

WASCO COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 2019
9:30 a.m.
COLUMBIA GORGE REGIONAL AIRPORT
135 AIRPORT WAY, DALLESPOUR, WA

ATTENDANCE

COMMISSION MEMBERS: Gary Grossman, Joan Silver, Mike Courtney, Mary Kramer, Matthew Klebes, Nan Wimmers, Justin Brock, Terry Moore, Megan Thompson, Bob Krein
EDC STAFF: Carrie Pipinich, Lauren Hernandez
GUESTS: Aryn Rasmussen

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Joan Silver called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. A round of introductions took place.

JUNE 2019 EDC MINUTES

Matthew Klebes noted a small correction needed under Commissioner Updates. Under his report, the name Ted Carpenter should be changed to Todd Carpenter.

Megan Thompson motioned to approve the June 6, 2019, meeting minutes as corrected. Mary Kramer seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

2020 COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT PROJECT PROCESS

Carrie Pipinich explained the Community Enhancement Project Prioritization Process provides an opportunity for the EDC to engage and support community priorities throughout Wasco County. Staff received positive feedback from the local prioritization meetings approach last year and noted that they gave the opportunity for cross-coordination between local entities as well as provided clear communication of local priorities and more efficient use of time. She noted that the intent is to continue with a very similar process this year.

Carrie reviewed the process outlined in the memo and requested feedback from the EDC members.

Nan Wimmers stated the prioritization process was important and noted that the City of Maupin has used it very effectively to move projects forward. Joan added it makes a significant difference to communities if their projects are on the list as they seek funding. Mike Courtney asked why the projects are ranked as a top ten instead of just including all projects submitted on one list. Joan explained the numbered ranking helps when a project seeks funding.

Terry Moore stated he agrees with the process and the direction project prioritization is headed. He suggested revising the staff memo to reflect a broader audience and posting it to be publically available. Carrie explained she has a separate outreach document for the process that explains what the EDC looks at when considering projects, and the value of the process. She noted if the commission thinks revising the memo will be valuable, she welcomes feedback on shifts in the content. Nan stated she would like to see Carrie's time spent on the outreach document. Terry noted that it could be useful in justifying the rankings to have an outward facing memo. Joan

stated that if any member of the commission feels there is something that should be put into an outreach document, that information should be submitted to Carrie in a timely fashion to give her the chance to make revisions. She stated the process should not be dragged out because then the EDC runs the risk of losing the ability to work with small communities who do not meet regularly.

Gary Grossman noted the language for outreach should be reviewed to ensure it did not include a lot of jargon. Terry noted he did not have a single substantive change to the content of the memo but supported Gary's observation about the way the information is phrased. Terry noted there should be clarification about the process regarding local prioritization meetings and how projects received from these meetings are submitted to the EDC. Matthew suggested adding a few sentences under EDC Prioritization to clarify what prioritization means and what the process is. Carrie reviewed the next steps in the process with the EDC for clarity. Terry suggested clarifying that process in the memo, emphasizing the ranking from the EDC happens at the December meeting during conversation about projects.

Carrie asked who the target audience would be for the memo, once revised. Terry replied the EDC could use it as a clear explanation of the process for outside entities using the list, including local communities and funders. Mary Kramer stated there is value in having an internal document because the EDC sees turnover in members. Any opportunity to clarify the process for current and new members should be taken. Carrie noted the memo would be a good technical resource, but she will also continue to use the shorter outreach version, possibly with reference to the longer memo as additional information.

Terry asked for clarification about who is expected to attend local prioritization meetings. Carrie stated the most important meetings for EDC members to attend are those held in the communities they represent. Matthew added the local meetings are for the communities to hold conversations among their partners, so having the entire EDC present would detract from that conversation. Terry suggested Carrie create the meeting schedule and include the EDC members she feels should attend each local meeting. Carrie noted she would include the relevant EDC members in the scheduling process.

