

WASCO COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION  
THURSDAY, JUNE 7, 2018  
9:30 a.m.  
LEGION HALL  
311 DESCHUTES AVENUE, MAUPIN, OR 97037

**ATTENDANCE**

COMMISSION MEMBERS: Kathy Ursprung, Stan Kelsay, Terry Moore, Frank Kay, Joan Silver, Gary Grossman, Matthew Klebes, Keith Nantz

EDC STAFF: Carrie Pipinich, Lauren Hernandez

GUESTS: Lynn Ewing, John Helquist

ABSENT: Dean McAllister, Nan Wimmers, Mary Kramer

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Kathy Ursprung called the meeting to order at 9:31 a.m.

**MAUPIN COMMUNITY UPDATE:**

Lynn Ewing, City of Maupin Mayor, stated site preparation and final fundraising for the new civic center is underway. The groundbreaking will be September 8. The fiber project is moving forward, but Q-Life and Wasco Electric are addressing some concerns before construction can begin. As soon as they are resolved, the project will begin construction. It should be completed within 60 days after the start date. Maupin is also pursuing a grant for Kaiser Park through the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department.

Keith Nantz joined the meeting.

Lynn reported that the Transportation Growth Management's Education and Outreach program supported consultants were exploring options to improve pedestrian safety at key intersections in Maupin and Dufur. A community meeting will be held in three weeks to share with the public the conclusions of the on-site observations and to propose ideas to interested parties. While in town, the consultants met with the property owner of the trail leading to the upper part of Maupin. As Highway 197 drops into Maupin, there are two steep curves with no shoulder or sidewalk for pedestrians to travel safely. The trail bypasses the curves alongside the highway. The property owner is willing to work with the City of Maupin to improve the trail so pedestrians can use it as a safe way to get between the two parts of town without having to walk on the highway. ODOT is working on a FLAP grant application to pay for this improvement. The FLAP grant would also designate connecting pathways through town and across the bridge as well as fund putting in sidewalks from the City Park next to BLM land to the BLM land at the other end of town. This will create a safe walking path for visitors and residents. Because the path will adjoin the state highway and a county road, matching funds will come from ODOT and Wasco County.

Stan Kelsay asked for an update on the health clinic. Lynn stated the clinic needs to raise \$1 million in order to get to the point where they can break ground on the new facility. The City of

Maupin received a grant from Gorge Health Council to provide fiber to the clinic. Frank Kay explained the clinic's operating bond ballot measure failed. Lynn added the measure was not described well and there was confusion as to what it was. Frank stated the clinic is hoping to raise the \$1 million needed to begin ground breaking, but these efforts have been put on hold due to lack of an operational budget. The clinic may have to cut hours or lay off staff.

**FEBRUARY 2018 EDC MINUTES:**

**Motion to approve** the February 8, 2018 meeting minutes made by Joan Silver. Frank Kay seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS + 2018 WORKPLANS:**

Carrie Pipinich presented the proposed 2018/2019 committee work plans for the Commission to review and discuss. Carrie noted some of the plans have shifted and asked the Commission for feedback as to the direction these plans should take.

Small Cities Committee Workplan

Carrie explained Strategy 1 is to continue having committee members representing place-specific communities and staff working with the cities to provide technical assistance. Kathy Ursprung reported highlights from work with Dufur have included the City of Dufur completing its strategic plan, implementing a Travel Oregon grant for new branding in collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce, working with the City on transportation projects and their water/waste water infrastructure updates. Carrie noted the same consultants are working with Maupin and Dufur on the transportation planning. Kathy stated both infrastructure plans are finished and the Port loaned the City money for the needed well improvements. Carrie explained Dufur is working through the siting process of waste water treatment pond expansion.

Terry Moore reported a continuing issue in Mosier is to identify funds to complete the Joint Use Facility. Terry stated he hopes to get a representative from Maupin to present to the Mosier group to give an overview of how to successfully raise funds.

Carrie noted that creating opportunities for collaboration and sharing successes is strategy two. Entities can discuss challenges and how those challenges can be addressed. Capital projects and fundraising would be a good topic to begin the collaboration, as it seems to be relevant to many communities.

The third strategy is to shift the Community Enhancement Projects process to utilize the committee structure to identify local priorities. This will make the list more useful for communities as they look for funding and for the Commission as countywide priority projects are identified. Joan Silver suggested communities submit a one page list of projects, project details, and a timeline. Each community can prioritize the top three picks, and then present those to the EDC. As the Commission gets closer to choosing the top ten, it could work more closely with project owners to gather additional information that tells the story of their projects.

Carrie noted MCEDD applied for a RARE position. The intention is to have half of the RARE's time be allocated towards the EDC, which will add some capacity to this committee in particular.

