

WASCO COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 2018
9:30 a.m.
MOSIER CREEK TERRACE
501 E 2ND STREET, MOSIER OR 97040

ATTENDANCE

COMMISSION MEMBERS: Joan Silver, Frank Kay, Stan Kelsay, Mary Kramer, Terry Moore, Kathy Ursprung, Matthew Klebes, Nan Wimmers

EDC STAFF: Carrie Pipinich, Lauren Hernandez

GUESTS: Colleen Coleman, Arlene Burns, Shelby Vincent, Scott Hege

ABSENT: Gary Grossman, Dean McAllister, Keith Nantz

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Kathy Ursprung called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

MOSIER ORGANIZATION PRESENTATION:

Colleen Coleman, Mosier City Manager, reported the City of Mosier is working with Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) on redeveloping the Rock Creek site. The site restoration will incorporate trees, vegetation, and pedestrian path improvements. Rock Creek Park improvements will include a public restroom facility. Union Pacific is funding the improvements as part of the Mosier settlement. The City of Mosier is exploring opportunities to build out pedestrian walkways, vegetative buffers, and bike paths between Rock Creek and the town entrance all the way to Mosier Creek Bridge.

The City has \$550,000 to do street scape improvements. City Council has not determined which block will be Phase One, though it is likely it will be the section of town between Rock Creek Road and Center Street. Improvements will include a pull out for parents dropping off children at school. The City sent a letter of interest to the ODOT program Safe Routes to School to apply for an additional \$1.5 million to finish out the project. The joint use facility is still in motion, and the project has approximately \$1 million.

Arleen Burns, Mayor of Mosier, stated the land along the UPRR right of way was given to the City of Mosier as part of the settlement. The City has leased the land for 30 years and tried to purchase it in the past. The City is working with the fire district on a joint use facility. The entities meet once a month and are working on plans for the approximately \$3 million facility to enable the City to have a commercial kitchen, a community space for meetings and events as well as improved City Hall and Fire Hall facilities. The City is working toward a net zero building, and the Energy Trust of Oregon has been helping with strategies to achieve this. A community museum could also be incorporated in the building. \$1.5 million in funding is still needed for this project. Terry Moore stated he is working with the project committee as a facilitator and that they are developing a fundraising plan. The first step is to make sure the building is built on the correct site. An architect was brought in, and a possible second site has been identified in addition to the

UPRR property along Highway 30. An evaluation will be done, and a decision will be made soon. Then the funding search and marketing will begin, and the project can proceed to design.

JUNE 2018 EDC MINUTES:

Motion to approve the June 7, 2018 meeting minutes made by Frank Kay. Terry Moore seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT PROJECTS – 2019 PROCESS:

Carrie Pipinich reviewed the memo outlining potential changes to the CEP process and noted the new approach would seek to better reflect priorities of local communities in the final ranking and reduce the capacity expended by the communities and EDC staff to reach final rankings. Key changes include a.) removing the formal project intake process and replacing it with community based meetings, and b.) eliminating the county-wide project presentation meeting to rely more heavily on the local prioritization meetings.

Criteria proposed would reflect changes made during discussion each year and include the following:

- Does the project address an economic development challenge or opportunity?
- Prioritization of critical infrastructure—broadly defined.
- Readiness to proceed—do they have community support? Do they have a feasible pathway for funding the project?
- Impact/Timeliness of ranking—does inclusion in the top 10 of the EDC’s project rankings have an impact on the project’s strategy for moving forward this year?

Nan Wimmers stated that better understanding local prioritization of projects would be really helpful. Frank Kay stated that having the criteria for ranking is important. He also noted if a community is unprepared, their presentation may not be compete, so helping communities present a project that is well vetted and thought through is important.

Joan stated it needs to be clear who the project proponent is. She also noted that clear time frames are necessary, as the project process occurs annual inclusion should only be for projects ready to proceed. Carrie agreed, and noted projects can be identified as needing technical assistance as well. Joan stated she sees lack of financial information on projects as a recurring challenge. Nan would like to see projects not ready still receive technical assistance and noted that this is a key service the EDC provides.

