

WASCO COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION  
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 2016  
9:30 am  
IMPERIAL RIVER COMPANY  
304 BAKEOVEN ROAD  
MAUPIN, OR

**ATTENDANCE**

COMMISSION MEMBERS: Joan Silver, Kathy Ursprung, Gary Grossman, Daniel Hunter, Stan Kelsay, Nan Wimmers, Dean McAllister

GUESTS: Lynn Ewing (City of Maupin), Allison Bechtel (Maupin Chamber of Commerce), Jeanne Carver (Imperial Stack Ranch) and Rod Runyon (Wasco County), Shelby Vincent

EDC STAFF: Carrie Pipinich and Sherry Bohn

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Kathy Ursprung called the meeting to order at 9:38 am.

**MAUPIN COMMUNITY UPDATES**

Mayor Ewing presented updates on the City of Maupin's Legion Hall, Kaizer Park, new bike path and the fiber optic project with Light Speed Network (LSN). He reported that because LSN was bringing fiber down from the BPA sub-station the Regional Solutions funding they received would allow for fiber to be installed on every power pole in Maupin. Maupin will have broadband speeds rated at a 100 megabyte minimum and one gigabit per second. He noted that LSN Networks had also been working with Moro and Dufur. Mayor Ewing reported that the goal was to be ready to roll out service to customers by the end of January. He also reported that the Council had voted to move forward with plans for a Civic Center that will combine a new City Hall and Library in Maupin.

Allison Bechtel, President of the Maupin Chamber and owner of Maupin Market along with her husband, reported that the library fund raising goal of \$120,000 from local donors had been met. She noted that the project was valued at 1.3 million dollars, so this amount along with the matching funds from the City Hall for their portion of the project make it competitive for seeking grants. Allison reported that their grant writer, Lyn Craig, was in the process of submitting grants. She also reported that most Maupin businesses were reporting that the summer season had been about the same as last year but that the internet was down on one of their big weekends which caused a lot of lost revenue. Allison noted that the summer season was very dependent upon the weather and that February, March and April are still tough. She noted that many businesses close during the winter, but that they worked hard to keep Maupin Market open year round. Allison reported that there are a number of rafting companies in Maupin but the challenge is that some use Groupon and this forces other companies to offer discounts as well. Both Mayor Ewing and Allison noted that housing is a large issue effecting labor. Both noted the need more seasonal housing as well as housing that would support year round employees. Allison noted that unless they can find housing in or close to Maupin, employees are always looking for a job closer to home.

Mayor Ewing and Allison both discussed challenges with the fish runs in recent years. They noted that the runs have been smaller and that there are fewer fisherman coming to town as a result. They also discussed up river projects related to the Pelton Dam, the permitting processes in the Lower Deschutes Management Area, and other items impacting the Deschutes River and its use in the Maupin area.

*Discussion: Kathy Ursprung asked how group-on affects the other business. Allison explained the challenges of “the river plan” and passes which designates how many boaters can be in each location. In the past the rafting company would purchase the passes. She reported that now they are purchased by individuals in addition to their tickets. She noted that there had been discussion about a higher pass price on weekends and lower during the week. Joan Silver asked where on the river the necessary boater passes start. Kathy asked if the community receives any benefit. It was asked if there were problem getting passes. Mayor Ewing stated that it is challenging to get a pass for multiple days and they are more difficult to get for certain sections of the river as well. Allison shared that the City Planning commission is working through the process to rezone Deschutes Ave as residential/commercial in the downtown core. Mayor Ewing reported that he had requested city planning take a hard look at all of zoning in town in order to ensure it is still appropriate to current uses and the community’s needs. Allison noted that the Chamber wants to expand the shoulder season and that they are working with Travel Oregon to designate businesses as Bike Friendly and that they were one of the few additional Scenic Bikeways designated this year. The Chamber is working through the planning process with Travel Oregon and plans to develop signage and a rest area in Maupin to act as a central point for the loop. She also reported that various businesses are working to include standup paddle boarding allowing shuttle companies and other businesses to expand.*

*Both Allison and Mayor Ewing noted that the community is very dependent on the river. It was reported that the river is dam controlled and in the past PGE would release cold water from the bottom of the lake above the dam, but now it is coming from the top which is potentially affecting habitat and fish. Mayor Ewing noted that there had been a 30% decrease in guide sales and that there had been a lawsuit filed against PGE. Stan mentioned that the Deschutes River Alliance was suing PGE. Allison reported that the Chamber supports the lawsuit and that the City had submitted a letter of support for the lawsuit.*

### **JUNE 2016 EDC MINUTES:**

Joan Silver moved to approve the June 2, 2016 meeting minutes. Nan Wimmers seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

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

**Wamic Water** –Joan Silver and Stan Kelsay are the committee members. Carrie reported that they continue to work on their Water System Assessment and should have it finalized in December.

**Dufur**—Mary Kramer and Kathy Ursprung are the committee members. Carrie reported that she and Kathy had been working with the City on water and waste water improvement plans. She reported that the City had pulled together \$70,000 in grant money to work through the plans. Daniel Hunter asked about federal funding. Carrie reported that they had received some funding from USDA Rural Development for the wastewater system planning, but that the balance in the water account was effecting accessing that funding for the water system plans. Kathy reported that they are also working on a strategic planning process. Carrie reported that the west end restroom project was moving forward through the parks district with funding from the Oregon State Parks and the Immediate Opportunity funds provided through the initial payment from Google to through the enterprise zone this year.

**Mosier**—Terry Moore and Gary Grossman are the members. Carried reported that Terry had noted that Mosier had been very busy after the train derailment. She reported that they had created an IGA to

continue negotiations with the railroad that included the City, Fire District, and Community School. Carrie also reported that Terry had been appointed to be chair of that group. Carrie reported that she is working with Mosier on an Encore Fellow application to provide additional support for these processes.

