

WASCO COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Thursday, September 19, 2013

The Dalles-Wasco county Library Meeting Room

722 Court Street, The Dalles

ATTENDANCE

COMMISSION MEMBERS: Chair - Joan Silver, Mary Kramer, Dan Durow, Frank Kay, Fred Justesen, Andrea Klaas, Kristin Chatfield, Michael Zingg and Jeff Renard.

GUESTS: Scott Hege (Wasco County Commissioner), John Roberts (Wasco County Planning), Keith Mobley (Qlife), Corliss Marsh (Library Expansion Committee Chair), Darcy Nothnagle (Google), Carrie Pipinich (MCEDD), Maggie Hanna (MCEDD)

EDC STAFF: Amanda Hoey and Sherry Bohn

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Joan Silver called the meeting called to order at 10:02 am. Round table introductions took place. Joan Silver introduced new commission member Kristin Chatfield and welcomed her to the EDC.

WELCOME FROM CORLISS MARSH – “ROOM to READ”:

Corliss March, Library Expansion Committee Chair, presented the history of the expansion project and outlined the costs of \$1.2 million. This is a project listed on the Wasco County EDC Needs and Issues list. She stated that the committee needed to raise \$200,000 from local contributions in order to make successful grant applications for the remaining dollars. Corliss reported that a local family had offered \$100,000 in challenge funding the committee can raise the other \$100,000. She reported that the committee had raised \$75,000 of that \$100,000. She handed out the “Room to Read” brochure and contribution envelopes.

APPROVAL OF JULY 18, 2013 MINUTES:

Frank Kay moved to accept the July 18, 2013 minutes as presented. Andrea Klaas seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

QLIFE PRESENTATION – Keith Mobley and Carrie Pipinich:

Keith Mobley presented a historical overview and strategic priorities for Qlife. Keith stated that Qlife is revenue positive and will soon be debt free. He stated that Qlife will soon have revenue available for further development and bandwidth. Keith reported that the Qlife strategic plan was last updated in 2002. Qlife was recently one of eight cities selected to receive assistance from the National Telecommunication & Information Administration in order to update their strategic plan. The plan was adopted by the QLife board in May 2013. It was then taken to the city of The Dalles and Wasco County where it was also adopted. Keith discussed Qlife’s strategies and tactics and highlighted the following:

- 1.d. Assist fruit growers and other local businesses to adopt broadband enabled strategies to compete in global markets.
- 3.c. Initiate a pilot program to test assumptions and develop best practices for using broadband to improve healthcare and/or educational outcomes.

Carrie Pipinich highlighted the following:

- 2.b. Deploy an effective public awareness and outreach campaign that articulates broadband benefits and values.

She discussed newly developed outreach materials for various Washington counties involved with the Local Technology Broadband Planning team.

Discussion: Amanda Hoey asked what the commission could do to support Qlife. Keith asked for ideas on where to focus. Andrea Klaas stated that the focus should be on I.e because all communities focus on “quality of life”. She stated that The Dalles and Wasco County should focus on marketing themselves as a “connected community” because broadband = quality of life. Andrea stated that there needed to be work done on the middle mile, promotion of reliability and that we needed to be better than average. Frank Kay stated that Maupin is building a new library/city hall and would like to see it pushed as a “super hot spot” and would like to see some collaboration. Joan Silver suggested committee members suggest additional members to the subcommittee.

Additionally, Keith Mobley reported that OPB is visiting all 36 counties promoting North West News Network. He also handed out the attached print out of a power point supporting OPB in Oregon.

GOOGLE PRESENTATION – Darcy Nothnagle:

Darcy Nothnagle provided a handout as an overview to the Google facility in The Dalles. She reported that Google currently has 80 full time jobs and that 80 percent of them live in the gorge. She also reported that Google has awarded more than \$777,000 in grants and hardware to local nonprofits and schools. Darcy reported that Google employees are active volunteers in the community. She reported that, in partnership with the City of the Dalles, Google funded the infrastructure for a free WiFi network and has funded \$180,000 since 2011 for the network. She reported that Google is committed to building interest in STEM and supports green initiatives and operations.

Discussion: Joan Silver stated that there needs to be a way that downtown The Dalles businesses are more aware of Google’s employment investment. John Roberts asked how many data centers Google has in the US and how does The Dalles facility rank. Darcy stated that The Dalles was the first and that it ranks right in the middle in size and investment. She stated that there are currently 7 in the US, two of which have recently expanded.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

- Industrial Lands – Dan Durow reported that the committee’s discussions ranked destination resorts as a low priority. A significant amount of work has already been done and at this time there is not a high demand. Discussion focused on eventually folding it into a regular update process. Amanda Hoey reported that the destination resort discussion lead the task force to take a closer look at the economic impact of events in the County. She stated EDC staff asked for support from the the University of Oregon which is willing to dedicate assistance this year through their Economic Honors class. Dan reported that the committee discussed next steps related to agricultural zoning. The state DLCD representative at the meeting plans to prepare a white paper on this topic. The committee also discussed adding Commercial lands to the Industrial Land review and how and when to get rural communities involved. Significant work was completed by the Planning and GIS

Departments with the EDC in 2011 relative to industrial lands. This will be updated and County Planning is taking the lead in obtaining information from GIS on commercial lands. Dan reported that it was discussed that there needed to be a visioning process gone through with the smaller rural communities to allow for better focus. On this issue, the EDC will follow-up on Rural Communities after the other items have been addressed related to Destination Resorts, Ag Lands, and Industrial Lands as those will inform how/if we move forward related to rural communities visioning/planning process.

