

WASCO COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Thursday, December 06, 2018

9:30 a.m.

MCEDD Office

515 E 2nd Street, The Dalles, OR 97058

ATTENDANCE

COMMISSION MEMBERS: Stan Kelsay, Mary Kramer, Kathy Ursprung, Nan Wimmers, Keith Nantz, Gary Grossman, Matthew Klebes, Joan Silver

EDC STAFF: Carrie Pipinich, Tatiana Eckhart

GUESTS: Roger Kline (Northern Wasco County PUD), Steve Kramer (Wasco County Commissioner), Nate Stice (Regional Solutions)

ABSENT: Terry Moore, Frank Kay

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Kathy Ursprung called the meeting to order at 9:38 a.m. A round table of introductions took place.

SEPTEMBER 2018 EDC MINUTES:

Motion to approve the September 6, 2018 meeting minutes made by Nan Wimmers. Mary Kramer seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT PROJECTS –2019 PROCESS:

Carrie Pipinich reviewed the memo outlining the shift in the CEP Process for 2019. Carrie informed committee members that EDC staff met with representatives of organizations and city officials in Dufur, The Dalles, Maupin, and Mosier in November to discuss local projects and community priorities. The Dalles area discussion utilized the Community Outreach Team for their meeting while the others were organized in conjunction with the local city.

Carrie reviewed the submitted projects in Attachment A and rankings provided by incorporated communities at local project meetings, noting that meetings were not held in unincorporated cities but project information provided by these communities was included in the packet.

2019 COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT PROJECTS:

The Dalles:

Carrie reviewed the prioritized project descriptions from the City of The Dalles.

1. Dog River Pipeline
2. Campus Housing and Workforce Training Skills Center (Columbia Gorge Community College)
3. Cascadia Internet East Route Interconnection (Q-Life)
4. UGB Expansion
5. Downtown Utilities Undergrounding Feasibility Study

Carrie noted the fifth project included in The Dalles area was the Downtown Utilities Underground Feasibility Study is the first step in developing a new underground utilities plan that would update current infrastructure and opportunities for future development in the downtown core.

Roger Kline stated that the current power system in downtown needs to be upgraded. Rather than replace the current utilities system individually, Roger noted that there was an opportunity for the PUD, the City of The Dalles, and other utility owners to come together. Matthew Klebes stated that there are many potential investments in the downtown area of The Dalles, making this time a good opportunity to look at the system holistically in order to increase efficiency.

Carrie reviewed the top three priority project descriptions from the City of Dufur.

1. Dufur Streetscape Improvements
2. South Basin Water System Improvements
3. Schrieber Cabin Reinking/Re-roofing

Tatiana Eckhart reviewed the top three priority project descriptions from the City of Maupin.

1. Deschutes Rim Clinic “We Care” Campaign
2. South Wasco County Library and Civic Center
3. Kaiser Park

Tatiana reviewed the top three priority project descriptions from the City of Mosier.

1. Mosier Fire Hall/City Hall
2. Mosier Facilities Plan Update and Design of a Tertiary Treatment Wetland
3. Mosier Community School Assessment

Carrie reviewed the two projects submitted from the very rural cities and unincorporated areas.

- Antelope School Community Center
- Treatment Pond Enhancement Project (Wamic Water and Sanitary Authority)

Carrie Pipinich stated that she and EDC Chair Kathy Ursprung developed a draft Priority Ranking document of countywide priority projects for 2019. She noted that this was intended to be a starting point for discussion.

Nan Wimmers asked if the CEP list includes ten ranked projects and the remainder are included as unranked projects as in previous years. Carrie confirmed this.

Joan Silver stated that she felt Dog River Pipeline and the Campus Housing and Workforce Training Skills Center were two such projects that should be moved towards the bottom of the list based on the current funding commitments. Joan suggested that the Deschutes Rim Clinic “We Care” Campaign should be moved to the first ranked project on the list. Joan stated that she thought the UGB Expansion effort should either be moved down or completely off the list due to the lengthy process. Joan thought the Youth Empowerment Shelter Fire Suppression System should be ranked as well.

Kathy stated that the Dog River Pipeline was moved to the top of the list because it needs advocacy in order to secure the last pieces of funding. Steve Kramer noted there might be legal issues for the project that should be considered in ranking as well. Matthew Klebes noted that this is a critical time for the

project and that there could be a strong impact in keeping it ranked high on the list to get it across the finish line. Nate Stice mentioned that the Dog River Pipeline was tabled at the Oregon Water Resources Commission meeting. He encouraged the City of The Dalles to bring a strong coalition to the next Commission meeting to discuss the project.

