

WASCO COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2015
9:30am to 12pm
Mosier Creek Terrace
501 East 2nd Street, Mosier, OR

ATTENDANCE

COMMISSION MEMBERS: Joan Silver, Fred Justesen, Kathy Ursprung, Stan Kelsay, Daniel Hunter and Nan Wimmers

GUESTS: Mark Heystek, Kathy Fitzpatrick, Jim Appleton, Scott Hege, Arlene Burns, Brian Schimel, Shilah Olson, Abby Forest

EDC STAFF: Carrie Pipinich and Sherry Bohn

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Joan Silver called the meeting to order at 9:33 am. There was a quorum present. A round the room of introductions took place.

Brian Schimel, Executive Director/Principal for the Mosier Community School reported on, its accomplishments, partnerships with the community and focus. He noted they are a charter school in North Wasco County School District. He also reported that they were looking at implementing the International Baccalaureate program.

Jim Appleton reported on the Mosier Fire District's supported area, mission, and the work being done to build a fire station and the tactical issues around that location. They are exploring the Union Pacific property as a potential site and developing a cooperative project with City Hall.

Shilah Olson from Wasco County Soil & Water Conservation District reported on the work being done on Mosier's comingling well challenges. She reported that the conservation district has approximately \$150,000 to study wells, and that the district has helped to secured \$1 million from state of Oregon to help fix wells after they have been identified as comingling. Shilah noted that there are 150 wells in the zone, so additional resources will be sought.

Kathy Fitzpatrick from the City of Mosier reported on the work being done on the water system study with a grant from IFA, the transportation challenges that have led them to develop a streetscape concept for Highway 30 through their downtown with a PSU Masters in Urban and Regional Planning team. She reported that Mosier has received TGM funding and is now working with ODOT to develop a transportation system plan. Kathy reported on the progress of the Gorge Hubs project and noted that they were looking for funding to begin the implementation phase. She reported that they would likely apply for a Connect Oregon grant for funding to develop the hubs. Kathy also reported on Mosier's participation in the Rural Tourism studio.

Joan Silver thanked all of Mosier representatives and commended them for the great work happening in the community.

MINUTES OF JUNE 18, 2015

Kathy Ursprung moved to approve the June 18, 2015 Wasco County Economic Development Commission minutes as presented. Fred Justensen seconded the motion. Motion passed with one abstention – Daniel Hunter.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Wamic – Joan Silver reported that she, Greg Johnson and staff have been working with the Wamic Water & Sanitary Authority to address their upcoming system needs. Joan reported that IFA staff were invited to meet with the Wamic Water & Sanitary Authority Board to discuss potential funding opportunities, and subsequently worked with WWSA to submit an initial letter of interest for the OHA Safe Drinking Water Planning Grant Program, which was followed by a full letter of interest at OHA's request. She also reported that the committee met with the WWSA Board in July, along with a representative of the Rural Community Assistance Corporation, to discuss next steps for the system and learn about its current state. Joan reported that the WWSA board will also host an SDAO circuit rider to provide technical assistance related to beginning to update their system assessment study. She also stated that she would contact Nancy, the WWSA secretary and bookkeeper, in order to follow up with the offer to help with the accounting system changes needed in order to move ahead. Nan Wimmers asked if it was a new or expansion of the existing water system. Carrie Pipinich noted it they were completing studies of their existing water system to better understand potential redevelopment needs for the aging infrastructure.

Dufur - Carrie Pipinich presented an update reporting that the Committee is focused on Dufur's water system needs. She reported that EDC Commissioners Mary Kramer and Kathy Ursprung are leading the project with support from staff. She stated that the group is working with Mayor Wallace in addressing pressing issues related to their artesian well pressure in addition to gathering information needed to begin pursuing the broader system assessments.

Open For Business – Kathy Ursprung reported that the conversations had centered on exploration of two potential initial projects. One - community members have identified web presence as vital to supporting community and economic development throughout the County, but capacity is challenging. Kathy reported that the committee is conducting outreach around the County to determine demand for this project. Two - the committee is gathering input on opportunities to coordinate economic development efforts related to business recruitment, retention, and expansion around the County to ensure that gaps are identified and duplicate services are avoided.

Broadband - Carrie Pipinich reported that the results of the Broadband Demand Survey have been presented at three South Wasco Alliance meetings in Wamic, Shaniko, and Antelope in addition to the Regional Solutions Advisory Committee. She is currently working with the Committee to gather information on assets available throughout the county as well as business and community institution demand for broadband. This information will be shared with internet service providers after it is completed in order to support development of a business case, or identification of the funding gaps to address, in order to foster investment in South Wasco County.

Carrie reported on the Connect America funds, with over \$600,000 per year for the next 6 years coming to CenturyLink and into Wasco County for rural broadband access. Carrie

also noted that she has been working with members of the North Central Regional Solutions team to provide support because broadband access is one of the top priorities for our region, and funded with \$1.2 million, with approximately \$400,000 focused on a South Wasco County project. She continues to work with the project proponents, private internet service providers, and other public funding sources to identify leverage opportunities that might increase the reach of these projects. Stan noted that Q-Life is looking at this investment to get fiber access into Maupin. Scott Hege clarified that QLife had not officially approved anything but they are exploring feasibility.

COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT PROCESS REVIEW

Carrie Pipinich reported that annually the EDC gathers information about projects of importance to the County and the communities in it. She stated that these projects are presented and then prioritized based on agreed upon criteria. Carrie reported that during the EDC's 2015 Community Enhancement Project process and broader conversations around the EDC's role update, the EDC expressed interest in implementing changes to this process during the 2016 cycle. She presented the following potential changes for discussion to allow the process to be approved by the EDC in December.

- Incorporating an additional element into the process related to identifying key community projects to provide technical assistance to the project owners. Carrie stated that this would occur in addition to the ranking and by the consensus of the EDC Commissioners. Criteria for identifying these projects would be developed with input from the EDC. The EDC agreed that this approach was still one they were interested in utilizing moving forward.
- Recognizing that the project ranking done individually by each Commissioner provides an objective way to prioritize projects as a group that process could/would be utilized as a starting point for EDC conversation around the finalization of the project list rankings. Carrie stated that this would allow projects that the EDC feels should be highlighted that do not necessarily fit squarely into the criteria to be prioritized. The group agreed that this flexibility for conversation was important to accurately reflecting County priorities.
- With the change in format related to the EDC meetings hosting conversations with project owners throughout the year Carrie asked if a single meeting with brief project presentations was still necessary. Carrie suggested that conversations on projects should now happen in the communities throughout the year. She stated that given that this change is still in process, should the EDC consider removing the presentation day this year, or it should it wait until next year to incorporate the change. Carrie stated that this would allow a full calendar year to implement the new format in the different communities around the County.

Discussion: Kathy Ursprung suggested a more detailed guideline for Agora input, and that there should be an opportunity for additional support getting projects online. Carrie confirmed that there are clear guidelines on requirements for information and assistance is available. Joan Silver suggested a question "Are you in need of technical assistance" vs just a check mark. She stressed that the EDC did not want to be misleading by implying that they could give technical assistance just by someone asking for it and requested that the form be worded carefully if it is

included. Kathy noted that she felt it was important to incorporate some flexibility as it can be challenging to accurately measure community impact with the criteria alone. The group consensus was that there is still a need for a project presentation meeting this year, as hearing from and asking questions of project proponents is helpful in determining where a project is in its process.

MEETING TIME

Carrie Pipinich reported that several EDC members have expressed challenges with the EDC meeting time and date. She initiated a poll to determine if a change to timing would support additional attendance and suggested the following two alternatives.

- First Thursday Morning 9:30am to 12pm time
- First Monday afternoon 3pm to 5:30

Consensus was for the first Thursday morning at 9:30

STAFF REPORT

Carrie Pipinich presented the WCEDC staff report highlighting the following:

Investing in Manufacturing Communities Partnership (IMCP)

The Pacific Northwest Manufacturing Partnership (PNMP) was awarded an IMCP Phase II designation this spring. This will give priority on federal application with participating agencies, including USDA. This could have a significant impact on Wasco County projects. Staff submitted a letter of support from the EDC for the project in March, and MCEDD is engaged in conversations around opportunities that could arise as a result.

Pine Hollow Boat Ramp:

Wasco County, Regional Solutions, and the SWA are all working to identify a solution to the Pine Hollow boat ramp challenges. A meeting was hosted in August to identify opportunities to move the project forward.

Activities of Interest to the EDC

Through work with the Columbia Gorge Cider Society, staff supported the Northwest Agricultural Business Center in bringing their Cider Principles & Practice class to Columbia Gorge Community College. The class toured Mosier Cider Rack & Cloth as part of their activities. Through this effort, staff also hosted an outreach meeting with local cideries and the Northwest Cider Association.

MCEDD worked with the Columbia Gorge Winegrowers Association to submit two grant applications to support developing marketing tools to support Gorge Wine Country this summer. One to the Rural Business Development Grant program through USDA focused on developing a marketing strategy and hosting marketing trainings for wineries and other beverage businesses. And an additional project submitted to Travel Oregon's new Wine Country License Plate Matching Grant Program to develop itineraries featuring local wineries, lodging, and restaurant partners for off season visits.

COMMISSIONER REPORTS:

Kathy Ursprung reported that The Port of The Dalles still has land available for businesses. She stated that the port has 30 acres with some already developed and some

poised for development. Kathy reported that the wet land mitigation application should be submitted later this year.

Fred Justensen reported the he had attended the Taste of the Old West and it seemed like a successful event. Fred reported that Wamic Days was also successful and that there is a lot of activity going on in rural Oregon.

Daniel Hunter reported on the Enterprise Zone and Oregon Tax Incentives Workshop scheduled for Wednesday, October 7th. He requested RSVPs from anyone interested in attending.

Stan Kelsay reported on the Web Works: Anywhere! Forum scheduled for November 12th from 6pm to 8 pm in Maupin. He stated that the forum will highlight local businesses and organizations that utilize broadband to support their success.

Nan Wimmers reported that local real estate activity is busy, and that it is currently a sellers' market.

Joan Silver reported that there are two commissioner terms expiring in December. She stated that Rick Leibowitz is new SBDC director. Joan reported that Senior Medicare Counseling is now available thru the Senior Center.

Meeting Adjourn at 11:45am.

Submitted by Sherry Bohn, EDC Staff