

WASCO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MEETING
THURSDAY, JANUARY 21, 2010
NORTHERN WASCO PUD MEETING ROOM
9:30 A.M.

ATTENDANCE:

EDC MEMBERS: Andrea Klaas, Carina Schmidt, Dan Durow, Dan Spatz, Donella Polehn, Gay Melvin, Joan Silver, Keith Mobley, Mark Cherniack, Frank Kay

STAFF:

Amanda Remington, Jessica Metta, Pat Hoffman

GUESTS:

Kathleen Fitzpatrick (Main Street Mosier); Kate Merrick (Mosier Watershed Council); Dennis Ross (Mayor, City of Maupin); Todd Cornett (Wasco County Planning); Sherry Holliday (Wasco County Commissioner); Bill Lennox (Wasco County Commissioner); Dan Ericksen (Wasco County Commissioner); Jason Vaillancourt (Palomar Pipeline Team); Michael Burke (Palomar); Nora Donovan (Port and City of The Dalles); Monica Reid (Mosier Middle School); Andrea Rogers (City of Mosier)

CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Silver called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. A quorum was present.

SEPTEMBER 17, 2009 MINUTES:

Keith Mobley moved to approve the 9/17/2009 minutes as presented. Mark Cherniack seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

MOSIER PRESENTATION:

As time ran out for the bus tour of communities in Wasco County on November 12th, Mosier was invited to make a presentation at today's meeting. The purpose of the presentation is for the WEDC members to hear of the needs of the community and learn how it can grow economically. Kate Merrick, Mosier Watershed Council, reported on the availability and decline of ground water in Mosier. The water table in Mosier has declined over 200 feet in the last couple of years. The Mosier Watershed Council took the lead in looking for funding for planning and implementation of a U.S Geological Survey study with a final survey completed November 2009. The survey was funded with \$57,000 (US Forest Service); \$20,000 (MCEDD); \$7,000 (Grower monies); \$230,000 (Mosier) and US Geological Survey provided the match needed. Well construction is the probable cause of the decline (not the use of water). There is no easy solution to the problem. Leaky well systems, wells co-mingling and difficulty in making repairs are obstacles to overcome. One solution may be to do nothing at all and hope it levels out at some level. This is not the preferred option as it may have an impact on growers. Abandonment means plugging up problem wells but this is an expensive alternative. It may cost up to \$75,000 per well to do in-well logging of walls. At the present time the Mosier Watershed Council is focusing on one well while testing of multiple wells is being done. Grants to do the work are being submitted, however this type of problem does not show an obvious environmental impact so grants are difficult to

obtain from regular sources. Commissioner Spatz suggested USDA Rural Development as a potential funding source.

Monica Reid presented the Mosier Middle School Project. Currently Mosier School is a K-6 grade charter school. The school is also used as the community center. The number one desire of the people of Mosier as expressed in the Mainstreet Mosier survey is to add grades 7 and 8 to the school. Students of those grades now attend The Dalles Middle School which has a capacity of 600 students but has 680 students enrolled. The addition of the two grades is at the feasibility stage. Four sites are being considered. An architect, GGL/BRB, has been selected. There has been some difficulty in raising money for the study.

The school architects wanted to see the Downtown Plan. A Citizen Action Committee is getting together to help with the Downtown Revitalization Plan and a goal setting session will be held in March. Oregon Solutions is an active part of the process. Union Pacific Railroad land acquisition is proceeding for development of the bike/ped bridge. Partnerships with ODOT and UPRR are being cultivated.

Andrea Rogers, Mayor of Mosier, reported the Wastewater Treatment Plant has been completed. The Safety Committee has completed a Safety and Code Plan. Two new housing developments are in process: one has been completed and one has not. It is important to get them completed as the City needs the System Development Charge fees they will generate. The current population of Mosier is 485 people. Future plans include the development of a taxing fire district. It will be on the May ballot. The goal for the new fire district would be to combine the two current fire districts.

PLANNING DEPARTMENT PRIORITIES:

Todd Cornett, Wasco County Planning Director, presented possible long range planning projects to be prioritized by the Commission:

- 1.) The Dalles Urban Growth Boundary Expansion- They have a grant now to do the cultural study which is 18 months worth of work, but there is other work that can be done in the interim.
- 2.) Expand A-1 "Go-Below" Area (Agricultural Lot Size) –current Exclusive Farm Use zone has 160-acre lot minimum size. This would allow lots to drop to 40 acres if they can prove they can still meet the ag income test by farming higher value crops such as cherries or grapes. Larger parcels are needed mostly for wheat and other grains. Currently landowners have the ability to drop to 80 acres.
- 3.) Commercial Events Ordinance –these are now allowed in the Exclusive Farm Use zone so the ordinance could add them to other zones.
- 4.) Destination Resort II – Map & Ordinance Adoption –the destination resort work is a little dead now because of the secondary housing market problems and the current state rules that don't allow large scale resorts. State is evaluating the rules now.
- 5.) Pine Grove Rural Community
- 6.) Pine Hollow Rural Community

- 7.) Walters Corner Rural Community –the above three would develop planning for the whole community, including zoning based on desires of the communities.
- 8.) Mosier UGB Expansion –this is a placeholder for now.

