

WASCO COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

THURSDAY, November 20, 2014

MCEDD Conference Room

515 East 2nd Street, The Dalles, OR

ATTENDANCE

COMMISSION MEMBERS: Joan Silver, Fred Justesen, Andrea Klaas, Dan Durow, Gary Grossman, Jeff Renard, and Donella Polehn (teleconference)

GUESTS: Denny Ross (South Wasco Alliance, Maupin resident), Robert Wallace (Mayor of Dufur), Greg Johnson (Renken Orchards), Kathy Ursprung (Port of the Dalles), Linda Hayes-Gorman (DEQ) and Joni Hammon (DEQ)

EDC STAFF: Carrie Pipinich, Amanda Hoey and Sherry Bohn

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Joan Silver called the meeting to order at 10:00 am. There was not a quorum present. She then asked for around the table introductions.

Donella Polehn joined at 10:03 am. Quorum present.

EDC APPOINTMENT

Joan Silver reported that there are three terms on the Wasco County Economic Development Commission which will end December 31, 2014: Andrea Klaas (Position 4), Fred Justeson (Position 7), and Donella Polehn (Position 8). Fred indicated he is willing to seek reappointment. Joan stated that Donella and Andrea have requested that staff open their positions up for new appointees. WCEDC staff contacted Kathy White at Wasco County to discuss the preferred mechanism for appointments. It was reported that Kathy noted that the open position for Donella's seat needed to be advertised, unless all are desired by the EDC. Carrie stated that a press release was issued related to the open position, as well as additional outreach was conducted to seek applicants through Staff and the Commissioners. Joan reported that Donella's vacant seat is generally focused on someone in the agricultural industry.

Joan explained that the Wasco County Board of County Commissioners appoints EDC Commissioners based on the recommendation from the EDC. Joan stated that staff will present the EDC's recommendation at their quarterly update to the BOCC in December.

Carrie noted that as Andrea's position is a representative for the Port of The Dalles, so she has been working with Andrea to identify a replacement. Andrea noted that the Port of The Dalles recommends that Kathy Ursprung, their new Communications and Marketing Specialist, take over the Port's seat.

Joan asked that the commission review the application received from Greg Johnson of Renken Orchards. Joan asked the EDC to provide staff with a recommendation to move forward with the two appointments and Fred's reappointment.

EDC WORK PLAN UPDATE

Carrie Pipinich presented an updated EDC Work Plan and requested that commission approve the plan in order to provide direction for staff resources.

Discussion: Joan explained the history and purpose of the EDC. Dan Durow asked about the community project prioritization process and how it would effect the proposed work plan. Carrie Pipinich explained that it would change some of the allocated staff time.

Gary Grossman moved to approve the work plan as presented. Jeff Renard seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Fred Justesen joined the meeting at 10:09 am.

MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 18, 2014

Gary Grossman moved to approve the minutes of the September 18, 2014 meeting. Fred Justesen seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT PROJECT PROCESS

Joan explained the process for the annual Community Enhancement Project Prioritization and noted that the memo provided by Frank Kay and Terry Moore proposed several changes to the process. She requested the commission offer any suggestions and comments to Carrie. Carrie presented an overview of the memo, background and proposed timeline of the process

Andrea joins the meeting @ 10:19

Discussion: Carrie reported on the memorandum from Commission members Terry Moore and Frank Kay discussing possible adjustments to the prioritization process. Joan stated that after review of the suggestions she thought the commission should consider whether it was too late and would require too much time to change the process this year. Joan requested that this process be revisited earlier next year and suggested after this year's process is finished the EDC should begin reviewing the process for the future.

Denny Ross asked if this was replacing Needs and Issues and explained his previous experiences with the process. Denny stated that he would like to make sure that this process is continued because of the value it brings to communities seeking funding for projects.

Joan reminded the commission to keep in mind the "readiness" of the projects and how each project balances with what the commission is currently doing.

Andrea Klaas asked if it would make sense to "pool" base infrastructure projects. Joan Silver stated that it might be possible to "pool" this year and the committee should consider that option. There was a discussion on the kind of funding "pooling base infrastructure projects" might bring.

Carrie explained that the memo requested changes to the information gathered from project owners. She noted that this was an opportunity to utilize the process to incorporate more complete profiles on the Agora Investment Platform, and would look to update the information gathered to better utilize the tools available. There was consensus around moving forward with this update.

