

WASCO COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Thursday, May 16, 2013
Northern Wasco County PUD
2345 River Road, The Dalles, OR

ATTENDANCE

COMMISSION MEMBERS: Chair Joan Silver, Andrea Klaas, Mary Kramer, Dan Durow, Frank Kay, Donella Polehn, and Michael Zingg

GUESTS: Annette Liebe (RSC), John Roberts (Wasco County Planning)

EDC STAFF: Amanda Hoey and Sherry Bohn

CALL TO ORDER: Meeting called to order at 10:00 am.

APPROVAL OF APRIL 18, 2013 MINUTES: Frank Kay moved to accept the April 2013 minutes as presented. Donella Polehn seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

EDC STAFF REPORT:

Amanda Hoey presented the EDC staff report highlighting the following:

Needs and Issues Project Assistance: Staff assistance was primarily provided for smaller jurisdictions and priority projects listed on our Needs and Issues list.

- Bike Hub (#7 Infrastructure): Staff provided information about the Bikes Belong Community Partnership Grant to the City of Mosier. Information on the funding source was also provided to the CGCC Small Business Development Center as the SBDC was working on a project with downtown The Dalles to increase bike parking options.
- Barlow/Wamic Water (#10 Technical Assistance): The EDC's last meeting brought together state agency leads to identify potential resources to support Barlow and Wamic. Staff will continue to follow-up with support for this project.

Discussion: Annette Liebe reported that she had identified contacts with four agencies for this project and that she was in the process of setting up a conference call. Annette stated that she was targeting the 29th or 30th of May for the call.

- Port Wetland Regulatory Streamlining (#2 Technical Assistance): Staff attended the first wetland technical advisory meeting in April. The role of the technical advisory committee is to guide and inform the project scope of work. A second meeting is planned in June following decision by the Environmental Protection Agency about a Wetland Program Development Grant applied for by the Port.
- Room to Read Library Expansion (#8 Technical Assistance): Staff participated in the library expansion committee as they pursue fundraising efforts for the Room to Read project.
- Staff met with Tyler Stone and Nolan Young to discuss anticipated budget impacts and requests. We anticipate \$35,000 to support EDC work. EDC chair Joan Silver and staff met to discuss modifications to our work to correspond to the budget, which will be discussed during the EDC meeting.
- Investing in Manufacturing Communities Partnership (IMCP): Staff has been engaged in concept development for a potential response to the Economic Development Administration's solicitation for IMCP grants which will provide \$200,000 for development of implementation strategies. These funds are "to get ready" for the next set of funding- \$25

million. We are in concept development stage, with applications due June 13, 2013. The opportunity could provide significant economic advantage for local businesses and competitive advantage to Wasco County and the bi-state region for business development. Amanda stated that the industries focused on were high tech UAV and value added food products and included partnerships with education.

Discussion: Mary Kramer asked if Oregon State University was at the table. Amanda reported that they are included in the conversation.

BUDGET AND ACTION PLAN:

Amanda Hoey reported that the EDC submitted its annual budget request to maintain staffing for the Commission. She reported that she anticipates a reduction in funding for Fiscal Year 2014 to \$35,000. She stated that long term, the EDC needs to seek opportunities to diversify the EDC's funding to reduce dependence on funds managed through Wasco County. Short term, the EDC needs to work with the proposed fund allocation to effectively deliver on our scope of work and make appropriate revisions to lessen impacts on staffing, which could include a revised needs and issues process, committee assignments and stronger role for EDC members.

Amanda stated that the budget discussion aligns well with the timeline for the EDC's update for its strategic action plan. The action plan is focused around getting the County ready for economic development opportunities, pursuing those opportunities and establishing the primary purpose, focus and direction for the EDC. Staff proposes to begin this process in June. The action plan will provide further direction for the EDC efforts.