There was much discussion on the Go-Below work with strong opinions on whether smaller lots should be allowed based on the need to protect farm land. Ultimately, the WEDC decided on the order above as their preference in prioritizing the projects.

Andrea Klaas made a motion to accept the above prioritized list of projects in the order presented. Keith Mobley seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

PALOMAR PRESENTATION:

Mike Burke and Jason Vaillancourt with Palomar reported the draft EIS is being prepared and should be finished by early February. A mitigation package is part of the DEIS. Warm Springs negotiations are going well and the route through the reservation is the most likely route now. The Pipeline Team is hopeful a conditional certificate will be available in October/November and then they'll seek permits. At this point, letters of support are not needed. The Pipeline Team will send information about the proposed route, where to send letters, etc. to Jessica to help her prepare a letter of support when it is time for letters to be received.

EDC TOUR AND PROJECT DISCUSSION:

Notes of the EDC Tour activities were presented. Cities included in the tour included: Shaniko, Pine Grove, Maupin, Wamic, Pine Hollow, and Tygh Valley. Dufur and Mosier will be on the next tour list. Dufur and Mosier have been in contact with the EDC staff. Chairman Silver noted that probably as a result of the tour some projects will be submitted for the Needs and Issues list. Chairman Silver noted that the rural entities need very basic infrastructure. Basically water is the biggest need and is the key to everything. Some ideas for assisting the communities include: hosting workshops, bringing people into the communities, helping businesses make it through the government red tape, helping businesses get funding from USDA/ OR Biz, how to develop realism and move step by step to achieve long term goals, and help to provide a clearer understanding of using Oregon water resources. In other words, what could the EDC organize to bring to the communities as a result of the tour and to serve the entire county? The EDC members stated they would like the tours to continue as it was enlightening to see the needs of the communities.

THE DALLES PUB TALK:

The Dalles Pub Talk was held November 17th. With over 70 participants it was the largest Pub Talk ever held in the Gorge. Presentations were given by Lee Weinstein, Imperial Fiber Company and WindPaddle Sails.

STAFF REPORT:

(See staff report by Jessica Metta prepared January 15, 2010)

Staff report included: **EDC Projects:** Needs and Issues Process, Available Industrial Land Inventory, The Dalles Pub Talk, Discovery Center OR Solutions update.

Information Local/Regional: Columbia Gorge Transportation Summit, Gorge Tech

Alliance update, MCEDD partners with 2010 Census, CGCC project included in CEDS, Oregon Investment Board, OR Connections, CGBREZ.

REGIONAL REPORTS:

The Commissioners provided updates on economic development initiatives throughout the County. Besides those submitted beforehand electronically, updates included: The Port has had many contacts by people preparing for the locks being closed Dec 2010 through May 2011. The Queen of the West wants to stop in The Dalles this year. CGCC has \$8 million from the state for their workforce training center and needs to match that amount. The Dalles is working on new market tax credits.

NEW BUSINESS:

Bill Lennox suggested to the EDC that we consider simple ways we can help the economy and work together, such as considering how our communities and county looks to visitors and working to improve it. Nora Donovan reported that the Ford Family Leadership group took on the project of improving the commercial kitchen at the fairgrounds. Other reports included that the marine terminal in-water work should happen in November 2010 and that a parks and rec grant has been received for Hunt Park improvements but that matching funds are needed.

FUTURE EVENTS AND MEETINGS:

February 18, 2010: Presentation of Needs and Issues Projects
March 18, 2010: Prioritization of Needs and Issues Projects
April 22, 2010: Gorge Transportation Summit, White Salmon
April 27, 2010: Gorge Angel Conference, Hood River
May 22-27, 2010: Jessica to attend AWEA Conference in Dallas, Texas

ADJOURNMENT: Meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

NEXT MEETING: FEBRUARY 18, 2010, Dufur City Hall, 9:45 am

*Respectfully submitted,
Pat Hoffman, MCEDD Office Administrator*