**Mt. Pulaski Economic Development and Planning Board**

*The mission of the Mt. Pulaski Economic Development and Planning Board is to improve the quality of life and create a shared prosperity in our community by retaining, sustaining, and enhancing existing businesses and community organizations, attracting and developing new businesses, and improving and upgrading infrastructure.*

**Date July 11th, 2019**

**Meeting Location: 124 South Washington Street, Mt. Pulaski, IL 62548**

**Meeting type: Business meeting**

**Meeting Minutes**

**1] Call to order**

Tom Martin called to order the regular meeting of the Mt. Pulaski Economic Development and Planning Board at 6:00pm on July 11th, 2019 at the Courthouse Foundation Office.

**2] Roll call**

Lorah Hoe conducted a roll call. The following persons were present: Tom Marin, Andy Meister, Tyler White, Jim Birge, Deron Powell, and Hillary Cherry. Tim Emrick (city council representative). Lorah Hoe (Administrative Aide).

Guests: Bill Thomas (Logan County Economic Development Director) and Doug Johnson (Johnson’s True Value).

Absent: Erin Wyss

**3] Introduction of guests**

Bill was introduced to the board members that had not known before this meeting.

Doug Johnson was going to speak to the EDPB about the Shopping Center Property. Doug had put together a team of accountants and other professionals to help him make an informed decision about making this purchase or not. It will come down to number for Doug and if he thinks the purchase will be lucrative or not. Jim, Bill, and Andy will help Doug Johnson and Jaqueline his sales representative move forward.

The EDPB is a city entity and has made it a policy to not own or purchase any property. The board’s funding comes from the Windfarm (private donation) and the business district tax (city tax).

**Old Business**

**4] Board History and Our Charge**

The board briefly discussed when new board members needed to be sworn in and how often they would need to be sworn in.

The board than discussed the revolving loan concept. Units of government can give “gap funding” to help complete a project. Seed money from Windfarm can possibly be the source of funding for revolving loans. The EDPB would have to decide on if they would give a recommendation to the City of Mt. Pulaski to give revolving loans or not. An example of amounts that could be given out would be $2,000, $5,000, or $10,000. The board must look at the structure of our bylaws to see if this is possible. Bill will provide models of this being done. The board wanted to know if as soon as 2020 arrives, could the EDPB be able to give out Revolving Loans. We are a city organization, but we have funding from private business so this situation will have to be looked at carefully. (Please refer to follow up information form Bill which is located in the shared Drive).

**5] Review of First Two Years Priorities: What Have We Accomplished**

Tom reviewed what had been done in the first two years of the Economic Development Planning Board. This included strategy sessions, focus on the city website, grant program, the food co-op, and the town square renovation.

The EDPB has helped the Historical Museum, the Hilltop Club, the Athletic Association, Christmas on Vinegar Hill, Second Friday Markets, and the Fire Department. The EDPB has made it a policy to accomplish its goals by entering into partnership. All these partnerships have helped to leave a good impression of our board to the community.

The EDPB has also created a new part-time city job, in the administrative aide position. When Lorah was hired she took some responsibility from the boards plates by filling in the gaps that the board members couldn’t fill. Lorah is able to take on secretarial duties, fill out reports for the treasurer, and to help organize ongoing projects like the grant program.

**6] What we know now that we didn’t know then.**

The EDPB has been interested in the fate of the Shopping Center Property as a long-term project. As state before, the board was not interested in purchasing the property, but was very aware of the property’s potential given its size, location, and history. Doug Johnson of Johnson’s True Value hardware store came to the board to ask for guidance and assistance in his interest in acquiring this property. Doug, owner of Johnson’s True Value has been in contact with True Value Corporation and they had a positive response to the idea of Doug moving to a larger store and having a larger inventory for customers to access. True Value Corporation would help with the preliminaries, but than would charge a fee for consulting. So, Doug came to the EDPB for assistance in making this decision. Doug’s sales’ rep, Jacoline, will help him in this decision but the EDPB will put a team together to help Doug in any way that they can.

Doug owns the hardware store and may need help selling that building if he does move to this new property. He will also need help with construction advising.

He pointed out that if his store is larger, he will employ more people, pay more into the business tax, and pay more property taxes than what he does now. And his store moving from one side of town to another could lead to more expansion in that part of town. True Value would gain highway access if it moved. And True Value would be expanding on what it has to offer the public, as far inventory goes. Doug would have to do all of the work in setting up the new business location and make all shelving purchases on his own.

Doug needs to investigate financing possibilities. The city will have to look into how the TIF comes into play. Improvements to the building creates more money that will go to the city. The additional money that goes to the city is called the increment.

If he bought the building, he alone would have ownership of the building but the EDPB would come into help advise him and be a partner that shares a common interest in the economic development of current businesses in town. The board discussed if Doug should look into becoming an LLC or S Corp to set up a partner who will take up the business if and when Doug wishes to step down from the store.

The greenhouse is more of a hobby and does not generate much of an income so he would not take it with him in a move. But he would want to have seasonal plants for sale instead of selling plants all year around.

True Value was a co-op until 2 years ago and it is the main supplier of Doug’s business. True Value owns a portion of the store, but Doug is still the owns 30% of the shares and it is still considered a co-op. The store would go from 3,200 square feet to 8,000 square feet. The board asked about what he would do with the old doctor’s office and he suggested sub-letting it out for Doug.

