



Harney County Economic Development

Minutes
Community Revitalization Team
Tuesday December 1 , 2020
5:30 PM- 7:00 PM
Via Zoom

Attendees:

Pete Runnels-Harney County Judge	Andrea Letham-TVCC SBDC
Fred Flippence-Harney Electric Cooperative	Irene Gonzalez-Small Business Administration
Courtney Warner Crowell-Oregon Regional Solutions	Misti Porter-TVCC Outreach
Allison Field-Business Oregon	Logan Hunt-Burns Paiute Tribe
Dana Young-Treasure Valley Community College	Jen Hoke-Harney District Hospital
Eddie Alves-Treasure Valley Community College	Kirby Letham-City of Hines
Abby Lee-Treasure Valley Community College	Daniel Brown-Incoming: City of Burns
Curt Blackburn-Blackburn Real Estate	Judy Erwin-City of Burns
Colby Marshall-Blackburn Real Estate	Ed Susman-Worksource Oregon
Amber Wares-Symmetry Care	Ray LaFrance-Worksource Oregon - Burns
Emily Cecil-Harney County Economic Development	Bree Cubrilovic-GEODC
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 October 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 has received funds to provide business support to county business owners, focusing on tribal owned, under served and rural. They do not have the guidance yet, but it should be around \$500,000. Housing incentives proposal is going before county court next week and will propose 40% off permit fees for construction of housing over the next five years. The Brownfield evaluations are going well, and they have done most of the Phase I site visits and are starting on some Phase 2 work.

City of Burns, Judy Erwin-Judy introduced the incoming City Manager, Daniel Brown, hired to start January 4, 2021. He is coming from Arizona and has a background in government administration, the military and law enforcement. He was extremely interested in learning more about the area; he and his wife are excited to settle in Harney County. Judy announced the Christmas lighting contest in the city and reminded the group that some funds remain to help support businesses develop their online presence.

City of Hines, Kirby Letham – the water project is moving along and a bit ahead of schedule. They should be done early next year. The city has applied to Oregon Department of Transportation, Community Pathways funding for a 2-mile, paved walking trail in Hines. The plan has made it through the first round of the process. Hines is also having a Christmas lighting contest and has some CARES funds left for business COVID 19 relief.

Burns Paiute Tribe, Logan Hunt – The Tribe is working to get all their CARES funding distributed and spent. Logan's main project now is the remodel of restrooms in the RV park. The remodel will make the building hands free and accessible.

Harney County Economic Development, Greg Smith-the internship program with funding from Business Oregon and High Desert Partnership has been successful, employing Riley Morris from Burns High School and Jake Blackburn from Eastern OR University. They have worked to contact county businesses and offer COVID 19 related assistance as needed. Greg introduced Emily Cecil who shared the educational materials used in the process. The office has facilitated loan adjustments for three borrowers experiencing COVID 19 challenges. A loan is in process to enable a local collaborative group to purchase warehouse space for a native seed business. The office is working with HC Planning to address an Enterprise Zone request. A brief legislative update brought the good news that the local OR Youth Authority facility will not experience budget cuts and that the governors initial budget shows an increase of 50% allocated to economic development.

B. Additional Reports:

Harney County SBDC, Andrea Letham- Businesses in the county have submitted over \$685,000 in grant applications to GEODC for Business Oregon COVID 19 relief assistance. SBDC will be offering a QuickBooks class on December 9th, both online and in person. The Shop Harney card is off and rolling and sales are growing rapidly, encouraging recipients to shop locally.

Treasure Valley Community College, President Dana Young, and VP Abby Lee- face to face classes have gone to virtual for now. They hope to be back in the classroom on January 4th. A new program is being offered to those looking to explore course options. A prospective student can register for empty class spaces at no cost. There is no age requirement, this could be high school students exploring options or adults looking at continuing education. She will send more information by email.

C. Regular Committee Reports:

Housing – Curt Blackburn noted that they have put 5 of 7 buildable lots in a subdivision under contract in the last 30 days. These will be developed as home sites. Assistance with power and water lines and roads are of interest to developers. They are also working with a builder from MT who is partnering with a lot owner. He expressed a concern about the income levels in the proposed legislation and how it would apply to those with irregular flow of income. Colby Marshall encouraged repair and rehabilitation of older homes to meet the requirements of government backed lending programs. Greg stated the proposed legislation includes remodeling to bring a home up to lending standards.

Small Business Support- Greg and Denise will talk to Dan and Misti Porter about the committee offline to see if they might be interested.

Workforce – no report. Ray LaFrance the new Work Source Oregon local representative introduced himself and gave an update for the local office. He has lived in Harney County for about a year and a half and is currently doing a lot of training. Ed Susman welcomed Ray and gave phone contact information for unemployment resources. Job seekers and those looking for training and skill building can call 800-846-9110 and employment services, job postings can call 541-276-6542.

Infrastructure – Most of the infrastructure report was discussed in the county court report, including the Brownfield efforts.

D. Focus Project: Harney Homes Project

Allison Field of Business Oregon: Discussed the limited options through Business Oregon programs to fund water, wastewater, and general infrastructure. Most technical assistance dollars are allotted to repair of existing systems not expansion for new development. She contacted John Unger who reviewed the water and waste systems options and there are not grants for midlevel homes. Some assistance is available through the Community Block Grant program to provide tribal housing. The state acknowledges the gap in mid-level housing assistance.

Courtney Warner Crowell of Regional Solutions: Courtney echoed Allison’s findings; not great options for mid-level or workforce homes. She talked to Kim Travis at state Housing and Community Services. Last year the Greater Oregon Housing Accelerator was established, but due to COVID 19 the budget for that program was cut. She suggested exploring developer + municipality loan partnerships which can pay for planning and infrastructure. Once a program is defined there are several entities who can help with loans, including Special Projects Works. Colby Marshall asked about terms of the loans. It will depend on the program but most are ~ 30 years and less than 4% interest. Courtney also suggested looking at a Veteran’s Housing project, which would be eligible for some assistance. She will send contact information from a project in the NE part of the state.

General discussion was held regarding the updates and how to keep the process moving forward. Economic Development office will start researching the Veterans housing option and reach out to the Senior Center to connect with them.

General Announcements:

Allison Field addressed the group and complimented the collaborative effort Harney County, Burns and Hines put forth to grow and support the economy. She often shares the CRT process and the ability of our businesses and government leaders to pull together to find solutions. We are her “example county” as she describes successful models.

Greg Smith adjourned the meeting at 7:03 PM.