Terry Moore agreed this process is good. He does not want to prioritize a community’s projects; he wants the community to pick what is most important to them. He also noted that the EDC should still have the ability to shift how they reflect priorities in their ranking to meet its objectives. Carrie noted she would emphasize this in outreach about the shift.

Nan stated it is important for the County to see the list isn’t the only important product of the EDC, but the time spent with the communities is equally important. Frank stated EDC members can help communities take a more strategic point of view about their projects to get communities where they want to go.

Joan stated the EDC has made good changes, starting with adding the committee structure. The Commission could do a better job communicating what it is and what services are available in the

County. Minutes could be sent to leadership around the County. Colleen Coleman stated this would be helpful. Carrie added the Small Cities Committee will be valuable in providing more opportunity for communities in the County to come together. Stan Kelsay noted it is important to make sure underserved, smaller counties are equally represented. Joan agreed, but added each community has to be willingly moving forward.

The EDC came to the consensus to accept the CEP process revision with additional revisions as discussed.

POSITION 8:

Carrie Pipinich explained Dean McAllister is not able to continue service on the EDC at the end of his term, which ends in December 2018. Position 8 is an at-large position that traditionally engaged the agricultural sector with a focus on tree fruit production. Carrie asked the Commission to consider individuals who may be a good fit to fill the vacant position.

2019 CALENDAR:

Carrie Pipinich presented the proposed 2019 EDC meeting calendar. The January meeting may be canceled depending on the progress made at the December 2018 meeting. Typically, an annual tour is held somewhere in the County. Carrie asked for suggestions for tour sites to get the EDC out to look at various areas in the County. Brainstormed ideas included Tygh Valley and Pine Hollow, CGCC, cideries or wineries, hearing a presentation from Business Oregon or other similar entity, and renewable energy projects. Commissioner Scott Hege suggested Maury Forman could hold a seminar on economic development best practices.

EDC COMMITTEE UPDATES:

Unincorporated Communities Committee

Staff and committee members (Joan Silver and Stan Kelsay) continue to work with WWSA staff to support exploration of next steps with their water system replacement project as well as determine appropriate support for their waste water system. Staff has engaged with the Regional Solutions Team and local partners to explore strategies for better understanding challenges around septic systems in Tygh Valley and approaches to addressing these issues. Staff also provided support to the Tygh Valley Water District around the public budgeting process.

Small Cities Committee

Staff and committee members (Kathy Ursprung, Mary Kramer, Terry Moore, Gary Grossman, and Frank Kay) have worked on projects to support communities around the County, including:

- Working with the City of Dufur and Chamber to begin implementation of the Dufur Community Vision and Action Plan.
- Working with the Chamber and Port to develop a tear off map for visitors to use.
- Working with partners to wrap up the Travel Oregon grant.
- Dufur and Maupin completed their DLCD/ODOT's Transportation Growth Management Education and Outreach Program processes.
- Maupin has secured technical assistance support for an Economic Opportunities Analysis as well as support for water system mapping and planning.

Broadband Committee

Staff met with Warm Springs Telecom to discuss opportunities for partnership to improve services at Celilo Village and get updates on the company's strategy for addressing connectivity needs. The Maupin Fiber Project is moving forward Staff is beginning to explore next steps to improve connectivity in other areas of Wasco County building on the Maupin project. The Regional Broadband Meeting will be on October 5.

Open for Business Committee

Committee members (Nan Wimmers, Kathy Ursprung, Matthew Klebes, and Keith Nantz) have begun to update the Major Employers list by reaching out to large employers in the County. This should be completed in September. The committee has begun updating the Business Siting Guides to reflect the changes in the Enterprise Zone boundaries and building codes administration. This provides a chance to do outreach to local partners about the existing guides for any feedback. Staff is working with the City of The Dalles and other partners to support identifying a consultant to support a planning process to identify and prioritize brownfield sites in The Dalles Urban Renewal District for redevelopment.

