

WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES
SISTERS CITY COUNCIL
520 E. CASCADE AVENUE
APRIL 16, 2009

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Lon Kellstrom Mayor
Bill Merrill Council President
Sharlene Weed Councilor
Pat Thompson Councilor
Jerry Bogart Councilor

STAFF PRESENT:

Eileen Stein City Manager
Eric Porter Comm. Dev. Director
Brad Grimm Public Works Director
Kathy Nelson City Recorder

GUESTS:

Roger Lee EDCO Executive Director
Eric Strobel EDCO Zone Manager
Karen Friend Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council (COIC) Operations Director
Scott Ayock Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council (COIC) Program Administrator

ABSENT:

Lisa Young Finance Director

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Kellstrom at 8:05 a.m.

1. Economic Development for Central Oregon (EDCO) Membership

Roger Lee, Economic Development for Central Oregon (EDCO) Executive Director, distributed copies of his presentation and a packet of publications on economic development in the region as well as EDCO's strategic plan for 2007-2009. He provided a brief history of EDCO stating it was founded in 1981 with the express purpose to facilitate economic growth in the region. He stated there are currently 280 private members and 10 public members with three agreements for implementation of local economic development programs in Redmond, Prineville/Crook County and Jefferson County. He provided a listing of platinum members in both the public and private sector. **Eric Strobel, EDCO Program Manager** stated that a membership at the platinum level guarantees a seat on the EDCO Board of Director which provides exposure to many opportunities and quality individuals with a great deal of knowledge. He stated EDCO is committed to economic development in Sisters regardless of the membership level it chooses.

Mr. Lee explained how a higher level of membership will benefit not only the Sisters but EDCO also, as the resources will allow EDCO to do more in the region. He discussed the marketing and public relations works that EDCO provides as well as the effort it gives towards business recruitment along with business retention and expansion. He discussed EDCO's strategic projects to promote the region's competitiveness and preparedness for success in business and economic development. He also provided a list of tasks to be employed to enhance economic development in Sisters.

Mayor Kellstrom asked what percentage of initial contact comes from EDCO's outreach versus companies reaching out to EDCO. **Mr. Lee** stated that approximately 75% of the contacts come from EDCO reaching out to businesses and approximately 25% of the businesses reach out to

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EDCO for the initial contact. **Mr. Lee** added that a yield of 10% to 15% of businesses that relocate is received from the outreach EDCO initiates. He stated that EDCO does site visits with interested companies from other areas. **Mr. Strobel** stated that he also does many site visits to existing businesses in the region to see if there is any support that EDCO can provide.

Mr. Lee reported that an updated *Central Oregon Fact Book* is under construction. He stated the 200 page publication will also be available on the EDCO web site when completed.

Mr. Lee explained that the City of Bend is considering the possibility of a separate dedicated economic development program to more efficiently use its resources and serve the needs of members of the program. Mr. Lee stated if this occurs, Mr. Strobel will become the liaison and that he would become the enterprise zone manager for Sisters.

Mayor Kellstrom asked for additional information with regard to the venture catalyst program. **Mr. Lee** explained the program will have a regional focus linking up investors and people with technical expertise to assist potential businesses. He stated the program will launch in the next 60 to 90 days.

Mayor Kellstrom thanked Mr. Lee and Mr. Strobel for attending the workshop and suggested moving forward with the presentation from Cascade East Transit before continuing the conversation with regard to changing the membership level to EDCO. The **Council** agreed.

2. Cascade East Transit (CET) Ridership Update

Karen Friend, Operations Director for COIC stated she manages the Cascade East Transit (CET) program while Scott Aycock does all the planning for CET. She provided a history of how the program began and how it has evolved and grown into a regional transportation system. She stated that transportation can be a huge barrier to employment and people getting out of poverty and there is a need for connectivity in the region as people often live, work and seek medical care in different parts of the region.

Ms. Friend provided an overview of the services provided by CET including local and community connector shuttles as well as the fares charged for these services. She provided ride comparisons for 2007, 2008 and the first quarter of 2009 including the purpose for those rides. She stated that use of the service has been growing throughout the region with the exception of Sisters where the ridership is underutilized. She stated that a majority of the rides in Sisters are used by Sisters seniors for rides to the senior lunch provided on Tuesdays at a local church.

Ms. Friend stated she is struggling with what service to provide in Sisters as everyone she speaks to seems to have a different idea. She stated she has approximately \$100,000 to spend on the services in Sisters and asked the Council what services they feel would best suit the citizens.

