

Forest Grove Economic Development Commission
Thursday, October 7, 2010

Meeting Minutes

Attendees: Kati Mayfield, Brian Wilbur, Hope Kramer, Elena Uhing, Don Jones, Teri Koerner, J.J. Johnston, Lisa Duncan, Lois Hornberger, Jackie Sandquist.

City Staff: Jeff King

1. Call to Order

Meeting was called to order by EDC Chair Brian Wilbur @ 12:18 p.m. This was Brian's first meeting as EDC Chair. He asked everyone to please introduce themselves.

2. Citizen Communications

None.

3. Approval of September 9, 2010, EDC Summary Minutes

Brian Wilbur motioned to accept the minutes as presented. J.J. Johnston motioned first to pass the minutes, and Lisa Duncan seconded the motion. The minutes passed unanimously.

4. Additions/Deletions & Staff Summary

None.

5. Business

A. McMenamins – Host Update

None.

B. Board Member Nomination – Downtown Retail

Don Jones made a motion to elect Hope Kramer as the Downtown Retail EDC member. Teri Koerner seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The recommendation will now go before the City Council for approval.

C. Noise Ordinance

Jeff King gave a brief update of why the noise ordinance is being revised. The reasons vary, from making it a more effective law especially within residential areas, to making it an ordinance that is more easily and effectively enforced by the police department, and also to make a variance or permit obtained by individuals for a single event more useful. In the past permits gave no other provisions or allowances than the ordinance currently on the books, and the person obtaining the permit had to pay a fee.

Jeff asked everyone to turn to their packets to see the areas of the new proposed noise ordinance that had been stricken and revised. He noted that Michael Sykes, City Manager, was very sensitive to the needs of the business community. One of the revisions was that decibel levels were increased for commercial and industrial areas. Don Jones thanked the City Council for their willingness to listen to and accept comments from the EDC. Elena Uhing pointed out that there were enough concerns voiced by various boards and commissions that instead of a hearing being held this Monday, October 11th, it has been postponed until October 25th, 2010.

Teri Koerner received a letter from Steve Van Doren with Van Doren Red-E-Mix who had actually taken it upon himself to measure the decibels in and around his business. He indicated after several days of taking readings that the highest level he recorded was an 85, which happened to be a school bus driving by. The loudest his business measured was 83 decibels when everything was being used at once, which lasted about 5 minutes. Teri is concerned that the 80 decibel limit may not be high enough. Van Doren Red-E-Mix is an example of a business that has long existed in an area, prior to the residential neighborhood surrounding it currently. Teri asked Elena to please share that information with the City Council when adopting the new ordinance. Teri indicated that she would forward the letter from Steve Van Doren to all of the City Councilors, and the City Manager. J.J. Johnston pointed out that industrial & commercial areas don't necessarily have the same noise levels emitting from those zones. He recommended that the industrial be moved to 85.

Jeff King pointed out that the continuous dog barking had been changed from 10 minutes to 30 minutes.

Teri verified with Elena that there will be another Public Hearing on October 25th, 2010. Elena indicated that to the best of her knowledge, that is what she understood to be true concerning this ordinance. Elena also noted that at that Public Hearing, the City Council will be hearing from the Planning Commission Chair who will explain the thought processes that lead to the content of the noise ordinance.

Teri suggested that both commercial and industrial should be bumped up to the 85 decibel level.

Elena said that she would bring the proposed increase to 85, along with any other questions, to the work session with the City Council, and that she would facilitate the concerns of the EDC.

The decision was made at this time to support the noise ordinance with the understanding that Elena would relay any concerns, but not to endorse it as written at this time. J.J. Johnston made the motion, and Teri Koerner seconded it. it passed unanimously

D. Sign Ordinance

Jeff King gave an update about an amendment to the current Sign Ordinance. When the ordinance passed, there was no off-sight sign boards allowed. The question that arose was what about businesses that are off of main thoroughfares such as Pacific Avenue and 19th Avenue? A provision was proposed that would allow, in a similar fashion as State Tourism or ODOT, for blue signs, no more than 3 feet square, *and* if it is tourist oriented, *and* if it is in certain zones, *and* if the business is 2 blocks or further off the main road. A private business could opt to put one of these signs up, and there would be a charge for it. The signs would be very similar to blue signs that one may see along the highway. The 22nd Street Station was cited as an example of a business that would benefit from a blue sign. The Planning Commission estimated that only a half a dozen or so businesses would be interested in this program. They are still determining how much to charge for the signs. A second idea was proposed to have a green sign with wording and an arrow, similar to a street sign. The proposal will be brought before a City Council workshop on Monday, October 11th, 2010.

Brian Wilbur commented that the blue signs may be construed as an unfair advantage to some citizens. It may be a situation that snowballs to where several businesses would opt to purchase a blue sign.

Elena Uhing pointed out that the blue signs are being proposed for businesses that do not have the option of having an A-frame sign like some of the downtown businesses are able to have.

Teri Koerner pointed out that most of the businesses that are allowed to have A-frame signs are generally the businesses that are downtown, and that pay a higher rent than a business that is 2 blocks off of a main drag or a downtown area. She voiced that she cannot support this amendment because she feels that after nearly 2 years of research and hard work, and only 6 months into enforcing the new ordinance, that it is now being amended and challenged due to only one business that is unhappy with the new code.

Elena suggested for EDC members to please put their comments, questions, and concerns forward to Anna Ruggles to be considered by the City Council at their next work session. EDC members can contact Jeff King with their comments/questions and he will forward them on to Anna.

Teri was concerned that the amendment will be discussed, voted on, and passed this coming Monday, October 11, 2010. She noted that there are some resolutions that get passed without going to a Public Hearing first.

Elena suggested that the EDC request that the amendment be discussed in a work session or for it to be put on hold until a full discussion can be had. The EDC agreed with this recommendation. Brian Wilbur asked if any one would make a motion to support this. Lois Hornberger moved to make the motion, and then Teri Koerner seconded the motion.

Jeff King called Anna Ruggles from his cell phone and asked her if the proposed amendment was on the agenda to be voted on this coming Monday, October 11, and Anna confirmed that it was.

Elena noted that she didn't feel that she could pass the amendment that soon with the limited amount of information she currently has. Everyone agreed that the amendment deserves more discussion. Don Jones pointed out that he appreciates the City Council taking the time to hear all sides of issues such as this one.

E. Evaluation of Subcommittee Goals

At this point discussion of the amendment to the sign ordinance was concluded, and Brian Wilbur began a review of 18 goals of the EDC that were adopted last summer. Due to time constraints, a full review of the goals was not completed, and may be brought up at a later date.

6. Council Communications

Elena Uhing gave a brief overview of Council Communications due to time constraints. The Broker Letter written by Jeff King and the EDC was brought before the council and they liked it very much. She reminded Brian that as the new Chair of the EDC, that the Boards & Commissions Presentation will be coming up very soon. At this point in time the topic for the Annual Town Meeting has not been decided, so if anyone had any input or ideas for the town meeting, please let Elena know. Community Action facilitates an adopt-a-class program, so any businesses that are interested, please contact Elena and she will give you more information.

7. Staff & Board Member Communications

Jackie Sandquist reported that Work Systems Inc. will support the Work Force Center through the end of June @ ½ time.

8. Announcement of Next Meeting

The next EDC Meeting will be the first Thursday of November.

9. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned @ 1:35 p.m. by Brian Wilbur.

Approved by the Forest Grove Economic Development Commission:

Date: _____ 11/4/10 _____

Signed: _____