EDC STAFF REPORT:

Carrie Pipinich reported that Business Oregon confirmed the redesignation of The Dalles/Wasco County Enterprise Zone as the Wasco County Joint Enterprise Zone. The zone now incorporates areas within the City of The Dalles, Dufur, Maupin, and Mosier as well as the unincorporated communities of Tygh Valley, Wamic, and Pine Grove. Staff for the EDC will provide Zone Manager services to areas outside of the City of The Dalles. Matthew Klebes will continue to fulfill this role within the City of The Dalles.

Carrie attended the RCAC hosted Infrastructure Finance Workshop in Pendleton. MCEDD's Annual Economic Symposium is November 2, 2018. The Oregon Connections Telecommunications Conference will be held at the Hood River Inn. This is the last year the conference will be in the area, as next year, it will be in Ashland. MCEDD'S RARE participant will begin in September. She will work with the Small Cities Committee, on strategic planning with the Wasco County Fair Board, and on pieces around economic resiliency and fire recovery.

EDC COMMISSIONER AND STAFF UPDATES:

Joan Silver – The Senior Health Insurance Benefits Assistance program is putting on a Medicare 101 class that will be available to all five counties in the region.

Frank Kay – The ground breaking for the Civic Center in Maupin will be held September 8, 2018.

Stan Kelsay – The broadband project has had challenges but is now moving forward. Stan stated he believes an agreement has been made, and the project should move forward. It will allow access to high speed fiber optics cable to every structure in Maupin (to those who want it). This opportunity will allow for economic development.

Mary Kramer – Dufur is still in fire recovery. The impact to the ranchers is significant compared to the wheat ranchers. The loss of pasture and fencing is significant. There may be money coming for some recovery, but it will be a huge cost to rebuild fencing and other impacted facilities. There are real concerns for farmers and ranchers who don't have the resources to bounce back.

Terry Moore – The Mosier Creek Valley well system has been on the list in prior years. First work has begun. Orchardists are paying 10% of the cost and the other 90% comes from grant funding. Groundwater intrusion is starting to be taken care of. The project sounds successful.

Kathy Ursprung– Port of The Dalles has seen much interest expressed in the remaining land. The first year of the Gorge Works program wrapped up and received good feedback from the interns. The hope is to transition the program to CGCC eventually, so the Port has been partnering with CGCC this year. The Port received a Rural Development grant to do a feasibility study on the food learning business center, so this is moving forward with more expertise on the project.

Matthew Klebes – The Dog River Pipeline has been recommended for funding from the Oregon Water Resources Department, and the final decision and comment period will be over the next few months. A public/private partnership construction project on a four story mixed-use building went before BOLI and received determination that it is subject to prevailing wage. This decision is being appealed. The Honald Building is under construction and will consist of nine apartment units upstairs. Other parcels have interest developers. The development prompted questions about utility lines downtown. This is an opportunity to look at the downtown as a whole and to determine if upgrades are needed.

Nan Wimmers – Nan noted that there have been many ribbon cuttings for the Chamber, as there are many new businesses happening in The Dalles. The real estate market is also seeing a little more inventory, which will hopefully start easing prices.

Nate Stice – The Mosier deep well project is below the Oregon Water Resources Department funding line. Dog River Pipeline is above the line. There is \$14 million in funding for the biennium, but only \$6.7 million in projects has been recommended. The comment period is through September 21. Fire recovery resources will come in to play under the Hazard Mitigation program. Funds can be used in a variety of ways. Counties or cities interested have to express interest in that particular money pool. Nate has been in conversation with the Oregon Department of State Lands about wetlands. There is frustration around the state about the ability to do streamline permits around wetlands.

OTHER BUSINESS:

No new business.

The next meeting will be December 7.

Meeting Adjourned at 11:20 a.m.

Submitted by Lauren Hernandez, EDC Staff