

Morrow County Citizens Economic Development Task Force

Meeting Notes for September 6, 2016

Heppner City Hall
Heppner, Oregon

Attendees:

Sheryll Bates, Kim Carter, Kim Cutsforth, Dan Dunnett (USACE), Janette Eldrige, Melissa Lindsay, Carla McLane, Skip Matthews, Kevin Moynahan (USACE), Aaron Palmquist, Leann Rea, and Don Russell.

The meeting started at approximately 10:05 a.m. Meeting minutes for May 3, June 7 and Aug 2, and Sep 6, 2016 were not available for review and approval.

Community Reports:

Kim Cutsforth: Thanks the Corps for helping with paving project; still have some drainage issues to address; fire hall almost complete. Still have some small tasks but occupancy permit is forthcoming, contract came in just under original bid despite a few small change orders; full ballot for City Councilor.

Don Russell: Ruchi Sadhir of the Governor's Office visited last week. She is the Governor's advisor on energy. Feels she is genuinely interested in the welfare of Oregon.

Kim Carter: Noted that one person is running for Mayor (Rod Taylor.) Not much else is happening.

Carla: Energy still the current focus in the County. There are several projects in the works. Wheatridge Wind project is in contest phase. Heppner Wind Project may be resubmitted with a notice of intent. Gas projects: PGE submitted amendment to the Carty certificate (Carty II). Proposing a Carty III (Single cycle plan.) Also working on solar site plan (one siting at Threemile Canyon.) Boardman Coal still in conversion study process; looking to convert to burning woody materials.

Leann: CDA continues efforts to obtain land; interest in [three] solar projects in Umatilla County; currently evaluating buildings in Morrow County – there are a number of hazardous materials that cause concern.

Janette: 3 councilors running for positions. Still have one vacancy; well lining project underway. Have bids in and considering contractors; vet services.

Sheryl: WCVEDG; Housing grants continue, meeting this afternoon about workforce residential rental opportunities. Chamber: bike ride coming in about 10 days with 40 riders.

Don (for Boardman): 3 different parties are actively interested in hotels for the area. One has an application in to the Enterprise Zone for a boundary expansion.

Carla: Sponsor entities meeting announcement sent to CREZ distribution list and counties distribution list. Discussion will happen in front of all 3 elected boards in a public meeting forum. The intent of this meeting is to expand the EZ boundary for hotel.

Coordination with the Army Corps of Engineers: Kevin Moynahan provided an update on the goat grazing project about six weeks prior – there was a large amount of vegetation near the dam that was unsightly, however not detrimental to the dam structure. Goats will be scheduled for future needs. Undersheriff Bowles toured the Dam and will be receiving a key to entry. Offering tour opportunities of John Day and Willow Creek Dams. Willow Creek Dam is nearing 35 years old and maintenance is needed and underway. Security updates also coming in 2018 most likely. Heritage Trail questions from Aaron. He also asked about level of John Day pool. Note that Don is back at the Dam part time, the Corps is excited to have onsite presence.

Coordinated Human Services Public Transportation Plan: Per agenda, the County Court adopted the Plan on Wednesday August 24, 2016. The Final adoption by Resolution is scheduled for Wednesday September 14.

Initiative Petition 28: Ballot Measure 97; Some groups have come out in opposition, with county court inviting proponents to present, opponents have had an opportunity to speak. Efforts continue to defeat, including many Chambers of Commerce. Per August meeting minutes, the County Court has invited proponents to present at a future meeting. Discussion continued.

Noxious Weed Abatement Services to Cities: County Court adopted resolution R-2016-15 regarding abatement on June 13, 2016. Copy of resolution was provided for review.

Regional Travel Shed Planning: Carla does not have an update. There is a meeting scheduled in Hermiston Sept 20 at the Stafford Hansell Building.

Housing as Economic Development: No specific objective for the discussion, but still interested in bringing in sufficient housing for workforce; causing a hiring impact because incomers are not able to find housing to relocate; discussion about funding subsidized housing vs. higher end housing and BCDA grant funding usage locally.

Business Initiative/Incentives: Carla provided a short update of what this discussion has been. There is a new business opening in Lone – local resident is refurbishing the coffee shop. The City reports not having funding for the venture. There was discussion about funding through the program(s.)

Items for the Good of the Order: Discussion regarding other counties and how they managed funding for distribution for road maintenance. LUB GWMA update discussed for future conversation matter.

Agenda Build: Finish ROGS, Waste Water Options, housing.

Next Meeting: The next regular meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 4 at 10:00 a.m. in Irrigon at the Irrigon City Hall.

Adjourned at 11:16 a.m.

Future Meeting Agenda Build: Regional priorities, LUB GWMA, Travel Shed, 2017 meeting dates, business incentives/initiatives.