



Athens Economic Development Corporation

Board of Directors

Monthly Board Meeting

November 16, 2021

The Board of Directors of the Athens Economic Development Corporation (hereinafter referred to as AEDC) held a monthly board meeting on Tuesday, November 16, 2021 at 10 am in the Derek D. Daniels Room of the Athens Partnership Center located at 201 W Corsicana Street, Athens, Texas.

Directors' present: John Trent, Randy Jones, Donna Meredith, Joe Mike Murphy, Cliff Bomer, Danny Tidmore and Mark Ferrell

Staff Present Joanie Ahlers, Executive Director and Valerie Franklin, Office Manager

Ex-Officio: City Manager Elizabeth Borstad, Mayor Toni Clay, Councilmen Robert Gross, Aaron Smith and Mark Carroll

Guest: Blake Daniels and Debra Deas

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 10:01 a. m. by President John Trent for all agenda items. A quorum was present.

Declaration of Conflict of Interest

None.

Public Communication

None.

Consider discussion and possible action regarding the approval of Minutes from AEDC Monthly Meeting on October 19, 2021.

Mark Ferrell made a motion to accept the October 19, 2021 monthly minutes and it was seconded by Joe Mike Murphy . The motion carried unanimously.

Consider discussion and possible action regarding the approval of October 2021 Financials

Sales tax were up almost 14.15% increase from October of last year.

Mr. John Trent shared information from the Athens Review that stated sales tax revenue was up 18.41% for Athens. Cliff Bomer asked if there was a minimum balance requirement on the Tex-Star and Logic accounts. Director Ahlers stated she was not sure. Mr. Bomer asked that a meeting be called on the Investment Committee to discuss moving monies to possibly a CD to get a better rate.

A motion was made by Donna Meredith and seconded by Danny Tidmore to approve the October 2021 financials. The motion passed unanimously.

Consider discussion and possible action regarding 4th Quarter Reimbursement to the City of Athens

A motion was made by Donna Meredith to approve the reimburse to the City of Athens. It was seconded by Joe Mike Murphy and the motion passed unanimously.

Consider discussion on Downtown Incentive Policies

Executive Director Joanie Ahlers talked about the downtown Athens area and the master plan. She asked the board to consider some options to incentivize revitalize downtown. Canton has done a great job with their downtown. They have a renovation of a vacant building program, rent subsidy program for downtown retail, entertainment or restaurant for a maximum of \$7500 of rent forgiveness and exterior/interior renovation to historical buildings.

Mayor Toni Clay responded to the question concerning the master plan getting close. Some of the city people have talked to TXDOT about some versions of downtown square we would like to see. We have a special level of challenges because of the state's control through TXDOT on the square. A traffic study is required. After speaking to several organizations, the most asked question is about the square. She thinks a program like this would be wildly popular because people want our square to have a certain small- town charm.

Mark Ferrell asked if in master planning does it come up as having downtown approved as a historical district. Several buildings cannot be claimed as historic because of the façade. If it becomes a historic district, individual buildings do not have to apply for incentives. Must come from Historical Commission.

Cliff Bomer asked if downtown is in an opportunity zone. Director Ahlers stated it goes down Prairieville on one side.

Danny Tidmore talked about the parking as an issue. The Mayor addressed this. This is the need for the traffic study because there is a lot to consider.

Danny Tidmore addressed the code restriction issues for owners to update buildings.

Executive Director Ahlers asked for volunteers to serve on a downtown committee, Member Danny Tidmore, Mark Ferrell and Joe Mike Murphy are the committee.

Consider discussion and possible action regarding Business Assistance Grant

Executive Director Ahlers stated the business assistance grant closes this Friday and we have no applications. After discussion with City Manager Borstad, we would run this business assistance grant until funding is expended and leave the application date open. Her recommended is to ask the board to run this program on a first come first serve.

Executive Director Ahlers stated she would create a flyer to give out to businesses. There was discussion concerning adding information to the water bill and it was decided it is not a good tool to use.

Cliff Bomer made a motion to approve the business assistance grant as open ended. It was seconded by Mark Ferrell and the motion passed unanimously

Director's Update

Executive Director Ahlers stated the AEDC office will be closed on Tuesday-Friday during the week of Thanksgiving.

Save the date for the Chamber of Commerce. They are planning their annual gala for February 4, 2022. We have been asked if we are interested in being a sponsor for \$1,000. This would include eight tickets to the event. She shared this with the City Manager, and she suggested we share the sponsorship, and each get four tickets. This event will be held at the Nightingale. There is a ribbon cutting event tomorrow at Lakeland House at noon. The address is 213 W Cayuga Drive.

LJA Engineering who is handling the drainage issues in the Industrial Park. They provided an updated estimate to the construct at \$28,000. There will be a separate fee from Fentress Engineering for a topo survey. The project will be handled by the public works department.

GVD Rentals will request a reassignment to Deer Park LLC.

Biomerics' lease amendment will include tenant improvements and purchase of the building in three ½ years. There are some credits in the original agreement that will be changed.

Executive Session

Pursuant to the Texas Government Code: Section 551.087- Deliberation Regarding Economic Development Negotiations: MHP Partnership, LTD

Pursuant to the Texas Government Code: Section 551.072 – Deliberation regarding real property – to deliberate the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property – Deer Park Apartments (GVD Rentals)

The board entered in executive session at 10:51 a.m.

The board re-entered in open session at 11:26 a.m.

Consider discussion and possible action concerning items discussed under Agenda item #10

Mark Ferrell made a motion to approval the amendment to the real estate contract with GVD Rentals to approve \$96,744.00. It was seconded by Donna Meredith and the motion passed unanimously.

Randy Jones made a motion to amend the performance agreement with MHP to allow funding at \$62,500 as each certificate of occupancy is received. It was seconded by Donna Meredith and Cliff Bomer abstained.

Director's request for future agenda items

The Leakage Study

Executive Director Ahlers stated there are still issues we are waiting on. Hopefully it will be on the

December agenda.

The spec building

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 11:32 a.m.

Donna Meredith, Secretary

John Trent, President