Amanda presented the following revisions she anticipated to accommodate reduced funding:

1. Scale back the Needs and Issues process. Focus on community readiness and projects the EDC can support through implementation or fundraising.
2. Work with EDC members on their areas of interest to leverage staff capacity.
3. Reduce number of meetings with the elimination of an August, December and January meetings. These are very busy seasons already for staff and EDC members. December and January can be difficult travel months due to weather.

Discussion: Joan Silver presented a historical overview of the needs and issues process. She stated that the process began at the state but is no longer mandated which gives the EDC flexibility to come up with a name that better reflects the process and list. Frank Kay inquired if the county commission could be approached again for restoration of full funding. Amanda Hoey explained the history of the funding and the budgetary constraints facing the County. Mike Zingg inquired about the amount of staff hours for Wasco County needs and issues. Frank Kay stated that he thought the process was a good way for entities outside The Dalles to get projects recognized. Annette Liebe stated that process allow for the Regional Solutions team the ability to help leverage the projects.

Andrea Klaas stated there might be a possibility of using the county's fund as a match for state Port Marketing and Planning funds in an ability to leverage more funds. Annette Liebe asked if the Port of The Dalles planned to apply for those funds for any of their projects. Andrea noted it is still under consideration.

Frank Kay reported on the Wasco Electric Co-op grant opportunity.

Joan Silver stated that, because the commission functions as an advisory board to the county commission, the manner of fund acceptance would have to be clarified if the Wasco EDC could receive money directly. Dan Durow noted these could go directly through MCEDD for the EDC.

Joan Silver stated that the commission needed to clarify its effective role with the County and how staff should accomplish the EDC goals. This will be partially accomplished through the action plan.

Mary Kramer asked for more clarification about proposed revisions to the needs and issue process. Amanda Hoey stated that the commission needed to show that the needs and issues process and projects are valuable and that the projects are able to be completed. She stated that the list itself is valuable for seeking outside funding, but the primary purpose is to support completion of projects. Mike Zingg stated that needs and issues should be based on the ability to support and deliver family wages level jobs. Dan Durow agreed that job creation was important but the need for infrastructure cannot be separated as the infrastructure directly contributes to the ability for a business to operate. Dan Durow stated that there was a need to save jobs that are already there and to protect the investment already made. Joan Silver stated that there was a need to weigh infrastructure projects against its potential of building economic development. She stated that there is no cohesive entity except the WCEDC to analyze infrastructure. Andrea Klaas reviewed the debate between economic development and community facilities. She stated that the commission should be set up as an advisory board but is project focused and/or a community facility voice.

Joan Silver stated that the needs and issues application could be tailored for long term results and who would use the process.

Amanda Hoey stated that there was a need for feedback on long and short term projects. Joan Silver stated that it should be a new process, a new name and that there was a need for a change of focus. Andrea Klaas stated that there was a need for a pre-application and then only invite those that fit the criteria to apply. Frank Kay stated that there was need to keep in mind the level of expertise available in some of the smaller entities.

Joan Silver stated that staff would draft a document on this topic for review and discussion at the next meeting.

COMMITTEE UPDATES:

Pine Hollow Reservoir – Amanda Hoey reported that Steve Kramer noted that the bathrooms will be open for the next season. She stated that the community continues to struggle with the long term management but Commissioner Kramer is a strong supporter. The long term solution must be community driven, however.

Wasco County GIS Long Term Funding – John Roberts explained the history of the Wasco County GIS update to provide additional functionality and access for users seeking to site a business in the County. He stated that it is up and running and getting good feedback. He stated that there had been a “soft” request to see if users would pay in

order to help sustain. The government entities participating have provided no indication that they would not continue, but the initial response from private individuals and businesses was that this was a county function.

Discussion: Annette Liebe suggested connecting with the Water Resources Department to discuss a planning grant. She noted, with the elimination of the water master admin, getting the water master info online may help alleviate other issues Andrea Klaas reiterated that as an opportunity, noting the ease in working with the state water resources map. She noted if the information could be coordinated through the Wasco County GIS, it removes one additional place people have to go to research.

