

Town of Concrete Economic Development Commission
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Town of Concrete
Economic Development Commission

Meeting Agenda

November 8, 2023 - 6 p.m.

**Economic
Development
Commission Members**

Vacant

Dinah Kinney-Chair

Pro-tem

Anne Bussiere - Chair

Wiley Moore

Vacant

Town Council Liaison

Stephanie Semro

1. Call Meeting to Order
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Roll Call
4. Minutes
5. Old Business
 - Airport Recommendations to Council
 - PSE Items
6. New Business
7. Other Business
8. Announcements - Next Workshop/Meeting –
_____ 6pm
9. Adjournment

Proposals to Town Council from Economic Development Commission

It has been suggested that the town's Planning Commission be reactivated with membership derived from representatives selected from various town groups including:

Chamber of Commerce

Economic Development Commission

Historical Preservation and Landmarks Commission

Town Council appointees (2)

Work to be done by the Planning Commission should be:

Revision of the town's building and zoning codes to encourage a wide variety of housing options making any changes where needed.

Enforcement of codes prohibiting retail storefront spaces used as residential.

Investigation into pros and cons for invitation of possible Grasmere annexation.

Updates to the airport planning need to be completed.

Many ideas that the EDC has suggested would all be better done by an actual planning commission as the EDC has little to no authority.

It was the consensus of the Council to schedule a workshop for December 4, 2023 to review this information.

Salary Amendment – Ordinance #866: Andrea explained the update in the Groundskeeper and Public Works Laborer salary calculations. She stated she also noted the Public Works Maintenance position did not consider the trial period ending and the updated salary after the end of the trial period.

Councilmember Jenkins made a motion to approve. Councilmember Semro seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Gent – Utility Account Follow Up: Andrea stated that Angelica was unable to attend tonight but she did call and say that she spoke with her mortgage company and should be able to include the balance in her refinance that should occur by March. Andrea stated that she could do \$310.00 per month until she is able to pay it off in full.

It was the consensus of the Council to allow a payment arrangement for Angelica Gent at \$310.00 a month until March of 2024 when the balance should be paid in full.

New Business: EDC Recommendations – Airport Suggestions: Councilmember Jenkins asked if they are working on other items related to economics for the town as a whole or just airport related items.

Anne stated that when the commission restarted there were certain items that each person researched regarding economics. She stated the airport is an economic generator for the town. She stated they put together these recommendations and they do not expect all of these to be completed right away but would like to see them worked on. She stated one item, is the manager position. She stated that Jon is doing a great job but at some point, there may not be anyone on the council who is familiar with aviation. She stated that there needs to be someone appointed by the council to manage the airport on a day-to-day basis. She stated then there is the airport committee that could be used as the liaison between airport items and the council.

Anne stated there are other items they are working on. She stated that at their next meeting PSE will be attending so they can discuss a partnership with them for items in town, such as more car charging stations. She stated they are also working with the school on a possible work force program.

Councilmember Thomas asked about the budget provided and the item for the pilot's lounge rental being low. Andrea stated the church that has been using the Pilots Lounge paid for 2022 and 2023 in 2022.

Anne stated they also have 2 open positions on the EDC at this time that need to be filled.

Andrea stated she had advertised for both the EDC and HPLC vacancies and no applications had been received. She stated she will advertise for these again.

Discussion ensued on the current volunteer manager position and how that position was never intended to be a 24/7 onsite manager. Councilmember Jenkins asked what the airport tenants are hoping to gain by having a more on-site type of airport manager. Councilmember Jenkins asked if we appoint someone into the airport manager position, what authority would the town be giving them. He stated there would have to be rules, regulations, and job description developed for this position as well. He also asked if it will be beneficial to have an onsite manager when there are already codes, rules and process in place that are not being followed and other issues that are not

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being brought to the town. Andrea stated the town would also have to determine the pay and how that is to be paid for.

Audience member John Boggs stated they were each given items to work on and this was the one Wiley worked on. He stated the comp plan is going to be updated which include updates to codes. He stated the comp plan sets the goals and objectives of the town. He stated this could be utilized when determining the plan for the airport. He stated the council will have to define what those goals and objectives are.

Discussion continued an airport manager and what the goals and objectives might be for the airport. Discussion also ensued regarding possible development on the southside of the airport.

Councilmember Thomas stated that his understanding is that any airport tenants or issues at the airport are supposed to be brought to the liaison who then brings them to council when needed and he does not believe this is how it has been working.

Andrea stated that she can check with other airports that are not towered and are public use airports and see if they have managers or how they are being managed.

Discussion also ensued regarding having a policy in place or a manager in place and if the authority is ignored and still not followed, it will not work.

Councilmember Jenkins stated that he believes it has been made clear that if there are issues at the airport, those are supposed to be reported to the liaison and then the liaison determines if this is something that needs to go Council if it is policy or budget related or does it need to go to Public Works or maybe the Mayor for other items. He stated that it shocks him how often airport tenants they must be reminded of this process and that is why the council, or the town does not always know what is going on at the airport.

Councilmember Jenkins stated that he also does not believe that a full time, all year airport manager is needed but maybe the town could investigate a seasonal position during the busier spring and summer months.