Carrie Pipinich asked if there was consensus around the room to keep the Dog River Pipeline ranked highly on the list and the group confirmed.

Kathy Ursprung noted she had spoken to Dan Spatz at CGCC about the proposed Skills Center project and he had noted that if an IGA for funding can be worked out with the City and County, the College hopes to hire a project manager by the end of the season. Matthew Klebes noted that the City was supportive of the project and they were working out the details for the IGA. Steve stated that the Skills Center was a “greater good” project. He noted that there is a time frame of January 31, 2019 for completing the IGA for funding and noted that both the City Council and County Commission had approved moving forward and that they were just working out the details. He felt that the skills center project could be moved down the list. Gary Grossman agreed.

Steve suggested moving the Clinic project up on the rankings list. He noted that Maupin is the economic hub of South Wasco County and believes that additional healthcare services would benefit the whole area. Steve did highlight that the Clinic did not pass their operating levy so there was some concern. Keith Nantz asked about financing for clinic operations. Steve responded that the Deschutes Rim Clinic is still operating in the black but come December 31, 2018 some of the staff will be cut. Stan noted that the levy is not large but it is a critical piece of their operations. Gary suggested making the Rim Clinic “We Care” Campaign second on the project ranking list to support their funding search. Stan agreed with Gary on the shift in ranking.

Nan Wimmers proposed that The Dalles UGB Expansion project should move down on the priority list and that The Dalles Downtown Utilities Undergrounding Feasibility Study should be placed on the list. Nan also asked if the Mosier treatment wetland project should be moved up the list. Tatiana noted that it appeared the project was still in the early stages of planning and might be better suited to be higher up on the ranked priority list for 2020 when they are seeking funding for implementation.

Carrie Pipinich asked if there was consensus that the The Dalles Undergrounding Feasibility Study should be placed on the ranked list and the group agreed.

Kathy Ursprung asked if anyone at the meeting had any other proposed adjustments to the list.

Matthew stated that The Dalles UGB Expansion project should be on the list, but the Community Outreach Team itself had ranked the project lower on their priority list because of the long term nature of the effort. Gary commented that he thought it was good to show ongoing support for the UGB Expansion project and thought that the project should remain ranked.

Kathy Ursprung informed the group that there is only about 24.5 acres of industrial land for sale in The Dalles and that there is a lack of employment land overall. Carrie Pipinich noted that there are several planning processes that may impact opportunities around UGB expansion going on currently.

Roger Kline stated that the UGB Expansion project was important because there is capacity in the power availability but there are limited locations for firms today. This will limit the area's growth.

Gary also noted that moving forward it will be important to ask communities how the projects used their rankings to determine impact rather than relying only on discussion about potential impact of the ranking.

Carrie Pipinich asked EDC members if there was general consensus that the UGB Expansion project should remain on the list, regardless of where it was in the final ranking and the group agreed. Carrie also asked whether EDC members thought the Undergrounding Feasibility Study should be on the ranked list and the group agreed

Kathy Ursprung suggested moving the UGB Expansion project down to the 10th ranking and making the Utilities Undergrounding Feasibility Study 8th on the list.

Nan Wimmers moved to approve the priority list as follows and Matthew Klebes seconded the motion. The EDC unanimously agreed on the recommended rankings.

2019 List of Wasco County Top Ten Community Enhancement Projects

1. Dog River Pipeline
2. Deschutes Rim Clinic "We Care" Campaign
3. Mosier Fire Hall/City Hall Project
4. Cascadia Internet East Route Interconnection (Q-Life)
5. Dufur Streetscape Improvements
6. South Wasco County Library and Civic Center
7. South Basin Water System Improvements
8. The Dalles Downtown Utilities Undergrounding Feasibility Study
9. Youth Empowerment Shelter Fire Suppression System
10. The Dalles UGB Expansion

Carrie Pipinich asked the EDC what they thought about the newly adjusted CEP process. Nan Wimmers stated that she liked that local communities prioritized their own projects, as that demonstrated what projects are important to each city.

EDC VACANCIES: POSITIONS 7 AND 8

Carrie Pipinich thanked Dean McAllister and Keith Nantz for their service on the EDC. Carrie stated that with their departure, there are now two position vacancies on the Commission, Positions 7 and 8.

- **Position 7** generally provides representation from dryland crops and/or cattle producers. There were no interest forms submitted for this position.
- **Position 8** has a focus on cherry or other fruit producers. Staff received one interest form for the position from Megan Thompson.

