

WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES  
SISTERS CITY COUNCIL  
520 E. CASCADE AVENUE  
NOVEMBER 08, 2007

**COUNCIL PRESENT:**

Brad Boyd	Mayor
Bill Merrill	Council President
Lon Kellstrom	Councilor
Sharlene Weed	Councilor
Shawna Bell	Councilor

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Eileen Stein	City Manager
Eric Porter	Planning Director
Brad Grimm	Public Works Director
Paul Bertagna	Public Works Projects
Kathy Nelson	City Recorder

**CHAMBER MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Tate Metcalf	President
Michael Robillard	Vice President
Chuck Fadeley	Past President
Todd Dow	Director
Kathi Johnson	Director
Cheryl Mills	Executive Director

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Mayor Boyd. Introductions of Council, Chamber Board members, City Staff and guests were made.

1. Chamber Business Overview for 2007 and Plans for 2008 (handout attached)

**Sisters Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Cheryl Mills** thanked the Council for the opportunity to meet with the Chamber Board of Directors. She provided an overview of the Chambers accomplishments in 2007 and future goals for 2008.

**Mayor Boyd** asked what the Ambassador Program is. **Chamber President Tate Metcalf** explained that it is a group of member volunteers that help with Chamber activities such as networking, mix and mingles and ribbon cutting ceremonies.

**Mayor Boyd** asked for an explanation of the *Pioneering Trails itineraries*. **Executive Director Mills** stated the idea came out of the Sisters branding process. She stated the idea is to give visitors itineraries for local activities. She stated the itineraries can be created to the specific timeframes or interests of visitors to the area. **Chamber Director Todd Dow** stated that in the future the program will built an itinerary with maps and downloads.

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2. Report on Use of Room Tax Dollars in 2007 (handout attached)

**Executive Director Mills** stated the purpose of the Chamber is to promote the Sisters area and member businesses. She explained that the room tax revenue received from the City accounts for 25% of the Chamber's total income and provides funds for advertising and marketing activities.

3. Report on Street Vendor Survey (handout attached)

**Executive Director Mills** stated that the Chamber ran a survey during the month of October on the feasibility of allowing street vendors in Sisters at the City's request. She stated the questions were provided by the City and discussed the results of the survey.

**Councilor Weed** asked if the Chamber had an opinion on the matter and **Executive Director Mills** stated the Chamber Board had not discussed the issue. **Chamber Director Dow** stated he felt that if the questions had been more specific and not only with regard to food vendors, the answers could have been quite different.

4. Economic Development Discussion (handout attached)

- a. Economic Development Committee/SEED Survey
- b. EDCO Business Roundtable

**Executive Director Mills** discussed the results of a survey that ran last spring to determine if an Economic Development Director would be supported by the community. She stated that while most businesses were in favor of the concept they were unwilling to provide any financial support. She stated that work to educate businesses as to why it would be to their advantage needs to take place using as models the cities of Redmond and Madras where private and public money funds the position. She asked for the Council's opinion on the matter.

**Mayor Boyd** stated that he feels the City needs to target businesses that fit the community vision and the economic reality of Sisters. He stated an assessment of the City's strengths and weaknesses is needed and that Sisters is attractive to smaller firms with educated employees. He stated he is not being elitist but pragmatic, considering the high cost of homes and lack of public transportation. He stated there is a need for selective targeting of businesses that will stay and can thrive here.

**Councilor Weed** stated she agrees with Mayor Boyd. She stated she would support the hiring of an Economic Development Director but would need a detailed description of how and what could be expected from such an investment. She stated she would be leery of providing incentives to businesses to relocate or start up in Sisters as she feels the incentives often do not have the intended effect. **Executive Director Mills** agreed that the value of the position needs to be proven for the businesses that would contribute financial support. **Councilor Weed** stated she also feels

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some concern for the many businesses in town that pioneered successfully without the benefit of an economic development director. She stated the Council has shown its support by allowing the zone changes at Three Sisters and Sun Ranch Business Parks that provide an opportunity for individuals to live where they work. She stressed the importance of targeting people that want to live the Sisters life style.

**Mayor Boyd** stated that instead of hiring an economic development director in Sisters it might prove more beneficial to hire consultants in larger cities such as Los Angeles, San Francisco and Seattle to look for businesses that are looking to relocate. He stated those areas that have a higher cost of living but a lower quality of life would embrace Central Oregon. **Executive Director Mills** stated that Economic Development for Central Oregon (EDCO) has a model and strategy to follow for recruiting. **Manager Stein** stated that Redmond created the original model that merged with EDCO that provides recruitment efforts for that city. She stated that Prineville has also chosen to use the same model. She added that it is important for the business community to help finance an economic director position as everyone benefits. **Manager Stein** stated that with regard to those businesses that pioneered their own trail, a revamping of the relocation guide by the Economic Development Committee will highlight those businesses to show their pioneering spirit. She stated it provides a natural extension for the visioning and branding efforts into the economic effort. She also stated she sees potential for an economic development director to make contacts with the other markets as suggested by the Mayor.

