

Minutes of Meeting
Trail County Economic Development Commission
February 15, 2018
7 p.m. Trail County EDC Office – Hillsboro, N.D.

Board of Directors Present: Ben Hershey, Gary Nysveen, Paul Geray, Alana Gerszewski, Roxanne Phipps, Jami Hovet and Scott Hovde. Also present: Melissa Beach – Executive Director, Alyssa Short – Project Coordinator, Cole Short – Hillsboro Banner and Harry Lipsiea – Trail County Tribune.

A 6:30 p.m. tour of Hillsboro Café & Bakery with owners Kate & Derek Ehnert preceded the meeting.

The meeting was called to order at 7:09 p.m. by Chairman Hershey.

Additions to Agenda

Beach requested that multi-family housing be added to the list of New Business items.

Secretary’s Report

Gerszewski moved to accept the Jan. 25, 2018 meeting minutes, seconded by Hovet. Motion carried.

Treasurer’s Report

Nysveen moved to accept the Feb. 15, 2018 treasurer’s report, seconded by Phipps. Motion carried.

Hovet noted that Mayville State is looking to expand its marketing footprint and might be interested in a billboard space. She will send the name of a contact to Beach in hopes that it may help with the current TCEDC contract with Newman Outdoor Signs being discounted or renegotiated. A. Short explained some of the difficulties she’s had with getting direct deposit set up in Quickbooks.

Hovde moved to approve payment of checks as submitted. Phipps seconded. Motion carried.

Executive Director’s Report

Beach presented the monthly executive director’s report, giving an overview of her work with existing clients and noting upcoming strategic plan deadlines. Beach said she would make a preliminary schedule of 2018 business retention and expansion (BRE) visits. Land was purchased by a developer for multi-family housing units in Hillsboro. Another company looking for land along the I-29 corridor in Trail County wasn’t satisfied with the available options, so Beach contacted some similar companies to gauge their interest.

Beach said TCEDC is assisting as a fiscal agent for the Outdoor Heritage Fund grant for the Mayville Park Board and also is working with the NDSU Extension Center for Community Vitality on Lead Local training in Hillsboro on Feb. 28. This type of training was the highest-ranking request that came in from the community education survey.

Beach asked the board about establishing a 501c3, which would have a more charitable purpose



and would open up more grant-writing and training opportunities for Trail United Group. The funding would come from TUG and would require a vote of the TUG board.

Website Project

Work continues as time allows. Beach hasn't received any feedback since TCEDC sent its payment.

FlexPACE Project – Hatton Housing

The Hatton Housing loan application currently is being reviewed by Bank of North Dakota.

2018 Budget

The budget is tracking well so far. Beach met with Trail County Commissioner Tom Eblen, who researched the 2016 and 2017 funding and answered most of Beach's questions. Beach noted that the miscellaneous income being listed for TCEDC for those time periods was loan payments being counted by the county as income into the general fund rather than payments to the reserve fund. Eblen explained how property tax discounts impact the county department budgets, and also how the departments can better understand the state aid calculations

Chairman Hershey thanked Eblen for the time and effort devoted to helping the TCEDC board have a better understanding of the process because it will aid in the planning for 2019 and on. He also thanked Beach for her diligence in delving into the board's questions immediately.

Storefront Improvement Program/Main Street Initiative

Beach said the Storefront Improvement Program, included in the strategic plan, is intended to revitalize commercial storefronts by means of updated facades, beautification, sidewalk work, etc., typically using grants or low- or no-interest loans. Chairman Hershey asked how the program fits in with Gov. Burgum's Main Street Initiative, and Beach gave a recap of the Main Street ND Summit held in Bismarck earlier in February. Beach said three pillars were discussed: workforce, vibrant communities and smart infrastructure, and one of the speakers urged attendees to consider the economic benefits of infill versus urban sprawl. Speakers also discussed embracing the things about North Dakota that some people see as negatives and how to make young people want to stay in the state.

Beach's impression, however, is that there aren't additional funds set aside for the Main Street Initiative and the state legislature doesn't seem supportive, so there probably won't be any forthcoming. She also noted that Renaissance Zone funding is being reviewed by the interim taxation committee, and regulations are being tightened for TIF districts.

Various board members expressed support for continuing TCEDC's main goal of job retention and expansion instead of creating new initiatives – like the Storefront Improvement Program – that TCEDC can't fiscally support this year.

Nysveen suggested the board review where things stand in six months, and Hovet suggested the Marketing Committee seek information from businesses in the interim to keep the conversation going.

Grant Writing/Opportunities for Involvement

Beach said TCEDC still needs to find a way to be impactful to communities on a modest budget, and she feels more grant writing for 2018 would be a good use of time. She and A. Short already have a list of requests and ideas and they are willing to talk to various groups to find more opportunities, as well.

Multi-Family Housing

Beach gave an update on the upcoming multi-family housing project in Hillsboro and explained the current access issues the project is encountering. The project does have its detractors, but TCEDC is working in support of the project because it’s helping to fulfill the gaps identified in the countywide housing study completed in 2015. Beach noted that since the time of that study, a new company also has moved into Hillsboro and has expanded the need for rental housing even more. She also discovered only one rental unit currently available in Hillsboro while calling to gather data.

Beach asked the board for their thoughts and whether they’d heard feedback. Chairman Hershey noted the only concerns he’d heard were about the project not happening. Gerszewski said the project might have a positive impact on housing in other communities in the county.

Community Updates

- Nysveen – All but one lot has been purchased in the Prairieview Addition, so Hillsboro probably will be looking for a spot for a future development. The Hillsboro Banner relocated to the Erickson Agency building.
- Geray – Three additional businesses joined the Hillsboro Business Association in 2018, and Hillsboro Days has been set for June 13-17. The H-CV wrestling team won the region dual tourney for the first time in several years and the girls basketball region tourney was set to start. Paul’s Hometown Repair has a new tenant, Tiffany Abentroth, a candidate for the U.S. House. Abentroth is a big proponent of small businesses.
- Gerszewski – More lots have been sold in the Riverwood Addition in Mayville. The MayPort EDC is gearing up for the Red River Valley Home & Garden Show in Fargo.
- Hovet – Mayville State’s presidential search continues. The school received more than 40 applicants, with the top 12 being interviewed via interactive video and onsite interviews scheduled for the top candidates March 5-8. The athletic director search is on hold until President Hagen returns from Mesa, Ariz.
- Phipps – The school project is still in the planning process. Three homes currently are for sale on Jersey Street.
- Hovde – Invisimax was acquired by Midco. The May-Port elevator is having a new bucket installed in the grain terminal, which means they can’t run trains until the end of March.
- Hershey – There hasn’t been much change in homes for sale in Buxton, although a spec home recently was sold. The Buxton City Council is trying to revamp the city’s website.

Meeting adjourned at 8:59 pm.

Officer (printed name & office) Signature Date

Recording Secretary (printed name) Signature Date