

**Town of Concrete
Economic Development Commission Meeting
August 9, 2017**

Call Meeting to Order: The meeting was called to order at 6:13 p.m. Eric Archuletta led the gallery in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call: Planning Commission Members: Eric Archuletta, Claus Joens, Brooke Pederson, Tyler Nibarger and Lynette Gentry.

Eric reported that Cheryl will be at the fair all week and Em was stuck in traffic.

Liaison: Ginger Kyritsis.

Audience Members Signed In: None

Approval of Minutes: May 10, 2017

Tyler Nibarger made a motion to approve the minutes. Claus Joens seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Unfinished Business: Commission 2017 Work List Updates:

- a. Policy ED 1.1 – Replace Obsolete Town of Concrete Web site – Claus reported the website is almost complete but there is an issue with trying to write code for paying utility bills online. Mayor Miller stated they could possibly use a PayPal type option. The commission called Alex. Alex stated that he has completed the layout with the list of pages and just needs to add some remaining content and do some visual tweaks. He stated at that point he would be done except for the online utility payment option. Mayor Miller stated to not write any specific code for this and the town will look to use a third party vendor. Alex stated he will then send the mayor a link to the website and the Mayor stated that he will send that out to the commission to review.
- b. Policy ED 2.1 – Create Brand for Town of Concrete – Eric stated two workshops have been held so far and last month they started working through the information and data. He stated they continue to work on this.
- c. Policy ED 8.1 – Develop Database of Key Buildings – Eric stated this database is complete.
- d. Policy ED 9 – Develop Broadband – Eric stated he will be attending a meeting this Saturday with EDASC, and the Port. He stated that Congresswoman DelBene will be in attendance. Mayor Miller stated the main purpose of this meeting is to update DelBene so she knows where they are with this and seek her advice on where to get funding. Claus suggested a business incubator of some kind since the broadband will stop in Concrete for now and it would be great to have a place for those businesses located further east to have a place to go. Brooke and Tyler will both forward stories and experiences to Eric that he can refer to during the meeting.
- e. Town Flag Contest – Eric stated they kicked off the contest at the Youth Activity Day and will do another flag booth during Cascade Days. He stated the contest ends October 1. He also stated that he needs to check with Andrea and see if any entries have been submitted yet. He stated the commission will do the first review of the entries at their October meeting, second review at their November meeting and then take their recommendations to council in December or January for a final decision.

New Business:

- a. **Guest Speaker – Claudia Marken – Community Action Apprenticeship Program:** Claudia handed out some business cards and a pocket guide of services offered by Community Action to the commission members. She stated that she started as coordinator about 18 months ago and has now taken on the role of managing the Concrete Center as well. She stated that she was instructed to first begin a meal program that would be open to the public, which they have done.

She stated they currently offer 5 education programs, 5 arts and crafts programs and have trained 5 new volunteers. She stated there have been a few successes along with a few challenges. She stated with the

meal program they have served over 6,000 meals just during lunch. She stated they hired a chef and have partnered with Work Source and Work First for internships. She stated that 15 volunteers have been recruited and trained. She stated that 5 of these are consistently active and all have gone on to gain employment. She stated a large amount of this credit goes to Tera who has done a wonderful job with the program.

Claudia also discussed that they are looking into how to create a formal culinary program. She stated they have spoke with the Friendship House regarding their program. She stated they have also spoken with local businesses to see what they are looking for in workers and services provided.

Claudia reported that Community Action was intended to be an emergency services option but they have ended up assisting a lot of the same people over and over again. She stated one of the ways they assist is with the Community Closet that is currently housed in one of the portable at the elementary school. She stated the idea with Community Closet, which is donated clothing items, was to assist those who may not have the ability to purchase appropriate work wear. She stated that some of the people using the service have substance abuse issues and have used this resource to subsidize their habits. She they are now discussing whether it is helpful to just open the doors and allow them to come in take whatever they need. She stated they now have a space where they are discussing opening a thrift store that would also become a job training opportunity. She stated they could get cash handling, retail sales and customer service experience and this would also allow them to generate some revenue that would assist to further the programs offered and possibly expand services. She stated that they believe doing it this way would be a better use of the Community Closet resource.

