



Harney County Economic Development

Minutes
Community Response Team
Wednesday, July 11, 2018

Attendees:

Lori Cheek-High Desert Biomass Coop	Doris Davison-Hines RV Park
Rick Paul-Community Member	Steve Davison-Hines RV Park
Susan Christensen-GEODC	Arik Swindlehurst-WorkSource Oregon
Barbara Cannady-Community Member	Sammie Masterson-Harney District Hospital
Roger Sheeley-High Desert Partnership	Jen Hoke-Harney District Hospital
Curt Blackburn-Jett Blackburn Real Estate	Lori Sherwood-VantagePoint
Jordan Sheeley-High Desert Partnership	Becky Cunningham-Rimrock Recycling
Lynn McClintock-High Desert Parks and Rec.	Beryl Shea-Steens Mountain Brewing/Community
Martha Corrigan-Symmetry Care	Brenda Smith-High Desert Partnership
Judy Erwin-City of Hines	Kathy Rementeria-DHS
Nick Planinz-Business Owner	Deanna Thrall-Symmetry Care
George Heinz-HC Restoration Collaborative	Greg Smith-HC Economic Development
Amber Wares-Symmetry Care	Denise Rose-HC Economic Development
Luke Hemphill-Business Owner	

1. **Greg Smith** welcomed the group and called the meeting to order.
2. **Old Business:** June meeting minutes were with the July agenda sent via email. It was moved and seconded to approve minutes. All voted in favor.
3. **New Business:**

A. Regular Reports

City of Hines Judy Erwin-The lift station needs to be replaced in the industrial, residential area of west Hines. The city is exploring financing options and has applied for several grants. The Dollar Tree has been granted an easement on the street side of their property. They have started fencing the area in order to begin construction.

Harney County Court, Patty Dorroh/Pete Runnels/Mark Owens – no report

City of Burns, Dauna Wensenk – no report

Burns Paiute Tribe – no report

Business Oregon, Scott Fairley – no report

Harney County Economic Development, Greg Smith – Usually summer is a slow season for economic development but that has not been the case for Harney County! The sporting goods store sale is complete, as most know. The office is working with an entrepreneur who is rehabilitating several retail spaces downtown. Also, we continue to see several new clients each month.

Other Reports:

High Desert Partnership, Brenda Smith- Brenda introduced Jordon Sheeley, a new HDP staff member. He will be working on the entrepreneurial eco-systems map and coordinating the BizHarney project. Brenda also announced the Rural Skill Builder Workshop on September 21st. Janet Sotos from the Economic Development Division of Business Oregon will be here, and she recommended the Workforce Team connect with her.

Vantage Point, Lori Sherwood- Vantage Point was hired by the county court using grant funding to evaluate and propose solutions to our internet connectivity in Harney County. Lori gave a brief overview of the necessity of data gathering and stressed how important this face to face opportunity is for their process. She has met with groups today and will conduct more meetings tomorrow and welcomed any one with input or questions to contact her. Notification of an online survey will go to households in the county in the form of a mailed postcard. She encouraged everyone to participate. Feasibility study, proposed solutions and recommendations will be presented to the County Court in October and they have asked for this information to be made available to all county residents as well.

Greater Eastern Oregon Development Corporation, Susan Christensen-reported that GEOCD is working on a drone project in Pendleton using remote helicopters. They are also working with a federal loan program to build wastewater infrastructure supplemental funding in partnership with Business Oregon and DEQ. She is looking forward to spending more time in Harney County as she is now well established in her new position. The company will be looking for businesses and programs to partner with as they seek funding opportunities.

L&M Hemphill LLC, Luke Hemphill-talked briefly about the work they are doing on the old Voectly building and the two adjacent buildings known as the old quilt store. All properties are on Broadway and they hope to lease one half of the quilt store to a business owner who will conduct classes as well as operate a retail business, as early as October.

B. Progress reports on work topics:

- Lori Cheek reported that the Biomass Cooperative hopes to conduct a feasibility study to plan the expansion of services to the Sheriff's office and jail. They are also exploring an extension to downtown businesses, Hines and potentially the former Lincoln Jr. High for future development. **(Infrastructure)**
- George Heinz announced awarded funding for the housing development (proposed by the Sr. Center) originally submitted to the Lift program. He did not have details but was told this was a comparable number to the original request. CinA is also working on funding for existing home rehabilitation and repair. **(Housing)**

C. Housing Report:

- Curt Blackburn gave the following report on the housing work that has been conducted over the past several months:
 - a. Workforce and spec housing issues have been at the forefront of their efforts. He has requested a copy of the Pendleton Housing study and talked to the city manager there for applicable ideas and data. They offer a spec home building incentive program which offers full infrastructure in place and buildable lots to contractors (usually repossessed lots). Their program has been successful and they will likely discontinue it soon as it is no longer necessary.
 - b. The committee suggested an appraiser go through the past few years of sales and rentals to come up with an inventory. (Greg Smith later mentioned that the county would be doing this in conjunction with a DLCD grant program).
 - c. The group investigated a property tax rebate, this needs more work to come up with a logistics plan for discussion.
 - d. Water and sewer hook up breaks and rebates were also proposed as incentives for new housing starts. The city of Burns has the LID program but program specifics were not available.
 - e. Currently, spec homes are not financially feasible for contractors in the county. Real estate purchase, utility hooks up and construction cost are a challenge when compared to the sales price a builder can expect to get for a completed home. The appraised values and comparables are not high enough to support a mortgage, in many cases.
- Jen Hoke needs middle to upper end homes for recruiting at the hospital.

Outcomes and Recommendations:

- Work with the housing inventory will involve Curt and the Housing Committee - **HCEDC will notify Commissioner Dorroh as she is managing the grant and ask that she keep Curt involved**
- Committee will continue to seek information from the following: John Day city manager, Ontario housing project and Karen Pettigrew in Boardman - **Curt Blackburn**
- Eco Northwest funding for related needs – **Greg and Curt will keep watching for updates**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:50. The next meeting will be August 1st and the Workforce Development committee will report.