

Meeting Minutes

ATTENDEES: Tim Budelman, Chair; John Hayes; Steve Krautscheid; Kelly Marks; Bruce McVean; Mark Nakajima; Justin Norman; Guy Storms; Howard Sullivan; Javier Urenda

CITY STAFF: Jeffrey King, ED Program Manager; Cassi Bergstrom, Admin Specialist; George Cress, L&P Director; Jon Holan, Community Development Director; Brandi Walstead, Program Specialist

ALSO ATTENDING: Mary Jo Morelli, Business Owner; Linda Lewis, Business Owner; Gretchen Keifer, Business Owner for Curves

1. CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order at 12:16 p.m. by EDC Chair Tim Budelman.

2. CITIZEN COMMUNICATION:

None.

3. APPROVAL OF JANUARY 7, 2016 SUMMARY MINUTES:

Mr. Hayes moved to accept the meeting minutes as presented. Mr. Sullivan seconded. The minutes passed unanimously.

4. ADDITIONS/DELETIONS & STAFF SUMMARY:

A. STAFF BUSINESS UPDATES:

Mr. King has been working with a food processor on a significant expansion.

There is an Urban Renewal Agency open house coming up, and a handout was included in the packet.

The Oregon Travel Guide example ad was passed around.

A press release was passed around for two workshops available for small businesses. The city is in the middle of training with Mercy Corp and had 13 entrepreneurs in that class, 10 being from Forest Grove.

An update on the Washington County economic indicators was given, showing Forest Grove unemployment being down and the average wage being higher than Sherwood and Cornelius but still lags.

There is a pre-application in for the Matsuchida building becoming a marijuana grow operation. Mr. Holan clarified that code amendments are being processed in dealing with recreational marijuana. One issue needing more direction is how to buffer marijuana growing facilities. Two work sessions with council have been held to get a sense of direction.

5. BUSINESS:

A. McMENAMIN'S -HOST UPDATE:

None.

B. FOREST GROVE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE UPDATE:

Howard Sullivan updated the board on the following:

The new visitor guide will have 4 businesses insert a q&a segment answering the question "Why Forest Grove?"

The Chamber auction will be held March 12th at St. Anthony's church. Maggie's Buns will be catering. This is their biggest fundraiser of the year.

The chamber is partnering with Pacific University in presenting 'Stars in the Grove'. All proceeds go to a local charity, this year being Valley Art to help upgrade the building.

Forest Grove High School has a new gym facility that is now being recognized by the OSAA to host state/metro tournaments. On the 12 and 13th of February, FGHS is hosting the metro wrestling tournament. They are looking for sponsors for each weight class to contribute \$50. This gathering of schools statewide is providing excellent potential for local businesses. Mr. Nakajima stated that this is a great opportunity for local businesses to sponsor an event.

C. CEP 2016 EDC PROPOSALS:

Mr. King spoke on the Community Enhancement Program (CEP) city grant program and the different businesses the program has benefited. Mr. King gave a brief update on the Times Litho property, and the revitalization it is proposed to provide for the city. The CEP proposal involves helping older downtown businesses strategize their appearance with color, sidewalk approach, window positioning of merchandise, etc. A few years ago, Michelle Reeves had consulted with the city to help the downtown businesses with storefront design. Mr. King proposes that we follow that same idea to get both education and outcomes of our downtown businesses frontal façade. EDC will have another meeting next month to approach this subject.

Mr. Holan spoke on the action plan for projects and looking at the downtown by a design standpoint. There is an amount of money designated toward this project. With the Tokola property going forward, there may be a shift of design on 21st Avenue.

Today, Mr. King is looking for feedback from the EDC if this is a direction to pursue. Chairman Budelman inquired about what the funds will be used for. Mr. King clarified

that they will be used for education and outcome of design issues such as sidewalk approach, window merchandise appearance, signage, awnings, colors, etc.

Ms. Morelli stated that is important to focus on the downtown renewal in order to maintain and preserve the historical integrity of the downtown district. A recent survey went out in the utility billing, and there was positive support of the historic districts of Forest Grove.

Mr. King will discuss this topic further with the Chamber and City Club to gather more input on the CEP grant, with concentration on the downtown core. The general consensus from the board is that this is a great idea and look forward to discussing it more in March.

D. FOCUS ON DOWNTOWN-SWOT EXERCISE, 2 DOWNTOWN BUSINESS

GUESTS:

Mr. King introduced the business guests to give a background on their downtown businesses.

Ms. Lewis stated that she restores old furniture in her business, so her shop has an “old” feel. Every month she changes the window appearance to get different looks and attract customers. She feels that Forest Grove has lost its “cozy” appeal, and would like to see the downtown core extend onto 21st Ave. She is hopeful the Times Litho project will bring people down that direction. The show “The Librarians” did little things throughout the town to inexpensively change the downtown area, giving it the “more cozy” feel.

Ms. Keifer stated that Curves has been in Forest Grove on 21st Ave for 13 years. The location of Curves is hard to see, and with a tight budget it is hard to get a sign put up. Visibility, signage, and parking is an issue in downtown for her business.

Mr. King led the SWOT exercise. The EDC, along with business guests Linda Lewis and Curves owner Gretchen Keifer, did a SWOT exercise on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the Forest Grove downtown business core.

Strengths found within downtown Forest Grove were: Walkability; Farmer’s Market; historic buildings; charming; Pacific University; intersections/pedestrian use; signage; business diversity; parking on the street; long history of established buildings; small town feel; defined downtown district; library; cultural diversity/variety; friendly/safe.

Weaknesses found within downtown Forest Grove were: Perception of FG’s geographical location; lack of parking; empty storefronts; dead space at event hall;

unification of hours; weekend operations; one ways; back of businesses esthetic upkeep; garbage container locations; industrial “blank” space along 19th; vacancies along Main St.

Opportunities found within downtown Forest Grove were: Design workshop/program; Tokola Property at Times Litho site; consistent hours, late hours; Ride Connection; marketing of vacant store fronts; marketing as a destination location; marketing as a sporting event location; signage on Highway 47; partnerships for leveraging nearby events.

Threats found within downtown Forest Grove were: One sided industry with no diversity; lack of jobs in FG to keep citizens shopping here; the need for a smaller chain grocery store; smaller footprint.

6. COUNCIL LIAISON COMMUNICATIONS:

None.

7. STAFF & BOARD MEMBER COMMUNICATIONS:

None.

8. ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEXT MEETING:

Chair Budelman announced that the next meeting of the EDC will be on Thursday, March 3, 2016 at 12:00 noon in the Alice Inkely Room at McMenamin's Grand Lodge.

9. ADJOURNMENT:

Chairman Budelman adjourned the meeting at 1:32 p.m. by consensus.

Respectfully submitted by: Cassi Bergstrom

Approved by the Forest Grove Economic Development Commission:

Date: _____,

Signed: _____

EDC Chair