Nan Wimmers made the motion to recommend Megan Thompson for Position 8. Mary Kramer seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

Carrie Pipinich stated that there have been no applications for Position 7 and asked EDC members for support in identifying candidates. She noted that she would conduct additional outreach as well.

Gary Grossman mentioned that representation for dryland crops might be a difficult position to fill due to the devastation caused to wheat farmers in Wasco County as a result of recent wildfires. Gary speculated that many wheat farmers may not be able to make the time commitment that being a member of the EDC requires. Carrie Pipinich stated that technically Position 7 is an at-large position so there was opportunity to look at different representation, but noted she would like to have someone who works in or is connected to the industry given the impact it has on the local economy.

Keith Nantz thanked everyone for his time on the EDC.

EDC STAFF REPORT:

Carrie Pipinich thanked Nate and Regional Solutions for his collaborative efforts in hosting an outreach meeting with the unincorporated communities around the County. Carrie stated that she has been working with Wamic, Tooley, and Pine Grove districts on water and waste water projects. She also noted Maupin has been awarded funds to complete an Economic Opportunity Analysis, and the city has asked MCEDD to participate in the advisory committee for the process. Carrie also noted that the fiber project in Maupin is due to be completed in January.

Stan Kelsay also shared that RDI was conducting a First Impressions workshop in Maupin that looks at the city through the lens of a tourist. Stan also noted his desire to diversify the economy of Maupin. He would like to market Maupin as a place for small businesses in order to attract small business owners to the area.

Carrie Pipinich highlighted the Economic Symposium that MCEDD hosted on November 2, 2018. Carrie notified the EDC that data from the symposium that relates to current economic trends in the Gorge is now available on MCEDD's website.

EDC COMMISSIONER AND STAFF UPDATES:

Mary Kramer –The Hometown Christmas event in Dufur on the weekend of December 8th, 2018. There will be the lighted tractor parade and vendors selling crafts, among other festivities.

Gary Grossman –No new updates.

Nan Wimmers – Nan noted that there have been a lot of ribbon cuttings for the The Dalles Chamber recently. Nan noted she is interested in seeing what happens to appreciation rates of housing in the Gorge as markets around the state soften slightly.

Keith Nantz – Keith noted that erosion issues after the fires this summer are a major concern. Keith also shared that he is moving away from the area to pursue business opportunities but he hopes to make it back to Wasco County eventually.

Steve Kramer –Steve shared that the Shaniko-Bakeoven wildland protection district well has been funded and they are getting equipment purchased and in place. He noted that Mosier received a loan of \$763,000, as well as a \$660,000 grant, for a total of about \$1.5 million for their water system.

Matthew Klebes – The Dalles Airport is doing well this year. There are three buildings that will likely be coming up at the Business Park. The Honald building has begun construction and will hopefully begin renting out apartments in 2019. The City of The Dalles is also kicking off its Local Government Academy next year, a program that provides an overview of local governments in the hope of improving public participation and agency transparency in order to garner more public interest. Matthew also noted that the City of The Dalles currently has a SRTS application in for the Dry Hollow school intersection. Lastly, the City of The Dalles is working on a process to prioritize various brownfields in order to gain funding to address them.

Stan Kelsay –Stan noted that there were no additional updates from Maupin.

Joan Silver–No new updates.

Kathy Ursprung –The Port of the Dalles is working to increase diverse internship opportunities through GorgeWorks for 2019. Kathy also mentioned that the School District is focusing on community building after the school bond was not passed.

Roger Kline –Roger noted that Northern Wasco County PUD has updated its Strategic Plan and explicitly included economic development as part of its focus. Roger noted the PUD has been focusing on reinvestment in its distribution system and upgrades to reflect new technology.

Nate Stice stated that he was excited about the discussions and actions taking place after the wildfires this summer. Nate also noted that Governor Kate Brown has released her state budget for 2019 and there are a few pieces of the budget that are relevant on a regional basis. Part of the budget has allocated \$15 million for the Regional Infrastructure Fund. Furthermore, the budget included a housing package of \$400 million and sets aside \$15 million to provide workforce housing. Nate emphasized that Regional Solutions is heavily focused on rural economic development, and commented that the Governor’s budget also has set aside \$1.1 million for a state broadband office.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Carrie noted that the next meeting will be on January 10, 2019.

Meeting Adjourned at 11:26 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by Tatiana Eckhart, Project Coordinator