Councilmember Thomas asked that Andrea get information from other airports on how they are managing their airports.

Swap Meet Area – Lions Club Usage – Christmas Tree Sales: Andrea stated, as a Lions Club member, she was asked to request usage of the Swap Meet area for selling Christmas trees this year. It was the consensus of the Council to allow for this usage.

Discussion Items: Fireworks: It was requested that November utility bills include information regarding no fireworks in town, prior to New Years.

Council Reports: Parks: Cassie Manke: Councilmember Manke was absent this evening.

Airport: Jon Gunnarsson: Councilmember Gunnarsson stated the sprinkler system is almost complete. He stated work is also being done for the installation of fiber.

Health and Emergency Care: Drew Jenkins: Councilmember Jenkins reported on information he received on the different mental health resources available in Skagit County. He stated he will forward to Andrea and maybe this can be added to the town's website.

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The commission members reviewed the cover letter that Anne had developed to submit with the recommendations. Wiley expressed concerns that it may look like these recommendations are coming from him and not the commission as a whole.

Wiley stated the committee, and the manager are one in the same with no oversight and it does not seem to be working. He stated the committee should be composed of at least two and maybe more. Andrea stated this is a council committee and if there are three on the committee this would be considered a quorum of the council as a whole so she believes that is why it is stated that it is one or two councilmembers and not more than that.

Discussion ensued on the airport manager and that it should be a separate person other than someone on the council or committee.

Anne stated they make recommendations to Council and then the council can figure out the logistics. She stated the airport is not a good old boys club and needs to be ran correctly and not a burden to all taxpayers.

Wiley made a motion to submit cover letter and recommendations dated October 11 to council along with the attachments. Dinah seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Ger stated he would like to see a clear and concise budget and estimates for the future of the airport. Wiley stated that Andrea does a great job of generating the budget.

Discussion ensued on the airport budget and related items. Ger stated that he has questions on fuel sales and expenses. Further discussion ensued on the budget numbers for the airport. Dinah and Anne both stated that budgeting is beyond this commissions purview and the budget is the council's responsibility. Wiley stated this commission can make recommendations but that they are not writing the actual budget.

Ger stated the town leases lots for very cheap and he does not believe that is right. Wiley discuss what other airports are increasing their rates to and stated the Town is line with those increases.

Ger stated he believes the commissions job is to look at revenues and expenditures along with economic development and advise the council on those items. Anne and Dinah stated they agreed but that the actual budget is out of their purview.

New Business: Schedule Meeting with PSE – Discussion/Update on Trail, Visitors Center Marketing, Electric Vehicle Charging Stations: Anne stated she would like to discuss adding vehicle charging stations in Bear Square, the new trail that PSE is working on and the PSE visitors center. She stated that she would like to invite someone from PSE to come to a meeting to discuss these items and get an update.

Discussion ensued on charging stations and what is being for their use as well as the need for more of these in town. Wiley discussed one of his neighbors who has 5 teslas and could probably utilize a charging station.

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Ger stated that this bothers him. He stated there is a guy at the airport who owns a hangar and has 5 teslas but is only paying around \$250.00 a year for lease. Ger stated the town is basically giving money to people who have money. He also stated that he pays \$500.00 a month for a spot at the Anacortes Marina and people year are paying barely anything for a yearly lease. He stated the town pays for all the airport maintenance and repairs and that something needs to be corrected. He stated it's like a handout for the rich.

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Dinah and Wiley both stated that is a budgeting item and is up to the Council. Ger stated that it is related to the economics of the town and that maybe he is on the wrong committee. Wiley stated there is not a finance committee for the town but there are budget meetings he could attend. Ger stated that he needs to resign. He also stated that he realizes this probably isn't the most proper way to do so but he must submit his resignation. Ger left the meeting at 6:40pm.

Further discussion ensued regarding PSE and the charging stations and visitors center. It was stated to invite a PSE representative to the next meeting.

Audience member Jason Miller stated that PSE has a foundation and most likely that is where they will be directed to seek any funding. Andrea also stated that she believes the budget for this year has been expended but if they talk to them now, they may be able to get something budgeted for next year. Andrea stated that she would forward the contact information for PSE.

Other Business: Planning Commission Update: Dinah stated the first meeting was mostly introductory and they will be spending a lot of time on the comprehensive plan update to start.

Wiley asked for a brief on the next year or so work and the GMA component of it. Dinah stated they will be going through and updating the plan. Wiley asked who was writing it. Dinah stated, the document already exists but it is need of updates and revisions.

Wiley asked if the comprehensive plan is a GMA submission. Dinah stated that she is not sure. Stephanie stated the comprehensive plan update will also mean municipal codes will also need to update.

Wiley discussed expanding water and sewer at the airport and that there needs to be a plan in place for that. Dinah stated that is good to know and will bring that to the commission.

Stephanie discussed the town shop, the town hangar and that the town hangar could possibly be used to generate income. She also stated the current shop could possibly be demolished and maybe put businesses in that area and then the town could build a new shop at the wastewater treatment plant. Wiley stated the town could also sell the hangar and use those funds to assist in paying for a new shop.

Announcements: Next workshop will be November 8.