

**Forest Grove Economic Development Commission
Thursday, May 5, 2012**

MEETING MINUTES

Attendees: Hope Kraemer, George Cress, Tom Belusko, Brian Wilbur, Tom Rabe, Kelly Marks, Bruce McVeen, Lisa Duncan, Jeff King, J.J. Johnston, Ali Brown, Mark Frandsen, Guy Storms, Tim Budelman, Teri Koerner

City Staff: Michael Sykes

Also Attending: John Michael Kowertz, Glen VanBlarcom, Pete Truax

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order @ 12:11 p.m. by EDC Chair Brian Wilbur who asked for everyone to please introduce themselves.

2. Citizen Communication

None.

3. Approval of the April 5th, 2012 EDC Summary Minutes

Bruce McVeen moved to approve the meeting minutes as presented. Hope Kraemer seconded the motion. The meeting minutes passed unanimously.

4. Additions / Deletions and Staff Summary

Jeff King gave a brief update on the progress being made by the owners of Prime Time to reach their goal of re-opening their restaurant by Fall 2012. Things are proceeding well as they pertain to Clean Water Services. They don't expect a hold up in that area, or with any other permits that are required at this time to proceed with construction.

Jeff also reported that the City hopes to hear by mid-May from a sweet bean company who is very interested in one of the vacant buildings in Forest Grove. If they do decide to move here, their company will create up to 50 jobs. They were very impressed with the package that the City put together for them, but of course there are many variables to consider. A definite answer should be coming from them soon.

Jeff also had an update about Pascor, a company located here in Forest Grove that makes products for energy power transmission, who is embarking on a project that will result in an 18,000 square foot expansion of their existing facility. Pascor has received approval to move ahead with the expansion from their corporate office in Seattle, WA, and this expansion will mean adding jobs as well. Jeff added that there are several other smaller projects moving forward within the City as well, one of which is that O'Reilly Auto Parts is moving from their current location in Forest Grove on Yew Street, to the old Chevrolet car lot owned by Jeff VanDyke on Pacific Avenue.

A few more topics Jeff reported on briefly are that round two of the Downtown Revitalization Program will be held on May 22nd, 2012 at the Community Auditorium in Forest Grove. The main speaker will be Michelle Reeves from Civilis Consultants who will be reporting on her recommendations and/or strategies that she feels Forest Grove should follow to increase revitalization of the downtown area. This is the second of four presentations on this topic. Also, Jeff noted that Economic Development will have a booth at the Small Business Growth Summit on July 26th, 2012 at the Oregon Convention Center in Portland.

5. **Business**

A. **McMenamins Host Update**

None.

B. **EDC Board Openings Update**

Hope Kraemer stated that she and her business partner have sold The Urban Decanter, and so she is no longer a small business owner. She thought that the EDC would most likely want to replace her position with another small business owner in town, but she expressed that she is willing to stay on as a member of the EDC, perhaps occupying a different position or role, such as “Citizen at Large”. Jeff King pointed out that the bylaws state the position as “representing the downtown business community” so that does not specify that the person holding that position has to be a small business owner. Brian Wilbur asked if the EDC should open up the topic to discussion. Michael Sykes said that he felt that Hope fit the description for the position, and that he did not see a reason for changing her from her current position to a new position at this time. Mark Frandsen asked who has purchased The Urban Decanter from Hope, and she stated that the new owner is Becky Kramer, whose parents are Trudy & Keith Kramer who own Kramer Vineyards in Gaston, OR.

Jeff King said that Don Jones had been speaking with Jim Kuhn who is the Store Director at Safeway. Don had spoken with him in regards to filling the “At Large” position with the EDC. At this time it is up to the EDC to decide if they would like to make a recommendation to the City Council to consider Jim for this position. Brian Wilbur moved to recommend Jim as a member of the EDC. Teri Koerner seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

C. **Forest Grove Safety Levy**

Mayor Truax spoke on the importance of the levy passing, and what it means as far as a financial impact on the City. He noted that if people have not voted within a few days of the election deadline, which is Tuesday, May 15th, 2012, to please use the ballot drop-off box on Pacific Avenue in front of the Library, since mailing a ballot at that late date will most likely result in the ballot arriving too late to be counted. He stressed that it is an absolute necessity that this levy pass in order for the City to operate properly. Glen VanBlarcom, who is the former Chief of Police of Forest Grove, spoke as well, agreeing fully with Mayor Truax in that the City definitely needs this levy to pass in order to operate efficiently.

D. Business Incentive Program

The current Business Incentive Program will expire in June 2012. Jeff King remarked that he would like to see it be extended for another twelve months. He asked that the EDC recommend to the City Council to re-new it for another year. Teri Koerner made the motion to recommend the program for extension. Tim Budelman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

E. Video RFP

Brian Wilbur reported that out of the top two candidates who applied to produce two videos for the Forest Grove EDC, that videographer John Cardenas has been selected. Brian asked the EDC for input as to what ideas or topics should be considered as focal points for the two videos. Jeff King added that it is important to hone a message to provide a clear picture of how Forest Grove may have different amenities to offer than other cities. There was a lot of discussion among members about the “small town feel” in Forest Grove, but Mark Frandsen pointed out that the small town atmosphere should not be the driving force behind a company’s decision to relocate to Forest Grove. He stated that we should be recruiting for bigger businesses by showing the success of global companies that are *already* doing business in Forest Grove, which would then give our City the credibility it needs to attract new businesses. Bruce McVeen suggested a tag line such as “the quality of business life”, rather than the “small town” approach. J.J. Johnston added that promoting the fact that people who live in the Portland area would have a “reverse commute” if they worked in Forest Grove, may be appealing to a lot of businesses. Mark Frandsen commented that low land cost, low power cost, City and Government cooperation, and quality of the workforce available in the area are all strong points that should be included in the videos. After much discussion, Jeff King asked the group as a whole which was more important to highlight in the videos, quality of living, or attracting more business? The group agreed that attracting more business was the message to relay.

6. Council Communications

Tom Belusko spoke briefly due to time constraints, but wanted to report that the City Council will begin budget talks the second week of May.

7. Staff & Board Member Communications

Teri Koerner mentioned that the Washington County Visitors Association (WCVA) will be hosting a reception to welcome the new WCVA CEO on Wednesday, May 16th, 2012. Also she reminded everyone that that date is also the first day of the Farmer’s Market for this year.

8. Announcement of Next Meeting

Brian Wilbur announced that the next meeting will be held on Thursday, June 7th, 2012 @ 12:00 noon, @ McMenamins Grand Lodge in the Alice Inkley Room.

9. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by EDC Chair Brian Wilbur @ 1:33 p.m.

Approved by the Forest Grove Economic Development Commission:

Date: _____