PROJECT & COMMITTEE UPDATES

Industrial Lands – The commission discussed current infrastructure projects and the possibility of pooling in relation to finding successful funding. It was discussed that a destination resort was determined to be a low priority. The commission discussed the Outdoor Mass Gathering study conducted this past year. It was reported that the study was helpful but that it needed more information. Dan Durow updated the commission on current activities and reiterated the idea of “pooling” the infrastructure project requests. Carrie Pipinich stated she had scheduled workshops on Agora where community partners could learn how to better use Agora for the prioritization process. Andrea Klaas asked about projects in Maupin.

Andrea Klaas explained the Regional Solutions Team history, its purpose and actions and that they are currently focused on housing and rural broadband. She stated that the Commission should be prepared to present their project ideas to the Regional Solutions Team for their next cycle in two year. Additionally, they should begin to engage legislators around basic infrastructure needs as this project develops. Andrea stressed the need to take the commission’s voice to the state legislatures in order to receive the help needed.

Joan Silver presented a history of how the WCEDC had worked with the planning department.

Denny Ross asked how Regional Solutions Team fit into this process. Amanda Hoey stated that the Regional Solutions Team generally participate and are supportive.

Broadband— Carrie reported on South Wasco and the Google grant. She reported on the progress of the demand survey and that it will provide information for providers on demand for service. Carrie also reported that she had participated in a good meeting with MCEDD, USD Rural Development and the Regional Solutions Team to talk about ways to work together to increase investment in broadband in the region through the various funding sources available.

EDC APPOINTMENTS

Gary Grossman moved to recommend to the Wasco County Commission the appointment of Greg Johnson to the Wasco County EDC. Dan Durow seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Andrea Klaas stated she would like to have Kathy Ursprung represent the Port of the Dalles on the EDC. Jeff Renard moved to recommend to Wasco County Commission the appointment of Kathy Ursprung for the position currently held by Andrea Klaas effective January 1, 2015. Dan Durow seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

DEQ PRESENTATION

Linda Hayes-Gorman and Joni Hammon introduced themselves. She stated that they were not here to talk at the commission but were here to listen and communicate. Linda stated that Alan Daniels is the contact for this area and that he is willing to help and answer questions. She requested that people “call us early and call us often.”

Dan Durow asked about DEQ process in regards to “pooling” projects and was DEQ able to work with that. Joanie Hammon stated that DEQ wants to take on a more regional approach to projects. Joanie stated that for planning it makes sense. She stated that when it gets to funding DEQ will need to have more information and potentially individual project applications for funding. Joanie reiterated that it was important that DEQ talk with the communities early. She stated that it was especially important before they spend a lot of money and before consultants and designers are involved.

Denny Ross asked if DEQ has worked with decentralized sewer systems. Joanie stated that DEQ is willing to work on them and that they like the idea. She provided some examples of their use but noted that each situation was different because of the soil types and climate.

STAFF REPORT e

Carrie Pipinich presented the EDC Staff report highlighting the following

Investing in Manufacturing Communities Partnership (IMCP)

The IMCP Project now has a section on the MCEEDD webpage that can be accessed for the most up-to-date information. The site is: mcedd.org/IMCP.htm.

- **UAS Applications for Tree Fruit:** MCEEDD, OSU, and WSU hosted a forum on UAS Applications for Tree Fruit September 26th. It focused on ways that unmanned systems (both aerial and ground based) can be integrated into efforts to solve agricultural issues and identifying potential research topics conversations around challenges that UAS applications could address centered around pest management and monitoring crops for health and required inputs. Discussion was also had around challenges with scale for these efforts and the need for a research intermediary like OSU or WSU rather than individual tech companies to overcome this.
- **Composite Firms:** As part of the effort through IMCP to develop a regional strategy to support manufacturing firms in the region, two researchers from Washington State University Composite Materials and Engineering Center were in the region working with major firms engaged in manufacturing using composite materials. They were held October 22nd to gather information and to gain an understanding of the composite materials and production processes being used, local firms key products, growth trends and any key obstacles to future development.
- **Quality Certification Workshops:** Several companies in the region, including some in Wasco County, have noted that for smaller businesses it is challenging to get certifications (ISO9001/AS9100) that can greatly benefit food manufacturing and aerospace companies. On Nov. 4th there were workshops hosted that outlined the benefits of these certifications for businesses so that they can get a better understanding of the processes and impacts.
- **Value Added Food Manufacturing:** Girsh Ganjyal, a Food Processing Specialist with WSU, will be visiting the region in late September in preparation for an anticipated value added forum scheduled for November 28, 2014. The visit will also help him better understand of the needs of the existing value-added processors in the region and the

needs/hurdles for the new processors who want to get into value-added agriculture businesses. The forum is still in planning stages, but the expected outcome will begin to formalize the industry cluster through understanding of economic benefit, and the roles for development and exploration of growth opportunities.