John Roberts shared the information from the GIS director indicating the cost to maintain the system was around \$10,000 to \$20,000, about 0.2FTE for current system and 0.4 FTE with "bells and whistles."

Andrea suggested a student internship program

Joan Silver suggested a role for the EDC in outreach

Dan Durow discussed opportunities for short term grant applications to Google through their community giving program.

Mary Kramer inquired as to the funds allocated to The Dalles Main Street position and if those were short term or long term. If short term, could they be allocated next year to GIS

Amanda noted a role for the EDC in supporting development of grant applications, demonstrating the value of the GIS system and advocating for continued funding by current users.

Amanda Hoey will get in touch with Tyler Stone to determine how the County would like the EDC to proceed in support.

CALENDAR/SCHEDULE:

Amanda Hoey presented the proposed FY 2014 calendar and noted that there was also one last FY 13 meeting scheduled for June 20, 2013.

Donella Polehn moved to approve the proposed FY 2014 calendar as presented. Mike Zingg seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

COMMISSION MEMBER REGIONAL UPDATES:

- Mary Kramer reported that Ridgefield Plumbing's new building was up and running.
- Donella Polehn noted that cherry harvest was right around the corner and that the cherries were looking good. She invited everyone to The Dalles Chamber's Business After Hours at their farm on tonight from 5:00 – 7:00 where they will be show casing their new machinery. She also reported that beauty school would be closing in September.

- Dan Durow reported that Riverfront trail is on track and that there will be a fence installed along the nature area. The Dalles Urban Renewal board moved forward with the agreement for the hotel. Demolition is scheduled to begin inside with the outside removed last. He stated that the artifact dig found borderline significance so they plan to build on top.
- Annette Liebe reported that the Department of State lands had issued a wetlands permit for Wal-Mart and that she was not aware of an appeal. Annette stated that she had received a phone call from Hood River County Commissioner Meyer stating that the owner of Dirt Hugger had informed him that it would be easier to move to Washington. She stated that the problem was that compost needed to be on industrial land by Oregon state law.
- Frank Kay announced that RiverFest was scheduled for two days over the Memorial Day weekend. He stated that the Maupin Economic Development Action Plan was being implemented. He reported that there was a \$6,000 contract position for a Business Facilitator available. He also reported that Cycling Maupin wants to add to rafting and fishing in the area and has been meeting with Sherman County to discuss a project.
- Andrea Klaas reported that the North Chenoweth project was quickly moving forward with a ground breaking scheduled for the end of July. She also reported that the cost keeps climbing. She stated that they are moving forward with the wetland mitigation and that the Port of The Dalles is concerned about the increased vacancies downtown. She stated that they are trying to find a way to work the chamber to development marketing. Andrea handed out a list of the top property tax payers in Wasco County.
- Mike Zingg reported that construction was improving. He stated that there was a lot of building taking place in Hood River. He also informed the commission he now lives in The Dalles and inquired if his position needed to be reevaluated to ensure Mosier was represented on the Commission.
- John Roberts reported that the planning department had been keeping busy dealing with appeals. He reported that What The Fest had been approved for a 5000 person attendance but it was being appealed. John also reported that the Brush Canyon wind proposal was close but there were questions about who would purchase the power. He reported that PGE was putting in a 40 acre substation and that the Cascade Crossing project was on the short list.
- Joan Silver reported that at the Government Affairs Meeting it was announced that one of the bonded debts for the Discovery Center would be paid off in 2017 and the other in 2019. They are now operating in the black. She reported that there are a number of cruise ships visiting and that the Chamber is doing a great job and having fun greeting them. Joan also reported that the Main Street board is continuing and the Maupin retirement center is full

Meeting Adjourned at 12:05 PM

Submitted by Sherry Bohn, EDC Staff