



Harney County Economic Development

Minutes
Community Revitalization Team
Wednesday, September 2, 2020
5:30 PM- 7:00 PM
Via Zoom

Attendees:

Pete Runnels-Harney County Judge	Brenda Smith-High Desert Partnership
Patty Dorroh-Harney County Commissioner	Irene Gonzalez-Small Business Administration
Amber Wares-Symmetry Care	Misti Porter-TVCC Outreach
Allison Field-Business Oregon	Steve Quick-HC School District #3
Logan Hunt-Burns Paiute Tribe Economic Dev.	Jennifer Taynton-High Desert Partnership
Becky Cunningham-Rimrock Recycling	Kirby Letham-City of Hines
Fred Flippence-Harney Electric Cooperative	Judy Erwin-City of Burns
Andrea Letham-TVCC SBDC	Jen Hoke-Harney District Hospital
Dr. Ed Henninger-EOU School of Business	Ed Susman-WorkSource Oregon
Tory Stinnett-Grant Co. Economic Development	Chris Holloway-TVCC SBDC
Doris Davison-Country Washboard	Jeff Graham-MiWave
Jordon Bennett-Harney County Fair	Noelle Colby-Rotell-DHS
Terri Hellbusch-community member	Susan Christensen-GEODC
Shawna Bonaby-community visitor	Jen & Forrest Keady-Historic Central Hotel
Denise Rose-Harney County Economic Development	Greg Smith-Harney County Economic Development

1. **Director Greg Smith** welcomed the group, called the meeting to order and identified those calling in by phone.
2. **Old Business:** The June meeting minutes were sent out by link to the website, and there were no comments or changes suggested.
3. **New Business:**
 - A. **Regular Reports:**

Harney County Court, Pete Runnels -the County Court is working on a housing incentives program. There will likely be a legislative process as well, which is already under discussion. The brownfield evaluation is under way with Cardno Consulting. The county received a Business Oregon grant for business assistance and that will be rolling out soon.

City of Hines, Kirby Letham – The water project is going well, most have probably noticed the visible signs of material piled up and digging in streets and easements. Overall, the project is going well considering the majority of the system is at least 90 years old, the main problem seems to be valves sticking. Becki Graham of High Desert Partnership is working with local youth to plan and redo the skate park. A paving project will come later.

Burns Paiute Tribe, Logan Hunt – The new General Manager has started work. A new cohort of tribal entrepreneurs has started. The Economic Development Committee is also seeking members for the advisory group. They meet twice a month. Homes are being planned for 8 lots on tribal land, likely starting with 4 homes. Improvements are being made to the RV park including installing internet, fixing the bathrooms, and developing a website to market the property. The Tribal Foundation has taken the lead on the downtown property development. The old armory building is primarily being used for offices for the prevention programs and IT.

City of Burns, Judy Erwin – The Burns Town Apartment building has been closed down and they are working to get the last few tenants out. The city is also working on potential property to entice new home starts. They continue to work with owners to clear problem properties.

Harney County Economic Development, Greg Smith – The office will be expanding hours due to some COVID 19 relief funds made available through a Business Oregon grant received by High Desert Partnership. The plan is also in place to add several student interns who will work on marketing material and reaching out to county businesses.

B. Additional Reports:

Harney County School District #3, Superintendent Steve Quick – The schools are open this week with students on an A and B model schedule. The ultimate goal is to be fully opened up later this fall. The bond for facilities improvement will be on the November ballot. The proposal recommends a number of physical improvements and consolidating from three school buildings to two. A committee to promote and educate the voting community will be mobilized after the Labor Day holiday. Greg offered the CRT as a resource for getting the word out.

Harney County Fair, Jordon Bennett – the Manager reviewed safety and health precautions they will be taking at the fair. There will not be a carnival, but they have a variety of kid's games and activities. GEODC and funds available from Business Oregon to support fairs were mentioned to Jordon.

C. Regular Committee Reports:

Housing – Judge Runnels reported that he has sent a letter to the owner of several multi-parcel lots beyond Slater School, asking him to consider making these available by donation, for housing. There are several 2-6-acre sections and one 12-acre lot. The owner has ties to the community and went to school here. Denise gave an overview of the Housing Committee activities over the past three months and other committee members contributed to the conversation about incentive programs, contact with developers, and values in the general housing market in the county.

Small Business Support: Greg thanked Jen and Forrest Keady, and Myndi Hemphill for their service to this effort. They are all moving onto new projects personally and have asked for new leadership from the group. Noelle Colby-Rotell volunteered to be on the Small Business Committee as well as the Housing Committee.

Workforce – Brenda Smith reported that there are a number of working groups convening through High Desert Partnership including the Mentor Match Teen Entrepreneur, Indian Entrepreneurs, and a new pilot project to connect high school students with businesses for school credit. Any business who is interested in mentoring can contact Brenda at HDP.

Infrastructure – Judge Runnels reported on the progress of the \$600,000 grant received from EPA for Brownfield evaluation and clean-up of local properties. The county has hired Cardno Consultants to help guide the process, and the economic development office is helping with administration. A list of potential properties was developed from the suggestions made last year by the CRT group. The October 7th CRT meeting will host Cardno for the purpose of a public meeting. Encourage any community members who are interested in learning more about the process to attend. A DEQ hazardous waste collection day will be held in the county on October 31st, please watch for more information.

D. Focus Projects:

Dr. Edward Henninger, the Dean of the School of Business from Eastern Oregon University gave an overview of his career which includes a broad background in colleges and universities as well as a specialty CTE school. He commented on the Strategic Plan and how it is compatible with their efforts to work toward improving EOU programs here in Harney County. Their efforts will include work-based learning, career exploration, and program overview to align with industry needs. Focus right now is career preparation so this is a good opportunity to work together on dual enrollment possibilities. Dr. Henninger was very encouraged by what he sees happening in the community and looks forward to more collaboration in the future.

Jeff Graham, Owner of Mi Wave Internet reported that the agreement between Harney County, Business Oregon and MiWave has been finalized and work has started on stringing broadband capacity lines. The backbone should be complete by the end of 2020 with residential and business core areas within city limits able to access 1GB by the end of 2021. They estimate service will be available to 2000 homes, 100 businesses and 25 government and tribal entities. They will start with the business core in Burns and move to Hines from there. The project is slated to take approximately 3 years. They are still awaiting funding to supply the Pine Creek and Drewsey areas.

General Announcements:

Jen Keady introduced Shawna Bonaby who is in town from New York with her husband. They have family in Harney County and will be selling Patio Tacos at the Historic Central Hotel patio on Thursday evening September 10th. They are both in the restaurant industry. She also announced that she and Forrest have purchased The Palace building and have been removing fixtures and furnishings. There will be a parking lot sale this Saturday. Jen encouraged everyone to come get a piece of history from the old “Rug Room”!

The next regular meeting will be October 7th and we hope to have an in-person meeting at the community center meeting room. Greg Smith adjourned the meeting at 6:40 PM.