Councilor Merrill stated that a bulk of potential riders are within city limits but there needs to be

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additional education to inform citizens of the service available. He stated he also thinks there should be consideration to changing the route to run between Redmond and Sisters, not Sisters and Bend.

Mr. Aycock stated that it is not just a matter of getting people to ride CET; it is whether to focus on local service or connector commuter options and that needs to be determined before advertising the service to the community. **Ms. Friend** stated that service between Sisters and Redmond is less expensive and connector service could easily be made with Redmond as opposed to Bend.

Councilor Thompson stated there are two types of Sisters citizens with transportation needs; those who leave early and get back late because they work outside of the City and those who want to shop or have appointments in Bend or Redmond that want to leave mid-morning and get back in the mid-afternoon. **Councilor Weed** asked if there is more need for those leaving Sisters to work elsewhere or for those who travel to Sisters to work. **Councilor Merrill** suggested working with Black Butte Ranch to see if other people working in Sisters could piggy-back onto the bus it uses to provide transportation for its employees coming from out of the area. **Ms. Friend** stated that CET currently works with Black Butte Ranch and discussed her ideas for a base service plan and the times a bus could run from Sisters to Redmond each day. She stated if she implemented this plan then the local service within Sisters could not be expanded due to budget constraints.

Councilor Thompson stated he feels the spot for *Park and Ride* should be relocated. **Councilor Merrill** agreed that it should be moved from its current semi-residential area to possibly the City Hall campus. **Ms. Friend** stated that many people do not even know where the *Park and Ride* pick-up area is located. **Wendy Holzman, Chair for the Committee for Citizen Involvement (CCI)** suggested the CCI could possibly aid the project by means of a survey in utility bills asking citizens what type of service would benefit them the most. **Ms. Friend** stated that a map and copy of the schedule could also be included in the utility bills.

Ms. Friend said it is important for the citizens to think of this as their transportation system. She stated the program is getting several new busses and she already has drivers lined up and ready to begin. **Ms. Friend** stated she will maintain the Tuesday local bus service in Sisters that is heavily used by seniors and expand the service to include connector service Monday through Friday between Sisters and Redmond. There was discussion on the \$3,000 financial obligation for the City for FY 09/10 and FY 10/11 for the service to be maintained.

Ms. Friend stated she will implement the new connector service in two weeks. **Mayor Kellstrom** asked that Manager Stein, Ms. Holzman and Mr. Aycock work on drafting an appropriate survey for use at a future time. **Mr. Aycock** stated that a marketing effort will begin as soon as possible and the bus shelter will be installed in June. He stated that COIC will come back to the City with an agreement in June.

Mayor Kellstrom thanked Ms. Friend and Mr. Aycock for their presentation.

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Mayor Kellstrom called for a recess at 9:37 a.m. The meeting was reconvened at 9:41 a.m.

Continuation of Economic Development for Central Oregon (EDCO) Membership Discussion

Manager Stein asked the Council for direction with regard to what level of EDCO membership to budget for FY 09/10. **Mayor Kellstrom** stated the staff report recommends \$2,500 for membership dues for FY 09/10 and asked each councilor to discuss what level of membership they feel is appropriate for the next budget year.

Councilor Bogart stated he feels the Council should increase the membership to the platinum level of \$7,500, especially with the current unemployment rate in the region. He stated he feels that having a partnership with EDCO and a seat on the Board of Directors of EDCO will provide great benefit to Sisters. He stated that if the City wants to make a difference it will need to support economic development endeavors.

Councilor Merrill stated he has no problem with committing to \$7,500 to economic development but that consideration needs to be given to the many groups and organization such as Sisters Business Attraction and Retention Team (SBART), Chamber of Commerce, Sisters Village Association and other groups that are all working on economic development as their mission. He stated all of these organizations are going to be looking to the City for funding and stressed that no one will come to Sisters if the downtown core area is run down and not a pleasant place to visit. He stated he feels the Council has a fiduciary responsibility to the tax payers to establish guidelines for how these economic development funds will be dispersed and how they are accounted for within the budget. He discussed a chain of command he has created showing how all the various organization fit together with EDCO leading the economic development project. He discussed how community grant funds might be used and how to coordinate the different groups. **Manager Stein** stated she has planned to discuss how all these economic development organizations might be funded during the budget session and that the funds will come from the General Fund.

