



**Banks Economic Development Commission  
February 5th, 2020  
MEETING MINUTES**

**CALL TO ORDER** Economic Development Commission Chair Will Moore called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

**ROLL CALL**

Present were Margaret Holland, Rich Weitzel, Kim Post, City Councilor Marsha Kirk, and Will Moore.

Absent: Mayor Peter Edison, Clint Jackson, and Carolyn McCormick.

Staff present: City Manager Jolynn Becker and City Planner Scot Siegel.

**APPEARANCE OF INTERESTED CITIZENS** – None

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

1. Approval of January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020 minutes.

Margaret Holland noted the following correction:

- Round Table: “Announced that the kick-off of the 100-year celebration ~~was~~ **would be** on Thursday, January 16<sup>th</sup>...”

Rich Weitzel made a motion to approve the minutes from the January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020 meeting as corrected. Kim Post seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

**PRESENTATIONS** - None

**BUSINESS AGENDA**

2. **Banks Entrance Sign Status Update:** Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) has approved the conceptual design. Staff was working on a grant application from the Washington County Visitor's Association, which Commissioners would have the opportunity to review and comment on before the March 1<sup>st</sup> due date. Once grant funds have been received, the project will be put out for bids. Staff has scheduled a meeting with PGE to discuss options for getting power from the transformer to the sign. Additional costs could be incurred. The power source to the existing sign also provides power to the streetlights.
3. **Banks Façade Improvement Program Status Update:** The Urban Renewal Agency approved \$25,000 in funding for the program. A consultant for the Banks Hardware Store has developed three concept designs for the owners to choose from. The final design, a brochure, and associated costs will be presented to the Commission at their next meeting. In March, Commissioners will have packets to use when visiting businesses. Staff will be sending requests for qualifications (RFQ) to four architects and a designer, who will be added to a pricing list that will be provided to applicants.

Staff and Commissioners discussed the process necessary and difficulties involved with annexing the Duncan Automotive property or moving into the city limits. The County had suggested the owner look into moving into the city, but the City has not received any applications.

4. **Discussion regarding Development Opportunities and Resources Available to further Economic Development in the City of Banks:**

Chair Moore asked if the Commission wanted to explore development opportunities and potential resources for economic development in Banks.

The Commission and Staff discussed development and infrastructure with the following key comments:

- The City could consider purchasing property. Commissioners discussed specific properties in the city and shared ideas about how those properties could be developed in ways that support economic development. The City Council was already discussing purchasing lots for some specific purposes, so perhaps this could be discussed further at a joint work session.
  - The 2037 Plan and Economic Roadmap do provide guidance for working with local businesses and attracting new businesses. However, Chair Moore believed more research was still necessary to guide the search for properties to purchase.
- Developing a reliable communications network is high on the EDC's priority list. Staff will be installing fiber optics from the Banks fire station to the new station in Manning. Frontier will not be part of this project. Clackamas County has a similar system that other jurisdictions use.
- The new residential development could double the city's population and consultants have said the city should get industrial lands shovel ready because the area needs more employers. However, for the city to be self-sustaining, residents must understand that there are two ends of town. People who live on the south end do not necessarily know there is a north end and vice versa. However, wayfinding signs could help resolve this issue and bring people in off the highway and from Jim's and the gas station and direct them to other businesses as well as features, like the Banks-Vernonia Trail. The Commission and Staff briefly discussed wayfinding signage used in other towns.
- During the discussions on development and infrastructure, the following ideas were presented:
  - A public/private partnership to develop industrial lands
  - Rezone the 11-acre parcel north of Sunset Park, which is currently for sale, to industrial
  - Find a way to develop the lot on south of Sunset Park into a three-story office building or a free-standing sit down restaurant
  - Expand fiber optics from one end of town to the other and connect with Clackamas County's fiber
  - Install more wayfinding signage

The Commission and Staff discussed a variety of resources, as follows:

- Staff listed State and local agencies that provide consultants, advice, and grant funding. Staff was directed to create a list of resource organizations to be used alongside the Economic Roadmap, which also identified specific resources. Typically, private foundations do not award grants to local governments, so tax increment financing tends to be the best tool for public improvements. However, non-profit friends' organizations, like the Friends of the Park, can fundraise for public entities.
- Acquiring Sunset Park could be difficult because the land was donated with conditions and has deed restrictions. However, those conditions could always be challenged, and Banks does need a hall that can provide dining services to 100 people, which could be built on park land. Working to remove the conditions would be controversial, but Chair Moore believed doing so should still be discussed.
  - Perhaps the EDC could develop a partnership with Sunset Park. The EDC should be assisting Sunset Park because the school district relies on the property, the school's sporting events bring people in from out of town, and the soccer fields need updated.
  - The owner of the floodplain to the west has said in the past he would donate his property to the school district. However, the school investigated this and is no longer considering the property because taking ownership of it would be cost prohibitive.

