

Economic Development Advisory Board

December 7, 2021, Meeting Minutes

I. Call to order

Vice-Chair Wayne Stephany called to order the regular meeting of the Economic Development Advisory Board at 3:30 PM on December 7, 2021, at Memorial Hall and via conference call.

II. Roll call

The following members were present:

Vice-Chair Wayne Stephany (17-0)
Paul Yaroslaski (14-3)
Lori Kelley (15-2)
Jason Curtis (16-1)
J.D. Cox (1-0)
Tabitha Snodgrass (Ex-Officio)

The following members were absent:

Chair Chuck Goad (16-1)
Brian Hight (6-4)

The following staff were present:

Kelly Passauer, City Manager
David Cowan, Assistant City Manager
Lacey Lies, Director of Finance
Jordan Bagley, I.T.
Lydia Collins, Administrative Aide

The following visitors were present:

III. Approval of Minutes from October 7, 2021

A motion was made by Lori Kelly to approve the minutes from the October 7, 2021, meeting, which was seconded by Jason Curtis. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. Items for Discussion

A. Update on Internet Access

- Internet Subcommittee

Members are Wayne Stephany, Paul Yaroslaski, Jason Curtis, Jordan Bagley and David Cowan.

Wayne Stephany summarized the subcommittee's report

Objective of the meeting was to set initial work plans and strategies.

- Inputs considered
 - Current state of internet services in Independence (fiber cable, speed, interruptions, etc.)
 - What we must have – like to have – would love to have
 - Organize thoughts for review by key players (TBD)
- Kansas Office of Broadband Development
 - Talked briefly with the Director, Stanley Adams
 - Help is available from his group and the State of Kansas
 - Very willing to assist
 - Can play various roles
 - Has \$\$\$\$ available
 - Need to get involved EARLY
 - Consider connections throughout Montgomery County
- Kwicom – internet provider interested in our community
 - In towns in region Iola, Garnett
 - Working in Neodesha now
 - David Cowan is in touch with them currently
- Action Steps
 - Gather input on current internet status and needs
 - Jordan and Jason
 - Report to subcommittee mid-January
 - Set up meeting via Zoom or in person with Stanley Adams' group, Kansas Office of Broadband Development, established by the Governor
 - Share our needs
 - Begin working on more definitive improvement plans
 - See what we can get financially
 - Assigned to Wayne and David for January
 - Step up discussions with Kwicom
 - Assigned initially David

The next meeting will be on Monday, January 3, 2022.

Wayne Stephany said the Stanley Adams group can assist in many ways as money has been set aside for this. Mr. Adams can meet with the subcommittee after the holidays. He has not interfaced with anyone else from Montgomery County. He indicated we could get more money if we get together with the other local cities.

Lacey spoke to the Assistant City Manager, Jay Byers, at the City of Pittsburg about sharing franchise agreements and the process they went through. With Kwicom you can get a gig of fiber for \$70.00 a month. This should be our goal, to be price conscious.

Kelly Passauer said the City has a specific attorney that can deal with what services these companies provide and will help with franchises or rights-of-way.

Lori Kelly suggested that the subcommittee come up with standards.

B. Grassroots Economic Development 101 9-week series

Lacey Lies asked if anyone from the group had registered. Wayne Stephany, Chuck Goad and Lacey Lies have registered, and Lacey will have the first session in her office on Thursday at 9:00 a.m.

C. Review of Business Incentive Information

- Website

Lacey Lies said the website has links to the forms and information needed. The forms need to be reviewed on an annual basis. There are attachments listed on available land for businesses, with John Garris updating recent changes. I have looked at other City websites to see if we need to add anything. Some have graphics and we could put those on there if it is a priority.

Lori Kelley suggested adding a link on the City's website to the MCAC relocation profile page for Independence, so the City's site reflects the most recent data.

Lacey Lies said she did not think that all parties were receiving the forms. She will check on that. She will add the Chamber and Main Street and get the same form on everyone's website.

J.D. Cox asked if we are making the process as easy as possible. He suggested starting easy like having a "to get started click here" on the website.

Lacey Lies suggested the second page be titled differently. We could ask what kind of loan they are looking for, what information do they want from us. We could change the wording to 'items you should be gathering'.

Wayne Stephany suggested that J.D. Cox and Lacey Lies get together and let the committee know next meeting.

- Policy

Lacey Lies would like the group to look at the policy to see if it needs to be updated.

Wayne Stephany said whoever sees changes that need made to get them to Lacey for the next meeting.

- Central Business District Commercial Building Grant Program and Application

David Cowan said the CBD program is going really well.

Lacey Lies said if anyone notices any changes that need to be made to let her know.

- Independence Revitalization Application

Lacey Lies said the Neighborhood Revitalization Plan is a county program and she does not know that the City can change the form. This is something we need to learn more about to see if changes need to be made. Look over the application for the rebate program and look at the district specifications and bring questions for the next meeting. If we are not giving out the right information, it will not be utilized.

Kelly Passauer said she thought April said there are some neighborhoods we need to add. Kelly

said Chanute did their entire city, taking out any City, County, School and College properties. It is intended for blighted areas so that may not be in the spirit of the project.

Kelly Passauer noted every taxing entity has to approve it after the Commission approves it. Some of the taxing districts may not sign off if the entire city is blanketed. There is an opportunity for additional and this group might want to look at that.

- Project Initiation Form
- Firm Worksheets (for Cost-Benefit-Analysis)

D. Other items for discussion.

Kelly Passauer sent some presentations to the group from a conference. J.D. Cox said he was most impressed by the LEAP program in Atchison.

Lacey Lies asked about the presentations being organized and it was noted that there is a share file for the group that can be utilized.


Wayne Stephany said that someone made a comment on Facebook that they moved to the area along with their relatives and they are displeased and are going to move. Does the City hear or is there something someone from this group can do if they see something like that. If we are aware of any problems like this we could maybe help. Could we do something at First Friday about starting businesses.

Lacey Lies asked if anyone wants anything in particular on the next agenda. If there is a topic please let Lacey know.

V. Adjournment

A motion was made to adjourn by Jason Curtis, seconded by Paul Yaroslaski. Motion carried unanimously.

Minutes approved by:


Charles W. Goad (Jan 6, 2022 10:35 CST)

Chuck Goad, Chair


Paul Yaroslaski (Jan 6, 2022 10:49 CST)

Paul Yaroslaski, Secretary