2020 MEETING CALENDAR

Carrie Pipinich presented the proposed 2020 EDC meeting schedule. The group asked for calendar invitations to be placed on schedules at the beginning of the year with specific details about location of meetings to come closer to each date. Carrie asked if the group still wanted to meet on September 3rd considering Labor Day in 2020 is not until the 7th. The group agreed to shift the meeting to the 10th. Carrie will update the meeting schedule, and calendar invites will reflect this change.

EDC COMMITTEE + STAFF REPORTS

Carrie Pipinich reviewed highlights from the staff report, including:

1. Staff has been working with local stakeholders to study economic development related response and recovery efforts to natural disasters and economic shocks. Toolkits are being developed which address access to capital and workforce resources in the event of emergency.

2. RARE participant Tatiana Eckhart will continue to work with the EDC's Small Cities Committee and the Fair Board in the coming year.
3. MCEDD's Annual Economic Symposium is Friday, November 1st. Carrie noted the Symposium is a good opportunity for the commission to look at economic indicators and to have a conversation about the group's focus areas. The Symposium celebrates MCEDD's 50th year and will look back at how the economy has shifted as well as look ahead at economic opportunities in the region.

Unincorporated Communities Committee

Stan Kelsay continues to volunteer on the Unincorporated Communities Committee even though he is no longer on the EDC. There is a new staff member at Rural Community Assistance Corporation (RCAC) with systems operations background, which will be beneficial when working with the Wamic Water Sanitary Board. A meeting is scheduled in September to begin the planning for this project. The hope is the Board will choose an engineer to address infiltration issues with Wamic's septic system.

Small Cities Committee

Staff and EDC members have worked on projects to support local cities, including attending the LOC Small Cities Coordination meeting and planning to host an infrastructure planning and funding training with RCAC. Matthew Klebes stated the expansion of the wastewater treatment plant in The Dalles was recently completed. He asked if it would be beneficial for Dave Anderson to speak about the project. Carrie replied it might be an interesting example for discussion, and it could be valuable to talk about his approach to the project.

Carrie reported Dufur is trying to get all of the wastewater pieces in place for the DEQ deadline. The Economic Opportunity Analysis process is complete for Maupin, and the City is looking at next steps. A more complete picture of Maupin's housing needs is needed to get an idea of what is happening in the Urban Growth Boundary.

Broadband Committee

There is no EDC member currently participating in the Broadband Committee. Carrie noted that if any member is interested to please let her know. The last piece of the fiber installation is complete in Maupin. 60% of the community is now hooked up, and more will be hooked up soon. Staff is working closely with the City and Chamber of Commerce to discuss how the community can take advantage of the fiber. The next step is to host training for local businesses in partnership with the Chamber to learn how to leverage this resource.

Open for Business Committee

Staff received feedback from businesses to update the business siting guides. The updates will be posted on the website. Carrie stated she will reach out to committee members to start on outreach tasks.

COMMISSIONER UPDATES

Matthew Klebes– The Recreation building's roof is collapsing. The City is in the process of evaluating if the building can be saved or should be demolished. The building is three storefronts, so the hope is only the bowling alley portion will need to be demoed. Todd Carpenter

received an Oregon Main Street grant to do façade work to restore the building, but there is now a question on how this will proceed. The City is working towards a disposition and development agreement for sale of the blue building as well. Matthew also shared that the Local Government Academy begins soon and has 16 participants, which is up from 11 last year. The next step for the underground utility project is to issue an RFP for a feasibility study. The City put out an RFP for grant writing for the Coalition Assessment grant which grants up to \$600,000 over a three-year period.

Matthew shared that the airport has a new manager, and there have been positive changes. There has been a dramatic increase in activity at the airport, and the airport needs expanded fuel capacity. Aryn Rasmussen stated the airport currently has a 100,000 gallon tank and a 12,000 gallon tank. The airport supports firefighting activity in the region, and running out of fuel in the event of emergency is harmful to the business and the community. Fuel is the limiting factor at the airport, and future development depends on finding a solution to the fuel shortage. The airport's typical funding avenues will not help with this issue. Mike Courtney asked what it will cost to add fuel capacity. Aryn replied that to build a new fuel island and expand capacity will cost approximately \$1 million. Bob Krein asked if there is a private fuel business that can take on a contract with the airport to make sure fuel does not run out. Aryn replied the FBO makes money off of fuel sales, and she has spoken with them about participating in the funding. She noted that private investment can be challenging as airport receives federal funding and part of this agreement is the airport cannot sell airport land. She noted that they are exploring a variety of strategies for this project.