- Community Analysis – Frank Kay presented a handout titled “Analyze & Enhance Infrastructure to Support Community Readiness for Industrial/Commercial Growth.” He reported that the committee discussed the need for focused support for communities outside of the City of The Dalles, which has additional support through the City and Port. He noted the unique role the Wasco EDC plays in supporting rural communities. Frank also reported that the committee discussed the need to focus on community preparedness and vision in order to move forward and that the project’s goals should include: readiness to succeed; planning for success; collaborating/ partnering to launch; and learning how to create a job, write a grant and seek resources

Amanda Hoey reported that the committee discussed the role of EDC and how it could support rural communities. She reported that the discussion included that there needed to be some very specific focus on individual communities. Amanda stated that the discussion also included the need for more individual, in depth, analysis looking at readiness to proceed and economic opportunities.

Discussion: Joan Silver inquired about the possibility of a visioning process becoming part of an EDC meeting. Andrea Klaas stated that there needed to be a pre-meeting before taking this process to the communities. Mary Kramer stated that there needed to be a “champion” for each of communities.

- Pine Hollow - No report. Amanda Hoey explained the history

EDC STAFF REPORT

Amanda Hoey presented the attached September Wasco County Economic Development Commission staff report highlighting the following.

The established priorities at the last EDC meeting included:

1. Review Industrial Land and Zoning - Taskforce convened; led by EDC Commissioner Dan Durow. First meeting held in August in coordination with the Planning Department. Next steps involve addressing economic impacts of events and reviewing industrial and commercial land options.
2. Community Analysis for Industry and Entrepreneurial Development Options - Taskforce convened; led by EDC Commissioner Frank Kay. First meeting held in August. Looking at asset-based analysis model, starting with pilot support for one community in South Wasco County. Also focused on industry areas.
3. Analyze and Enhance Infrastructure - Activities for the two taskforces listed above incorporate some discussion of infrastructure analysis. Focus would move away from a project listing to a more holistic view of the capacity of infrastructure in communities.

4. Enhance Broadband Access and Education - EDC is a partner and support, with other entities such as Qlife as the primary driver.

Amanda reiterated the Industrial Lands subcommittee discussion stating that the commission will seek to analyze the economic impact of visitation to the county, events and existing facilities through solicited support from the University of Oregon EDA funded University of Center. She reported that they have committed to the use of their honors economics course in January – June 2013 to help support this analysis. Amanda also introduced Maggie Hanna, Agora Investment Platform Coordinator.

COMMISSION MEMBER REGIONAL UPDATES

- Dan Durow reported that the Riverfront Trail expansion was temporarily delayed to review a parking impact at the Marina. He also reported that the downtown hotel project was granted a 120 day extension to secure its financial investments for the estimated \$22 million project.
- Frank Kay reported that Maupin had six candidates for its Business Facilitator position. He stated that they hoped to have someone on board by November 1st. He also reported that the library project was moving forward and they are in the process of doing a park visioning.
- Jeff Renard stated that chamber had hired a new membership coordinator and that the cruise ship stops continue to grow.
- Mary Kramer reported that the college's accreditation celebration was scheduled for September 19th from 5 to 7 pm
- Michael Zingg reported that Cottonwood Canyon dedication would be on September 25th
- Andrea Klaas reported that the port was finalizing the North Chenoweth package.
- Fred Justesen reported a successful motorcycle rally- Run21- which he reported as having a good economic impact for Wasco County. He also reported that it appeared that the wheat harvest was going to be good.
- Kristen Chatfield reported that Thirsty Women was closing and that there was a new person running the ice cream shop. She also reported that there was a new 2.5 mile trail to the overlook.
- John Roberts reported that Wasco County is projected to keep growing.
- Joan Silver reported that the Governor's Market Place was coming to The Dalles on September 18th. She stated that it is an event that is geared towards businesses that want to do business with the state of Oregon. She also stated that it was recently reported that less than 20 percent of the food needed by the Oregon Department of Corrections comes from Oregon. Joan reported that the Dalles Municipal Airport was doing a runway extension with the support of federal dollars and that potable water continues to be a development issue. She also reported that Mary Merrill, of Columbia Gorge Community College's Small Business Development Center, will be retiring in December.

Meeting adjourned at 11:55 PM

Submitted by Sherry Bohn, EDC Staff