**Broadband**—Stan Kelsay and Frank Kay are the members of the Broadband Committee. Stan reported that the group hosted a meeting with Q-Life, LSN, and Century Link to discuss opportunities for collaboration in the Maupin area and around the County as well as their plans for Connect America Fund II resources. He reported that there is not a firm schedule for South Wasco County improvements but that Century Link knew there was a problem with congestion coming into the area and that they had been working on a fix. He reported that they had expressed interest in meeting again during the winter.

**Open for Business** – Kathy Ursprung, Daniel Hunter, Nan Wimmers and Fred Justesen are members of this Committee. Daniel reported that they had been working on finalizing the business siting guides looking at them from the business side and were conducting outreach to ensure partners were aware of the resource. Kathy reported that she had been working with the county on the EDC side of their website update.

**Agriculture** – Dean McAllister and Joan Silver are the members of this committee. Dean reported on the background, focus, framework and proposed immediate actions of this committee. Dean noted that the proposed focus areas included:

- Market Access
- Transportation
- Entry into Agriculture/Farming
- Labor
- Food Safety
- Water

Carrie requested commission feedback on the proposed focus areas.

*Discussion: Nan Wimmers reported that ag-tourism is now part of the chamber's focus.*

*Kathy Ursprung reported that the Port of The Dalles was exploring developing more space that could be of use for food processing and other value added projects. Daniel Hunter noted that the trending growth area is value added.*

### **EDC ACTION PLAN UPDATE:**

Carrie reported that the EDC last conducted an overhaul of its Strategic Action Plan in 2013. In the three years since this process occurred, there have been significant changes that impact the utility of the current plan for staff and the Commission as we conduct our work to support strong communities throughout Wasco County

Carrie proposed the following updated process and requested the commission provide feedback and to actively engage in the strategic planning process over the next several months. Nan noted that she thought it would be good to update the plan and encouraged the EDC to consider ways to better communicate the great work we are doing with partners.

### **COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT PROJECT PROCESS:**

Carrie reported that the Community Enhancement Project Prioritization Process is an opportunity for the EDC to learn about community priorities from throughout Wasco County, highlight key projects that support economic opportunity as they seek funding, and identify areas to focus the EDC's technical assistance resources. She proposed formally updating the prioritization process to incorporate the

changes made during 2016, and consideration of additional updates to the broader CEP process during the strategic planning efforts to ensure that it continues to support fulfilling the EDC's role in the county and meeting priorities developed through the strategic action plan update. Carrie also presented a proposed schedule for 2017 and requested commission members mark their calendars to reserve the meeting times. There was consensus to move forward with proposed approach and timeline.

### **STAFF REPORT**

Carrie Pipinich presented the staff report highlighting the following:

- Staff has begun outreach and trainings on the Agora Investment Platform for community groups, including the South Wasco Alliance and the South Wasco Parks and Recreation District, to prepare them for the 2017 Community Enhancement Project process as well as provide them with additional information on the resources available to promote their priority projects.
- The Uplifting Elevator Project received \$50,000 in funds from the Immediate Opportunity Projects fund consisting of dollars provided through the initial Enterprise Zone Agreement with Google on their most recent project. This fund is managed by the City of The Dalles and Wasco County. As a result of this influx of funding, the Senior Center has been able to begin their project with continued fundraising efforts to cover the final portion.
- The City of Mosier also received \$15,000 from the Immediate Opportunity fund to do further design and development work on their Bike Hub. This funding will likely be leveraged to bring in additional grant resources to support the project as well.
- The Dalles Main Street Business Retention and Expansion: 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. The initial data has been returned from 33 interviews with downtown businesses and organizations. Key highlights on downtown needs include support for marketing and promotion, continued investment in the physical environment downtown, and challenges with workforce availability. This report will be discussed further with a group of downtown businesses on August 25th to narrow the focus and develop collaborative strategies to address these challenges.

### **COMMISSIONER REPORTS:**

Dean McAllister—Dean reported that the cherry and wheat harvest had been good but that they would see how prices were when it came time to sell the crops. He also reported that at this time grapes were being sampled for sugar levels and were getting close to harvest.

Stan Kelsay —Stan reported that South Wasco Parks and Receptions District had received a grant to do maintenance on the Pine Hollow restroom and that they had installed 6 new picnic tables there and in Shaniko.

Daniel Hunter —Daniel reported that he had started a new position as City of the Dalles Human Resources Manager. He stated that there was “tons going on” and that the downtown hotel development project was moving forward but it does not include the theater. The City will be posting for his old position shortly and his replacement will likely step into his seat on the EDC.

Kathy Ursprung—Kathy reported that the Port of the Dalles was exploring workforce concerns of industrial businesses and in the process of implementing an internship program to improve school to work and work to college. She also reported that the school board had retreat and was looking at going out for bonding authority to implement a facility replacement plan.

Joan Silver—Joan reported that the Senior Center elevator project had moved to the next stage and that they were able to start on construction. She reported that they had raised all but \$35,000 of the needed money. She reported that they are committed to reaching their goal as the project moves forward.

Nan Wimmers – Nan reported that there continues to be a shortage of homes in the area and that houses are moving quickly once they are listed. She reported that there is a lot of activity in the under \$200,000 and over \$400,000.

Rod Runyon – Rod reported that that on September 8<sup>th</sup> there will be a grand opening for Heritage Heights. He also reported that the Mid-Columbia Community Action Council building was for sale.

Meeting Adjourn at 11:25am

Next meeting is December 1<sup>st</sup>, in The Dalles.

*Submitted by Sherry Bohn, EDC Staff*