Lynn Ewing asked if there have been any applicants for code enforcement. Maupin and Dufur have been collaborating on hiring someone for code enforcement. Carrie noted that there have not been any applicants.

Lynn asked if Regional Solutions could tie in with some of the strategies as they can impact strategies to move some of the projects forward. Carrie noted that the EDC works closely with Regional Solutions and will incorporate Regional Solutions and other partners into the workplans more clearly. Matthew Klebes noted it is important to know the challenges for communities from a city/government/community wide infrastructure perspective but that there may also be an opportunity to overlap around the challenges businesses face.

#### Unincorporated Community Workplan

Carrie explained strategy 1 is a continuation of the committee's current direct support approach. A few items were added to look at additional opportunities. Joan stated it can be challenging for smaller communities to communicate the state of their systems to their communities effectively. Most small communities need additional revenue to address system challenges. The committee is looking at helping those communities have that conversation with residents in an effective way. This is something the committee may need to spend more energy on in the upcoming year. Joan stated many of these areas are reluctant, and it will take changing the overall thinking, which can be challenging.

The committee will plan to work with Tygh Valley and Wamic in particular to support their infrastructure needs. A working asset management plan is being created for the Wamic water system to show upgrading the system piece by piece versus replacing it as a whole. In Tygh Valley, the committee has had discussions regarding septic challenges as well as support for the Tygh Valley Water Board as needed. With support from MCEDD RCAC provided financial management training for small utilities in March. There were a good mix of attendees from Wasco and Sherman counties, including attendees from Tygh Valley and Wamic. It also provided an opportunity for the small systems to network amongst each other and learn from experiences with their colleagues.

#### Broadband Committee Workplan

Carrie stated the strategies for this committee look at the next steps to support for Q-Life as the Maupin fiber project moves into construction. There has also been continued engagement around federal funds already coming into the county through Century Link's participation in the Connect America Fund Phase II processes. Carrie noted that with the Wasco County Comprehensive Plan update process, broadband and infrastructure were specifically discussed. As South Wasco County improves fiber access, it is also important to explore resources and tools for community members and businesses to utilize those connections to support the community and economic development.

Kathy Ursprung asked the status of broadband access in Mosier. Terry Moore replied the challenge is the location, as Mosier is in a challenging spot to get infrastructure into. Stan Kelsay stated the Gorge has restrictions on towers and other development. Stan noted that Mosier's WiNet is bringing additional options into the community for service. Lynn stated he believes WiNet is gaining access from The Dalles and hopping over just like the current wireless system. Carrie stated the committee should have a discussion with the ESD to see what kind of connection serves the School as that may be an opportunity for collaboration that could support improved access in town.

Keith Nantz asked about the progress of Maupin's fiber infrastructure. Carrie explained the funding is in place but Wasco Electric and Q-Life are in discussion about agreements for the use the WEC's poles.

Joan Silver stated it may take the federal government stepping up like it did with electricity and telephones to allow all communities to gain access to broadband. Lynn Ewing stated the USDA is interested in changing the mindset about this. USDA RD's Oregon State Director John Huffman is trying to highlight the difference between rural areas in the West with frontier characteristics and the areas in the eastern US where rural communities are much closer together.

#### Open for Business Committee Workplan

Carrie noted that critical pieces for this Committee include updating business siting guides and increasing use of them as a resource. The committee will explore strategies to use enterprise zones to be a better resource. The committee has been looking at community capacity and readiness for economic development efforts, and this year, hosted a grant writing workshop. Keith suggested the committee look at how to engage smaller communities in economic development.

Matthew explained strategy 2 shows the committee participating in a project with the City of The Dalles to complete an inventory and prioritization of the brownfields with grant support from Business Oregon. With the grant funds, a consultant will be hired to work with the City to develop a scope of the projects. The City will put together a local advisory group to discuss these priorities.

#### **WASCO COUNTY JOINT ENTERPRISE ZONE PROCESS UPDATE:**

Carrie reported that since the EDC meeting in December, she and Matthew have been working on enterprise zone expansion and redesignation. After the initial check in with the EDC, they reached out to Mosier, Dufur, and Maupin to see if they were interested in the updates. The initial response was yes. They met with the Planning Department to see what appropriately zoned property from around the County could potentially be incorporated. Draft maps were created, and Carrie and Matthew met with representatives from each city to discuss the proposed enterprise zone expansion in more detail. It was also determined the best approach would be to divide management and decision making based on geography. The Dalles will have Matthew continue to serve as zone manager for developments, and the same partners will have the opportunity to weigh in on any enterprise zone applications with a The Dalles component. Outside of The Dalles, the EDC will take on the role of zone manager and the geography will determine which sponsors have an opportunity to participate in conversations around negotiated components.

