

Morrow County Citizens Economic Development Task Force

Meeting Notes for March 6, 2018

City Hall

Heppner, Oregon

Attendees: Edie Ball, Janette Eldrige, Judy Moore, Sheryll Bates, Don Russell, Carla McLane, Melissa Lindsay, Aaron Palmquist, Stephanie Loving, Melissa Drugge. Karen Pettigrew by telephone.

The meeting started at 9:10 a.m. Meeting minutes for February 6, 2018, were reviewed and approved with changes to the roundtable discussion showing the WCVEDG annual lunch in place of the Heppner Chamber of Commerce lunch.

Housing as Economic Development:

The Request for Proposals (RFP) are going out and the Buildable Lands completion is anticipated by the end of 2018. Identifying non-resource land and determining the most appropriate use of the land will be top priority. There was discussion about rezoning Exclusive Farm Use (EFU) lands to residential lands and any land proposed to be under 10 acres would require a Goal 14 exception for Urbanization.

Carla McLane requested that all cities present the Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) approved by their councils and get the signed IGA back to her as soon as possible.

Melissa Drugge provided information on nominations for the Oregon Opportunity Zone.

Mid-Columbia River Regional Master Plan:

Morrow County sent comment to the Mid-Columbia River Regional Master Plan. The deadline for comments was Friday, March 2, 2018.

Tourism:

There needs to be follow up on Heritage Trail – the next meeting will be set after the Morrow County Planning Department is fully staffed again.

There was discussion about this group engaging with the Forest Service about their Elk Resiliency Project which may close 50-70% of Federal Forest Land.

Roundtable:

Melissa Drugge – Moving forward on South County wastewater system. There will be a meeting in April about communities' priorities, exact date still to be determined.

Judy Moore –GEODC Annual Meeting will be in Arlington on Friday, March 9, 2018. John Huffman from USDA will be speaking as well as Judge Schafer. Pilot Rock was recently awarded a housing grant.

Aaron Palmquist – Irrigon was awarded \$2.5 million grant for wastewater improvements; there will be a city council work session March 20, 2018 about rate increases. The wastewater system must be compliant by 2020 and there are currently 2 project areas identified.

All cities in Morrow County were awarded grants for transportation and Irrigon is working with ODOT for a walking path on Division Street.

Fred Meyer and Costco have both wanted to go into Hermiston but have backed away due to perceived lack of workforce. Irrigon is going to build to suit with long term leases in the next 3 to 5 years.

Melissa Lindsay – Morrow County just closed on a Boardman property for the new Public Works building. Currently Morrow County is looking at county structure and thinking about efficiency.

Don Russell – Recently appointed to the Oregon State Parks Group offering grants to parks projects.

Edie Ball – Heppner Transportation System Plan is being updated and cleaned up. Heppner has hired Janette Eldrige to be Finance Officer.

Janette Eldrige – Will be leaving Lexington to become Heppner Finance Officer. Lexington received \$50,000 small city grant allotment. Currently recruiting for a new Mayor in Lexington.

Sheryll – The September Bikeway ride will be going to 75 riders this year. Workforce Housing Subcommittee is moving forward on a duplex and put money into Community Enhancement for WCVEDG grants. Heppner Chamber of Commerce is preparing for the annual St. Patrick's Day celebration.

Karen – Boardman is updating water and sewer lines.

Carla McLane – There is currently a lot of activity in the Morrow County Planning Department with various levels of projects including several energy and aggregate projects in the next few months.

Next Meeting: The next meeting will be held at the Irrigon City Hall.

Agenda Build: Housing as Economic Development, Tourism Opportunities, and roundtable. Invite Phil Steinbeck from DLCD.

Adjourned at 11:40 a.m.