Justin Brock – The PUD is looking at relocating the Tygh Valley substation off of State lands and onto private property. This move would allow for four times the capacity, which could spur additional development in the area. Approximately 7 miles of distribution line has been replaced in the Tygh Valley area which increases resiliency and ability for stable service. This could investment supports potential interconnection to solar and wind development as well. The Northwest PUD territory is The Dalles, Rowena, Dufur, parts of Tygh Valley, and parts of Wamic. Some PUD lines interconnect to and provide redundancy for Wasco Electric lines as well. The PUD is working on installing advanced meter infrastructure. 2000 meters have been installed already and the PUD anticipates completion of the project this fall. The new meters will allow customers to see usage data, allow PUD staff to analyze issues in the system, and provide quick access.

Megan Thompson – The cherry harvest is finished and was successful. Hood River had more issues with rain and damage than The Dalles. The labor force held well. Currently, pears are coming out of Wamic. And, Cascade Cherry Growers/Sage Fruit is looking at building a receiving station in the area. They have had challenges finding a two to three acre lot in The Dalles with truck access and are now looking at the airport as a potential location.

Terry Moore –The joint use facility is Mosier's main project and is being organized by an oversight committee. Terry noted he helps facilitate the committee but is not a voting member. The committee is using funds for an architect, and the project is close to 30% design. The project will cost more than anticipated. The City has \$1 million to put towards the project, but it is estimated the project will now cost \$4 million in total. A decision will need to be made about

how the project will move forward given these budget concerns. Frank Kay met with the committee to offer insights into developing a fundraising campaign that were valuable to the planning efforts. Terry stated the joint use facility will likely be on Mosier's upcoming project priority list.

Mary Kramer – The bond for Dufur School passed and is moving forward with a focus on safety alongside the City's investment in sidewalk improvements around the school site. The Park is also looking for funding to replace or rehab the pool. The school and pool are big economic drivers in Dufur. It is important to address the water and sewer issues so housing can be developed as well. Carrie noted the pool project has been presented to the grant review committee and it was recommended the State Parks Commission fund the project of resurfacing the pool to keep it functional for the next few years.

Bob Krein – Rafting season has wrapped up in Maupin. The season was slower than normal, which was likely weather related. Bob stated the lack of rafting business and the overall fishing decline has hurt Maupin's economy. One challenge is lack of housing. Bob noted that there is a home for rent a few new homes for sale, but he feels the cost of these is high and the target demographic is being missed.

Mike Courtney – Mike thanked the PUD for the \$1 million upgrade to the marina's infrastructure as well as their work on the new substation. Mike stated B&G Investment is building a 14,000 sq/ft building by the Port office and should be finished this fall and that the veterinary clinic expansion has been completed and is open for business. The Port is currently looking for an Executive Assistant for the office as well. Mike noted that the community outreach team leaves for DC in a week and will partially focus on seeking the unallocated economic development funds for the Scenic Area. Mike noted that the UBG expansion is the Port's priority.

Nan Wimmers – Nan stated she has been traveling to Salem frequently this year. The Oregon Association of Realtors is putting on an Opportunity Zones workshop in Central Oregon and will host a variety of speakers from different areas. The goal of the workshop is to make investors aware of the Opportunity Zone tool and its potential impacts. Nan shared that the OAR is working at the State level with Business Oregon to explore an Economic Development Committee. She shared the business siting guides with their staff and noted that they felt a similar kind of resource would be valuable at the State level as well.

Joan Silver – The Senior Center is considering hiring a part-time Assistant for the Director.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned to a tour of Columbia Gorge Regional Airport at 11:27 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by Lauren Hernandez