staff is working with The Dalles Main Street, the SBDC, the City of The Dalles, the Port of The Dalles and Rural Development Initiatives to begin implementation of a focused business retention and expansion program. Throughout April and May volunteers have interviewed almost 40 downtown businesses to gather information on needs and opportunities. She noted that after this information was compiled, she would share it with the EDC.
- Staff attended the Infrastructure Financing Workshop hosted by Rural Community Assistance Corporation, Infrastructure Finance Authority, and USDA Rural Development. The workshop had sessions that provided details on various funding opportunities. Staff was able to discuss projects submitted to the EDC through the Community Enhancement Projects Process with a variety of funders.

### **COMMISSIONER REPORTS:**

Nan Wimmers—Nan noted that she had concerns about the Dufur schools capacity to fit the additional students that would come from the proposed 50 home development with their being close to capacity already. Nan noted that housing prices are up and will continue to go up as there is little land ready to develop left. Daniel noted that they are doing a housing study to better understand both current inventory and projected needs. The analysis thus far has indicated that a mortgage is actually relatively more affordable than rental housing currently. Nan noted that the rental market is really high right now. She also noted that the subdivision they are working on with Mill Creek Crossing has six sale pendings, but closing dates are not until the end of the year so they are no longer processing sales until the builders can catch up.

Dean McAllister—Dean noted that the pre-harvest tours had gone well. The cherry crop is looking good for this year, and there were some challenges in Washington with their crop so if all holds steady it should be a good year for local cherry growers. He also noted that the wheat crop was doing well.

Stan—Stan noted that the new South Wasco Parks & Rec District was getting organized. He shared that they are moving forward with the Tygh Valley Central Park project and initial cleanup has been completed. They are also compiling a list of projects to tackle, one of which is the Pine Hollow Boat Ramp.

Daniel—Daniel shared additional information on the housing needs assessment process, and noted that he had attended the Housing Summit hosted by PSU in Hood River. PSU is gathering information from around the region to look at challenges around affordability. He noted that in The Dalles the issue is developable land, and the challenges with the growth boundaries in the National Scenic Area. He noted that affordability for purchasing a home in The Dalles is not as big a challenge as in Hood River, but rents are less affordable than mortgage costs. Daniel also noted that The Dalles-Wasco County Enterprise Zone is set to expire in 2018, and that with current employment and wage levels, the County will not qualify for an enterprise zone moving forward.

Gary Grossman—Gary noted that he had nothing additional to report from his work in The Dalles area or with Mosier.

Mary Kramer—Mary noted that the Dufur Threshing Bee is moving to a new format they are calling “Vintage Dufur Days” that will focus on vintage equipment more than the threshing conducted with the horses.

Kathy Ursprung—Kathy noted that the Port is receiving a lot of inquiries about their available land. She also noted that they have hosted the area's legislators recently for meetings and provided tours of the Port and the community.

Nan left the meeting at 11:28am.

Kathy also noted that they are working on opportunities to support additional career readiness initiatives in partnership with the school district and employers in the community.

Joan Silver—Joan noted that the School Facilities Task Force she sits on is hosting meetings on June 18<sup>th</sup> to provide information to the community about the current school facilities.

Meeting Adjourn at 11:31am.

Next meeting is Thursday September 1, in Maupin.

*Submitted by Carrie Pipinich, EDC Staff*