Chair Moore stated he believed the purpose of the EDC was to direct new property owners to specific projects that aligned with the EDC's ideas and vision. He did not believe that big picture goals had been incorporated into the plans that were already in place and catalytic projects were not an appropriate role for the EDC. He said he did not know which projects the EDC should focus on or where the already identified projects fit into the big picture. For example, he was concerned that if fiber was installed without a strategic plan for the future use of that fiber, it would have to be reinstalled if future development was different from what was anticipated. He was opposed to installing fiber and then just waiting to see what happened. Additionally, he did not understand how investments in infrastructure would make land attractive to developers. He was also concerned about developing industrial property without knowing if there was any interest in or demand for those lands because he did not believe the research cited in the Economic Roadmap did an adequate job of identifying levels of demand in the marketplace. He suggested the existing data be put into a useable form and said he wanted details of anecdotal successes in other cities similar to Banks that would give the EDC some ideas. Development will not occur without funding and if

developments do not bring in more taxpayers and businesses, future investments will not be made. Additionally, residents cannot sustain the funding needed to develop the projects already identified in the plans.

Staff and Commissioners responded to Chair Moore's concerns as follows:

- The EDC has already identified and prioritized actionable items to implement short term goals. Additionally, developing infrastructure is separate from processes and systems. However, the EDC can make recommendations to City Council about how and where to develop.
- Consultants keep saying that Banks needs better internet as an economic draw. If future development is different than anticipated, contractors can add to existing fiber lines to meet demands.
- The City already has strategic goals, but those goals do not identify what should be developed in specific locations. The EDC could create a list of funding mechanisms, get ideas from City Council, and create a public/private partnership to develop industrial areas.
  - The Economic Roadmap already identified resources, includes a task list, and cites all the research done to support its recommendations. The EDC should develop the assets it already has by focusing on the Roadmap's planning initiatives and milestones, as well as the projects identified in the 2037 Plan.
- Staff provided a detailed explanation of how the development of industrial and residential land would increase the City's revenues, which could be used to fund future projects. Once the water issue was resolved, the west side would be developed, resulting in an estimated additional \$35 million in the next 20 years. The Main Street project is only estimated to cost between \$5 million and \$6 million.
- Staff also listed the services and resources available to the City from Business Oregon and Washington County Economic Development. They explained how the City could work with these organizations to fund infrastructure improvements and let developers know of opportunities in Banks. Companies are looking for shovel ready lands with appropriate zoning and utilities, so that is where the EDC should focus its attention. Staff could ask both organizations for advice, but the City Council must decide on budgetary considerations.

Staff noted that the EDC would be reviewing the Economic Roadmap again in March or April. Several tasks have been completed and other tasks have been started. The Commission can discuss its priorities and decide if tasks should be added to the list. Chair Moore suggested the Commission also reassess the legitimacy of the research that has already been done. Commissioners and staff agreed that this discussion be revisited when other Commissioners were present.

The Commission and Staff briefly discussed the restoration of the Wilkes property. Ideas included acquiring the property, developing a parking lot, and contacting the property owner to find out what needs to be done to save the house and add parking. They also briefly discussed developing a boutique hotel with a small restaurant and parking where the bike shop is currently located.

#### **ROUND TABLE:**

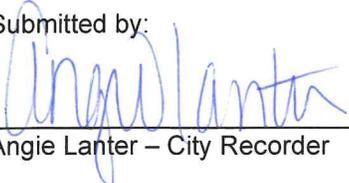
Jolynn Becker: Confirmed she would get more information about the fiber project. Once the fiber reaches the fire station, the rural residents will have fixed wireless service available.

Marsha Kirk: Reported that Verizon has fiber optics running through the park.

Kim Post: Said she knew Frontier had filed for bankruptcy but was unaware they had been sold. She asked if the Frontier building in Banks would be affected. Her clients have asked that she purchase the property for parking, but it has not been for sale. Additionally, she has been told her clients could not park on the property. Chair Moore said he assumed the existing use of the building would continue. Jolynn Becker offered to contact the company's government representative and ask about shared parking.

**ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting adjourned at 7:50 pm. Next Regular Meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020 at 6:30 pm.

Submitted by:



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Angie Lanter – City Recorder