

ECDC: Economic & Community Development Committee

Tuesday October 3rd, 2023, 5:00 PM

Committee Members Present: Mike Glenn, Don Griffin, Terry Schuster, and John VonTish.

Present via Zoom: Erin Folk, Tom Mahoney, and Phil Lehmann.

Also, present: Chris Chapman, City Manager Darin DeHaan, Mike Delaney, Cheryl Hilton, and Mayor Ken Williams.

Absent: Rebecca Hazzard and Phil Lehmann.

Don Griffin called the meeting to order and called roll at 5:00 pm.

No public comment.

Mike Glenn moved to approve the September 5th, 2023 Minutes, Seconded by John VonTish.

Motion carried. No nays.

Update of County ECDC: City Manager Darin DeHaan said the Next Move Group has been contracted to do the search for the Executive Director. They are going to reach out to the county finance committee for financial support for the economic development corporation. Rochelle will be voting on Tuesday on a \$50,000.00 commitment. The budget has been set and a business plan has been developed. Liz Vos will be working on marketing material to gain additional membership.

TIF and Enterprise Zone Updates: Mayor Ken Williams said at the last meeting for the Enterprise Zone they certified the additional acreage that was provided. A couple of TIF projects are happening. The retail portion has been completed at the location next to Athletico and is moving along nicely. The old sinnissippi counseling location is being rehabbed and the owners have been connected with Legal Design to design the façade of the building. The H&R Block building is also being remodeled. The owner has submitted a façade grant application to rehab the front of the building. The Midwest Dental location will be remodeled and available to rent at the end of the month. Don Griffin asked about the potential TIF grant for the Hunt Club that was discussed at last month's meeting. Mayor Ken Williams said the request has been processed as a TIF agreement. The request was initially for a façade grant, but the work completed was not for the façade of the building. Don Griffin asked about the old theater building. Mayor Ken Williams stated the back of the building is set up as a canning facility and the owners are waiting for their state license. The front of the building is finished, and they have a new plan for what they are going to do with the advertising on the front of the building.

Chamber News/Oregon Together Report/Schools/Community Events: City Manager Darin DeHaan said the developer is working on the first three townhomes in the Trestle Ridge Subdivision. The developer has submitted updated plans that will most likely require a variance.

Terry Schuster said it looks like the foundations and utilities are installed. City Manager Darin DeHaan said the street in front of the subdivision will be smoothed out temporarily and the entire street will be reconstructed in the future. He also said the draft of the Comprehensive Plan should be available on the 9th. The City Council will review the plan and a public hearing will need to be held.

Mayor Ken Williams said a ribbon cutting was held for the Sarah Phelps Community Plaza. He said it seems to be meeting the need as a community gathering place. He also stated he has created a list of key investors in the community. He said in other areas there are investors who buy single family homes and people who want to live in them do not get them. Large investment companies price the homeowners out of the market. He said some people think that does not happen here, but it does. We face the same problems as larger cities do. He will share the list that was created.

Terry Schuster said he saw a lot of murals in small towns, and not one of them had any representation of a business or commercial product on them. All the murals represented what was wonderful with the community they were in.

Erin Folk said the park district had a lot of great feedback with the updated community bike trail. They also hope to have the engineering contract for phase two back from IDOT soon for the ITEP grant they received. They hope to get the project going in 2024.

Tom Mahoney said the Oregon School District, the City of Oregon, and the Oregon Park District collaborated on a walkability grant that will provide a sidewalk behind the school along Koontz Place and a sidewalk from Etnyre School to the blacktop at Park West. The project will enhance the safety of the school children and the walkability of the community. He also said October is interesting for school districts because the state report card comes out. The report card is based on testing results from March and April. The district saw an improvement and growth two years in a row.

Mike Delaney said the TOSOC event did a fantastic job of showcasing what the city has to offer. He congratulated the organizers on a job well done. He said Professor Mark White will be in the area next week to talk about an economic development project that will incorporate Northwest Illinois and parts of Wisconsin and Minnesota. He would like to meet with people who are involved with economic development. The meeting will be held from 11-1 at the extension office, lunch will be provided.

John VonTish said the Chamber recently updated their website and some minor issues are being worked out. This Thursday at 5:30 there will be a ribbon cutting with the Emerging Leaders group to recognize the mural on the Chamber building. A Lunch and Learn is scheduled for Thursday November 6th at 11:30. CMAAA will be hosting the event and Kim Ewoldsen will be speaking about small business development. Jen's Artesian Bread will be providing lunch.

Mike Glenn with CMAAA said they held their first workshop and artist reception. This weekend they will be open for AOP. They also have over twenty authors lined up for a book fair in November.

Don Griffin said the county has finished the parking lot and the sidewalks are in.

Meeting adjourned at 5:22 PM.

Submitted by City Clerk Cheryl Hilton