The board discussed having the back of the building become more attractive and how it would help the property become more appealing to the 121 traffic. An architect or designer would help with the curb appeal of the building. EDPB may be able to help with hire someone with this expertise.

They will need to speak to Doug Johnson of Johnson’s Food Center about the state of the building as far as the roof and refacing the building itself. EDPB would like to help with the site planning and a planning board would like to help put the pieces of this together for Doug Johnson’s True Value business. Doug should speak with Doug about purchasing the property and the EDPB could be there as a supporter of this franchise. The EDPB could help with possibly repaving and highway access.

Tom spoke about how this potential sale meets up with this board’s goals. The original parameters were set up and now four new members must deal with a build up of projects. The board needs to set up a criterion to follow. This is a working board and it needs to know where it is going.

**7] Short-term Focus and Goals**

Bill discussed with the board about how the board members need to focus on this board. The chair is not going to be there forever, and a structure needs to be in place because the there are 20 more years of Windfarm money to still come in. Refocus on what projects the board knows is already going on and structure a discipline to keep up with these projects.

**8] Long-term Focus and Goals**

Bill is lending his expertise to help our new EDPB define what it will do in the future. He is doing this by reexamining the outcomes, projects/goals, project prioritization and scheduling, and policies. Every few years, as the community’s needs change and the board members change but the overall mission is to economically improve the city. We will have to discuss who, what, and how the EDPB’s mission relates to what the board wishes to accomplish. This discussion is our center, our guide, and our creation. The goal of this exercise is to ensure that all board members understand what the mission is and what they can do for this community based on the agreed upon mission.

This current board wishes to retain, sustain, and enhance existing businesses and organizations in Mt. Pulaski. Which is accomplished through grant programs and helping Doug with the potential Shopping Center Property purchase. This board wished to attract and develop new businesses to Mt. Pulaski. The Market On The Hill Co-op wouldn’t exist without the help of the EDPB. This board wishes to improve and upgrade Mt. Pulaski’s infrastructure. The Town Square Revitalization project also wouldn’t have been possible without the help of the EDPB.

The board is trying to strengthen the infrastructure of the city and have the work that they do radiate out to the rest of the community. This will be accomplished through Partnerships with people and other organizations. But we must have a way to focus what the board can and can not accomplish. If something does not fit into the mission statement, then it could fit into a policy that the board wishes to accomplish. The board has made it a policy to increase the community’s population base, this is a by product of much that we wish to accomplish.

Priorities on the future may leas to attracting businesses, gaining more job opportunities, and this may lead to more daycare options. The board must stay aligned with the mission statement. Policies are used help the board discover what projects they can take on based on if the projects compliment our policies.

Another outcome that the board wishes to accomplish is to enhance the community’s image. This has been done by our new website, online newspapers, signs, and firework shows. The EDPB wants to make promoting the community in a positive image a policy. This can be done in the future by possibly creating a promotional piece on our community. Economic development looks at the quality of schools, at attitude, an excitement about a town. A visitor’s perception of our town is very important (ex. Crumbling square, crumbling town).

**9] Wrap**

The board must be trained to compare potential projects to the three outcomes and it’s four policies. Some other projects that could come up and the outcome that it relates to would be the route to the square, blighted areas, safety of Chestnut Road and Route 121 all relate to improving and upgrading Mt. Pulaski’s infrastructure. Someone always has to ask, “how does this fit”. A business incubator could be facilitated by local business leaders to create a pool of entrepreneurs and this would be under attracting and developing new business in Mt. Pulaski.

Once a quarter the EDPB should brainstorm potential projects. Give a policy of time management. And have a productivity goal. An agenda can help with all of this and a full commitment will allow the board to move forward.

The board discussed the possibility of starting to meet on Saturday mornings as a regular structured time. This will be reevaluated at the next meeting.

Policies in the future for the board to find it’s structure from will include: a detailed agenda, information out ahead of time, and minutes that reflect the agenda. The board must have the budget in front of them every time they go to make a financial decision. Have a visual of the outcomes up in the board room. On a white board or a banner and review which will work better at the next meeting.

Officers are President: Tom Martin. Vice President: Deron Powell. Treasurer: Tyler White. And the Secretary will be determined at the next meeting.

Lorah is paid by the board at an hourly rate but the budget only allows for her to work up to $15,000. Lorah has been keeping track of her hours and she is working a lot for the Market On The Hill co-op to help get it up and running. The board must decide if the co-op should pay for her hours or if the EDPB will pay for hours that she works for the co-op. The board discussed this and decided that until the co-op opens or the next co-op elected board takes over, the EDPB will help cover this cost.

The Market On The Hill PR Committee is working on it mission/vision statements. The Local Foods, Local Places Technical Grant is on August 12th at 5:00pm and 13th 9:00am to 4:00pm. Market On The Hill will have a Farm to Table dinner on the Thursday before the Fall Festival to help get investors signed up. The building lease has been signed for the Market On The Hill co-op at 125 South Lafayette Street. Open possibly by March of 2020.

Next meeting is Saturday August the 10th at 9:00am.

**10] Adjournment**

Deron motions to adjourn at 8:05. All Agree. Motion passed.