Maupin, Mosier, and Wasco County have approved resolutions to approve designation. Dufur and the Port of The Dalles are considering resolutions in the next several weeks. The entities will submit a collective final application to Business Oregon for the designation. Keith asked if there are other enterprise zones aside from those shown on the map. Carrie replied historically, the enterprise zones have only been in The Dalles. Now, areas have been identified outside of The Dalles to incorporate into the zone and increase access to this tool.

Terry asked what the EDC's role is with enterprise zones. He asked if the areas on the map are obligated to use the enterprise zones or if they have a choice. Carrie replied that if a business qualifies for the standard three year initial abatement, the community cannot make the decision to not allow them into the zone once the zone is adopted. Terry asked if the cities have thought about this and understand what

this means. He noted that there were pros and cons to enterprise zones that should be considered when exploring participation. Carrie stated that in December the EDC discussed these issues and gave direction for staff to move forward to work with the County and cities to see if they wanted to engage in this process. Kathy stated the Port uses enterprise zones often, and the exemptions are helpful, especially with manufacturing concerns. Incentives can allow a small local business to expand and add more employees, and can often push them over the line of viability. This makes a difference in a start-up company. Matthew added that a community does have a say when a business applies for an extended abatement of up to 5 years or a long term abatement of 7-15 years. He also noted that the enterprise zones do not reduce taxes, just postpone new tax revenue. Businesses in the zones still pay for franchise fees, water, utilities, and other similar charges.

### **OFFICER ELECTIONS:**

Carrie reported that officers are elected annually. Kathy Ursprung currently serves as chair, and Stan Kelsay currently serves as vice chair. Frank Kay nominated Kathy Ursprung for the position of chair and Stan Kelsay for the position of vice chair.

Joan Silver motioned to close nominations and to appoint Kathy Ursprung for the position of chair and Stan Kelsay for the position of vice chair for a one year term beginning July 1, 2018. Frank Kay seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

### **EDC COMMISSIONER AND STAFF UPDATES:**

Carrie Pipinich – The Gorge 2020 process is continuing, and MCEDD staff is involved with the economic development chapter. Kathy Ursprung also serves on the economic vitality workgroup to represent economic development in Wasco County. Carrie encouraged the Commission to be aware as the economic chapter is updated. The Gorge Commission will also be looking at urban area boundaries, recreation, and emerging land uses. Carrie stated the next round of public outreach sessions was being held for the Wasco County 2040 Comprehensive Plan update. Carrie noted that topics discussed included agritourism and incentives around encouraging development related to priority development types. Carrie also shared that two census tracts were nominated for opportunity zone designation. Each of the five counties in the Mid-Columbia region got designations.

Carrie noted that at the request of Wasco County, she will be working with the Fair Board on strategic planning and future use of the fair grounds and Hunter Park to support sustainability of the organization as well as increase utilization of the facility year around to increase economic impact.

Carrie encouraged EDC members to put MCEDD'S Annual Economic Symposium on their calendars for November 2, 2018. It will be held at the Civic Auditorium.

Matthew Klebes – Housing projects in downtown The Dalles are moving forward slowly. The City transitioned to a new airport manager and fixed based operator for Columbia Gorge Regional Airport. Work is moving forward on marketing and developing the business park at the airport as well.

Gary Grossman – No update.

Joan Silver – Joan shared that a representative from Nonprofit Association of Oregon presented at The Dalles area Chamber of Commerce's Government Affairs Committee and covered information about the

economic contribution of non-profit charitable organizations to the tax base. Approximately 30,000 employees contribute to payroll taxes across the state. The organization itself may be tax exempt, but employees are not, and those taxes add a large chunk to the State's budget.

Frank Kay – The City of Maupin received \$1.5 million from the legislature. \$600,000 is allocated for the library, \$500,000 for fiber, and \$400,000 for City Hall. An anonymous gift of \$200,000 was received. The City is still \$600,000 short of completely funding the library project. Lynn Ewing noted there would be a meeting about strategy for filling this gap shortly.

Terry Moore – The City of Mosier is trying to make progress on the joint use facility. Terry stated he would like to have Frank Kay and Lynn Ewing give some help regarding how to successfully raise funds for projects.

Keith Nantz – No update.

Stan Kelsay – No update.

Kathy Ursprung – The Port of The Dalles is progressing with the Gorge Works program. Some interns will begin next week. Currently, there is a small group 6. Local experts will provide professional development and advice. The program will include Wednesday workshops on a variety of subjects, work place ethics, communication and work place, work life balance, personal finance, as well as community service to provide interns with well-rounded experience and education.

**OTHER BUSINESS:**

No new business.

The next meeting will be September 6, 2018, in Mosier.

Meeting Adjourned at 11:12 a.m.

*Submitted by Lauren Hernandez, EDC Staff*