**Mayor Boyd** stated that the price per square foot for light industrial land in Sisters will never be the lowest in the region, but that other factors make Sisters a fit for some businesses. **Chamber Vice President Robillard** countered that office space in Sisters is half the cost of office space in Bend. **Manager Stein** added that EDCO use to comment that Sisters had no industrial land inventory but now it does with Three Sisters and Sun Ranch business parks.

**Councilor Merrill** stated that prior to approving an economic development director there needs to be an evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the City and of the competition's strengths and weaknesses. He added he would want to see concrete plans prior to approving the position. **Manager Stein** commented that the Economic Development Committee is working on an update of its strategic action plan and determining those strengths and weaknesses could be incorporated into that update. **Chamber Director Dow** stated there is the issue of workforce and where those people are living. **Councilor Weed** stated that is one of the reason it is important to focus on small businesses.

**Councilor Weed** asked who comprises the membership of the Economic Development Committee. **Executive Director Mills** stated the committee that meets once a month is comprised of members from Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council (COIC), EDCO, Central Electric Cooperative (CEC), Bill Mintiens, Manager Stein, community members and herself. **Manager Stein** explained there are economic sectors the Economic Development Strategic Action Plan

created by this committee and that recent additions to the plan include the real estate/construction and arts sectors.

5. Downtown Issues

a. Kiwanis trash receptacles

**Manager Stein** informed the Chamber that the Kiwanis are no longer maintaining the downtown trash receptacles. She stated the City is making an effort to pick up those receptacles that are not being maintained by a nearby business. She added that Public Works Director Brad Grimm is working to find replacements and a more efficient means to collect the trash from those receptacles.

**Chamber President Metcalf** informed the Council that Roger White, a member of the Chamber's Arts Council, is working on a beautification plan for downtown, which he will bring to the City upon completion. He stated the plan will include benches, flower baskets and utilize the new Sisters brand. **Manager Stein** stated the plan can become part of the vision for the urban renewal plan for the downtown core. She informed the Chamber that the urban renewal plan is still two to three years away because of the need to be debt financed. She stated she is beginning to think about the need for the City to engage the services of an urban designer to assist with the design of the streetscape project. **Mayor Boyd** affirmed that there is no need for the Chamber plan to be put on hold until the downtown urban renewal plan comes to fruition and plans for flowers, benches, art and trash receptacles can be started right away.

b. Signage concerns

**Manager Stein** asked if the Chamber members have heard any concerns raised by the community as it relates to signs, in particular the proliferation of temporary signs. **Executive Director Mills** stated she has received no complaints. **Chamber Director Dow** asked if the City has any educational material written in plain language that can be distributed to new businesses regarding signage rules and regulations. **Manager Stein** stated there was none at present but that was an excellent suggestion for the planning department. **Councilor Merrill** suggested that all information that would be pertinent to new or potential business be consolidated into a concise packet. He also stated he feels the business community should police themselves for sign violations. **Chamber Director Dow** stated there needs to be some means of enforcements for violators also.

c. Sidewalk repairs

**Public Works Projects Coordinator Paul Bertagna** reported that it has been a busy summer and fall with sidewalks repairs. He stated repairs have been extended by the need to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). He stated that 42 letters were sent out to businesses by

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the City last spring regarding needed repairs and to date 28 businesses have completed the repairs, six have the repairs scheduled and eight will be receiving a third letter soon. He stated the City can have the needed work performed and bill the business when the repairs become a safety issue. He briefed the Chamber Board on the continuing discussion about ADA compliant pavers. He stated the City has had a hard time receiving an answer as to which pavers are ADA compliant.

d. East Cascade Avenue project

**Manager Stein** reported that the East Cascade project went out to bid twice; the first time the City received no bids and the second time only one bid was received with a higher price tag than the City's projected costs for the project. She stated the project will go out to bid a third time after the beginning of the year with the work to be completed next summer. She explained that the project, a planning requirement for the Civic Center, will bring the entrance/exit from the center to a 90 degree angle onto East Cascade creating a four way stop. She added the design will incorporate a storm water detention swall, curb and an area large enough for a bench or piece of public art.

6. Status of City Goals for 2007

**Manager Stein** distributed a handout on the Councils priority goals for the City. She briefed the Chamber on the Committee for Citizen Involvement (CCI), the Transportation System Plan (TSP), the Forest Service Property sale and the development of the Housing Plan.

**Mayor Boyd** thanked the Chamber Board for attending the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Kathy Nelson, City Recorder

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Brad Boyd, Mayor