She stated other ideas they have discussed are preparing and selling sack lunches and snacks to bicyclist and starting a bicycle repair shop. She stated approximately 900,000 people travel SR20 each year. She stated they are also discussing developing their own coffee roast or high protein snack of some kind.

She reported on NW Innovation Resource Services which assist entrepreneurs in getting these types of things up and running. She stated they currently have a survey out in the community to gather further input.

Rick requested that once the survey data is collected that she comes back to the commission and share that data.

Claus also recommended that she speak with Sally Straathof and Mike Holbrook at the high school. He stated there are many high school kids that need to get their volunteer hours which is a graduation requirement. He also stated the school offers a work base learning program that offers kids class credits for working.

Discussion ensued on different ideas and how they could be implemented and ways the commission could assist.

Mayor Miller discussed an idea from the new owner of the Eagles Nest who also owns the building on Main Street that use to be the Hi-Lo Restaurant. He stated his idea is a food lab where people could bring in a recipe or item to figure out how to mass produce it and then they could rent out the kitchen area to do the actual production.

- b. **Adaptive Reuse – Sean Connell (EDASC):** Rick reported that he and Jason had met with the Port of Skagit on how to form a partnership back in June. He stated they discussed the vacant building data base. He stated later they met with them again and did a walk through along Main Street at the buildings on that list. He stated they went by the old fire hall building and that spurred the conversation about adaptive reuse.

Sean stated they wanted to take a look at the buildings on the list, which none of them are currently on the market. He stated they brain stormed what type of businesses may do well and what the benefit to the town would be as well. He stated they discussed funding for adaptive reuses such CERB and Brownfield.

He also reported on a possible county wide, broader farmer's market type idea with sales occurring throughout the county and that the food lab idea would coincide nicely with this.

Rick stated the old fire hall could be used as adaptive reuse but a feasibility study would need to be completed so it would be known what needs to be done to get the building up to usable status.

Discussion ensued on the Made in Concrete and Base Camp type of business ideas and other businesses that can expand and contract with the changing seasons.

Claus stated a base camp type store could also be a place where people could order supplies and have them delivered to trail heads and other drop off locations along the Pacific Crest Trail. He stated this runs from Canada to Mexico and a service like this would become very well known amongst hikers.

Mayor Miller also reported on his discussions with the Pacific NW Trail group. He stated that he has actually met hikers at the post office that have had items shipped to them here so they can replenish their supplies or have a clean pair of socks. He stated that right now the Pacific NW Trail does not come into Concrete and hikers have to back track to get here and he is discussing with them the possibility of creating a spur trail that would bring them into town easier.

Brooke Pederson stated that people are always asking in the library for the closest place with showers as well. Mayor Miller stated the public restrooms are plumbed for showers but were vandalized years ago and have not been repaired or replaced, which he would like to see done.

Other Business:

Flag Design Training: Rick stated it would be a good idea to hold a small training on flag design so the commission better understands how a proper town flag design is chosen. He stated the commission also needs to work on the branding effort and get that narrowed down. He suggested a workshop be held on September 13 at 6pm at 5B's. He stated he would like to see the commission proceed with a twofold recommendation to the town council, one that comes from the 30,000 foot level and another from the ground level. Rick stated he would also like to invite the council to the workshop so they also understand flag designs and how to choose an appropriate design for the town.

An audience member congratulated the commission on the job they are doing and stated his excitement on the ideas he's heard and how they are trying to stay community focused.

Announcements: None.

Adjournment: Claus Joens made a motion for adjournment at 7:40 p.m. Tyler Nibarger seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Absent
Eric Archuleta, Chair

Lynette Gentry
Attest: Lynette Gentry, Chair Pro-tem