Councilor Weed stated the City needs to determine in total how much will be committed to economic development. She stated she is uneasy with committing \$7,500 to just EDCO without looking at the entire picture. She stated she is comfortable committing \$2,500 to EDCO with the remaining \$5,000 in a pool from which other organizations can draw upon for their economic development projects. She stated her main concern at present is empty storefronts in the downtown core and she doesn't feel that is something that EDCO will provide as much support for. She stressed she is not opposed to spending money on economic development but feels it is important to use the funds strategically. **Mayor Kellstrom** agreed that it is important to evaluate each request for funds for economic development.

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Councilor Thompson stated he feels the level of membership to EDCO should be raised to the \$7,500 level for the next fiscal year. He stated that EDCO has contacts and business relationships already established that can benefit Sisters right now. He stated he feels the City should encourage local businesses to utilize EDCO's services and the City should be a platinum member.

Councilor Merrill stated he feels the person who will be the contact person to EDCO should be the one to serve on the EDCO Board and that person should be the head of SBART and not a Council member. He stated a meeting with Roger Lee, Mac Hay and Lee Smith, a member of the EDCO Board of Directors, will take place on Monday to discuss economic development specific to Sisters.

Mayor Kellstrom stated that he feels that EDCO is a premiere organization and the City needs to be at the Board of Director table to take full advantage of its resources. He suggested the City ask EDCO if it can become a full member immediately, if the City commits to budget a full platinum membership of \$7,500 for FY 09/10. He stated the City can then begin to meet with EDCO on a regular basis and reap the benefits.

Mayor Kellstrom suggested that Councilor Bogart serve as the EDCO Board member since he is the Vice-Chair of SBART and a local businessman. **Manager Stein** reminded the Council that Councilor Bogart was appointed to serve in that capacity at the beginning of the year when other intergovernmental appointments were made.

3. Preview of 04/23/09 Regular Meeting Agenda

Manager Stein provided an overview of the joint workshop with the Committee for Citizen Involvement (CCI) and the regular meeting where the rate adjustment of water and sewer rate will be up for a vote. She stated the Council will also consider a transfer of funds to a Bank of the Cascades Money Market Sweep Service.

The **Council** discussed whether it should wait until the first quarter earnings report for Bank of the Cascades is released before making a decision on the Money Market Sweep Agreement. The **Council** decided to pull the item until the report is released.

Manager Stein reported that two proclamations will be read at the meeting also.

4. City Manager Update

Manager Stein reported there are approximately 20 delinquent garbage accounts that have had their garbage cans pulled by High Country Disposal for non-payment. She stated the City needs to determine what approach it will take with these accounts as the City has a universal collection policy and garbage service is mandatory. She stated there are also delinquent business licenses

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and City utility accounts that the Council will need to determine how to handle. She stated the topic of delinquent accounts will be scheduled for a workshop.

Manager Stein reported that when she was in Salem earlier in the week she spoke with Representative Whisnant and he indicated he would like to come to Sisters to hold a town hall meeting or a meet and greet. She stated the meeting will also include Senator Telfer and that she will let the Council know when a date has been identified.

Manager Stein reported she had attended a Project Wildfire meeting where the upcoming weather pattern for spring and summer was discussed. She stated that cool dry weather is being projected for spring and a hot dry summer with numerous lightening strikes. She stated this translates to the possibility of a bad fire season. **Director Porter** reported that on May 6th a coordinated meeting of the City, Deschutes County and Sisters Forest Service will provide training on fire mitigation and weed abatement for local residents.

Manager Stein reported that she and Mayor Kellstrom met with Kristin Kovalik from the Trust for Public Lands Greenprint project. She stated the greenprint project is beginning and the City was asked to identify an elected official to serve as a steering committee member. **Mayor Kellstrom** asked Councilor Weed if she would be the City's representative for the project and **Councilor Weed** agreed.

Manager Stein reported the City will be applying for \$100,000 in stimulus funds for roadway, curb and sidewalk improvements on Larch Street between Main and Adams. She stated that the transportation funding package before the Oregon Legislature may include some earmarks and the City will ask that Cascade Avenue improvements to be included on the earmark list.

Mayor Kellstrom reported that in follow-up to a discussion with Captain Edwards with regard to the deputy issue, Captains Edwards stated that a deputy should always tell someone why he is stopping someone. He stated that Captain Edwards has requested that any other incidents or concerns from citizens be reported directly to him.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:50 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Nelson, City Recorder

Lon Kellstrom, Mayor