



Economic Development Board Meeting Minutes, January 13, 2021

The meeting was called to order at 12:07 p.m. Open meeting laws noted in the City Office.

Members Present: Tom Shoemaker, Darcy Johnson, Derek Downer, Judy Jackson, Randy Heitmann, Jan tenBensel, Logan Baker, Dave Custer

Members Absent: Jarod Albers

Others Present: Mayor Dave Gunderson, Melissa Jackson, Brian Vasa – NPPD

Agenda Corrections or Additions: None noted.

Consent Approval of Financials/Invoices and Minutes and Bills: A motion to approve the Minutes and Bills was made by Logan Baker, seconded by Dave Custer. Motion carried.

New Business:

M. Jackson gave a brief activities report to the Board.

Jarod Albers stopped in briefly to review his top planning priorities:

Housing (affordable/rental rehab program)

Supporting existing businesses

Find a new skilled labor-type business that would provide 5-10 new positions within the community

Jarod left the meeting at 12:13.

Strategic Planning:

The strategic planning session began at 12:15. The Board took the opportunity to introduce themselves. Brian Vasa with NPPD introduced himself and gave his background in strategic planning/ED.

Brian reviewed the top strengths as reported on the pre-session survey and the Board discussed:

- The people – family values, loyalty, caring
- Local investment in projects
- Safety, sense of community
- Work ethic
- Everything is here and local
- Location, right size, recreation
- Progressive, supportive
- Infrastructure, core amenities

Brian then reviewed the top weaknesses as reported on the survey and the Board discussed:

- Affordable housing

- Lack of higher paying jobs
- Agriculture dependent
- Too many obstacles, policies, slow moving
- Youth recruitment, people attraction
- Available labor
- Need to diversify leadership, bring new ideas, vision is small
- Lack of diverse shopping
- High cost of living
- High school jobs other than agriculture

Brian then reviewed the opportunities as reported on the survey and the Board discussed:

- Great community and schools
- Housing development, people leaving large cities
- Promote fiber availability
- Business development in agriculture
- Attract people from larger communities seeking small town life
- Harvest Meadows residential and commercial
- Green energy
- Progressive economic development group
- Positioned for business growth

Brian then reviewed the threats as reported on the survey and the Board discussed:

- Loss of workers/population; aging population; youth leaving and not returning
- Workforce housing
- Loss of businesses
- Population growth without direction
- High cost of living, community finances
- Loss of hospital and school
- Lack of affordable childcare
- Agriculture dependent, need to diversify

The top 3 priority ranking areas for the purpose of developing a comprehensive strategic plan are:

1. New business development/existing business
2. Housing development
3. Workforce recruitment and talent development

M. Jackson will work to develop a strategic plan with measurable initiatives and goals that fit into our mission, and that we have the time and resources to effectively carry it out.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:23 p.m.

The next Board meeting is scheduled for February 10, 2021, at 12:00 p.m.