General EDC Activities:

EDC staff provided the following support services:

- Staff has continued to meet with community leaders in areas throughout Wasco County to gather information about community priorities, challenges, and successes that will inform opportunities for the Economic Development Commission to work in partnership with these communities. Staff visited with Maupin leaders as well as the City of Mosier. Common threads throughout the communities have thus far included challenge with downtown commercial space and filling business locations, the importance of tourism-both agri-tourism and cycling tourism, and infrastructure needs. As these visits wrap up staff will provide a summary with recommendations for next steps.
- Staff are working with the communities of Dufur and Maupin and their economic development entities to create business siting guides specific to each community. Currently, business siting guides are available for the unincorporated areas of the County as well as the City of The Dalles.
- Columbia Gorge Bi-State Renewable Energy (CGBREZ): Wasco EDC staff has been participating in discussions with CGBREZ and toured a large potential pump storage project in Klickitat County that could support additional investment in wind energy while storing energy for low water periods where it can be most useful in evening out the loads. The group is working to capture the potential impact of additional wind projects in the pipeline for the region. Staff is assisting with the Wasco County data collection along with the Wasco County Planning Department. Staff supported The Dalles Main Street Program's Energy Workshop held on September 22nd. Speakers from Oregon Department of Energy, Restore Oregon, Energy Trust, and N Wasco PUD spoke about the incentives available related to energy efficiency projects. This information will be of use as investment occurs in older buildings throughout the county.
- Staff has also been working with those EDC Commissioners who have terms expiring and the County to determine the best approach to reappointment/new appointment for the next term and implement it. Staff publicized the openings on the EDC webpage and through a press release. Thank you to the EDC Commissioners for their additional outreach!
- Staff attended the South Wasco Alliance Town hall & County Commission Meeting in Tygh Valley.
- Staff met with the newly appointed South Wasco Alliance Advisory Board to discuss opportunities to partner and ways to avoid duplication. Staff provided an overview of the EDC's purpose and role, as well as the proposed work plan so that there would be understanding of the work being done currently. The SWA noted they are still forming, and are looking at their organizational structures and ways to best identify projects to move forward. The SWA requested that the EDC staff sit on the Economic Development Committee as well as continue dialogue about opportunities to support South Wasco County.

EDC COMMISSIONER UPDATES

Donella Polehn – Reported that all of the cherry farmers were hoping for the best in regards to the early cold snap this year.

Fred Justesen – Fred reported that there are positive things happening across the county as far a renewable energy and that cattle prices were good and but feed prices are high.

Dan Durow – Dan reported that the Granada Block project is still moving along. He reported that the deadline was quickly approaching for purchase and there is a meeting scheduled to discuss options. Dan reported that the capital stack is coming together. Dan also reported that due to changes at ODOT the Riverfront Trail project will need to be discussed with new local project manager.

Gary Grossman – Gary reported that the Granada Block was seeking a 9 month extension and urban renewal is discussing that request. Gary Rains continues to report on the connection between education and economic development opportunities. Gary also reported that the Chamber is taking steps to support the school system and highlight their successes.

Andrea Klaas – Andrea reported that there is a new Facebook page called “Made in Wasco County.” She also reported that she has been working with the various museums in the area to have a retail presence in downtown. Andrea reported the Chenoweth project is currently at a standstill due to weather and but that the Port has been receiving a lot of interest. She reported that the grand opening celebration will take place later this spring. Andrea reported that the storm water in will be captured in bio swells and that the project will be going through “Salmon Safe” certification. She reported that the Wonderworks will be purchasing their building from the Port in December. She also reported that she had met with Jeremy Wallace of the Oregon Business Plan and that they were trying to flesh out biomass and forest projects. She stated that she would like to get Robert and Jeremy together.

Kathy Ursprung – Kathy noted she is interested in increasing the value added agricultural retail presence in downtown and that it would include a diversity of artisanal products and produce. She reported that there needed to be an ongoing network of the producers in order to maximize capacity.

Joan Silver – Joan reported that the initial grant applications for Senior Center elevator lift project are submitted and the community has been supportive. She also reported that the Economic Development Committee for the Chamber is working on an RV Park and it is moving forward.

Robert Wallace – Robert reported on the South Wasco Alliance. He reported that he had be talking with Sustainable Northwest and researching biomass generation for various buildings in the area and perhaps the two school districts will be candidates for the program. He also reported that the he had been speaking with Phil Chang about a possible forest collaborative in the Mt. Hood National Forest.

Meeting Adjourn at 11:40AM

Next meeting February 19th at 10 am in The Dalles.

Submitted by Sherry Bohn, EDC Staff