

Perry County Economic Development Authority Board Meeting

July 12, 2018

At Perry Business and Tourism Center

Attendance: Patti McLaughlin, Paul Rudy, Duane Hertzler, Dawn Lowe, Shawna Weller, Rich Pluta, Mike Lawler, John Gerner, Marti Roberts, Frank Campbell, Derek Whitesel, Morgan Tressler

Guest: Jason Finnerty

Excused: Kevin Fitzpatrick, June Reisinger, Emery Yoder, Russ Hoover

Absent: Brenda Watson, Jim Fuller, Steve Peters, Greg Gordon

Meeting called to order at 8:02 AM

Public Comment:

Jason Finnerty noted that 46 subdivision applications so far this year. The county is in the process of updating its hazard mitigation plan which must be adopted by June 2019 – must plan for all possible hazards – flooding, wind, snow, toxic waste, radon, etc. If flood plain property owners want a buyout, they must submit an application. Mr. Finnerty provided the Board with a copy of a sample hotel tax ordinance. Rich Pluta asked if municipalities must have comprehensive plans. Mr. Finnerty advised that municipalities are not required to have a comprehensive plan but are encouraged to develop them. Some have nothing, some have plans dating back to the 70s. Paul Rudy asked if such a “hotel tax” would apply to camp sites and that the state at one time was considering this. Patti McLaughlin questioned if AirBnB’s could be included under such an ordinance.

Secretary’s Report:

The minutes of the June 14, 2018 Board meeting were not distributed with the other materials sent out to all Board members prior to this meeting. Therefore, it was decided to table their approval until the August meeting so that all Board members have a chance to review them. Jason Finnerty advised that the that the poultry operation referred to in his opening comments was in Spring Township. The June draft minutes will be revised to reflect that additional information.

Treasurer’s Report:

Patti McLaughlin presented the current Treasurer’s reports that had been posted to the PCEDA Dropbox in advance of this meeting. John Gerner moved to accept the Treasurers Report, Derek Whitesel seconded the motion. Discussion ensued about what format best meets Board members’ needs/interests. Marti Roberts said her preference would be a YTD vs Budget format. John Gerner wants to track how it’s being spent, i.e. the statement of expenditures for each activity. Rich Pluta offered his assistance to Michelle Jones to create a budget in QuickBooks. Patti also recommended Leslie Heimbaugh as a possible source of help on this matter. The motion to approve the Treasurer’s Report was approved.

Chair Report:

Marti Roberts said PCEDA is still awaiting formal notification from the USDA regarding the status of our grant application. She stated that a portion of the grant funding would be used to implement the Branding Strategy. Other activities would be our efforts to help existing businesses grow and work with

new businesses to help them get established. Our business plan software would be used in these efforts. Each of these activities and the expenses incurred will have to be tracked with separate expenditure line items in QuickBooks reports to comply with federal reporting of grant funds.

Ms. Roberts reminded those present that the EDA board is the first line of ambassadors for the brand. It's important for all board members to very clearly understand what the purpose of the economic development brand will be for our work in the County. Thorough research on branding in rural counties found that the most successful ED efforts start with supporting existing businesses. Based upon this, the ad hoc committee that has been working on a plan for brand roll out has recommended that we select several local, diverse businesses to help. The next meeting of the branding ad hoc committee is scheduled for Thursday, July 26th at 9 a.m. in the PCEDA offices.

Ms. Roberts would like another ad hoc committee to form and strategize what activities need to be accomplished throughout the rest of the year and beyond. The strategy session should be scheduled by early fall, in order to prepare the 2019 funding request to the Commissioners.

Regarding a recent email regarding if the EDA was interested in hosting an informational session to review the HATS transportation study of the US322 corridor in Watts Township. Ms. Roberts suggested that we should host such a session and invite members of Perry's local governments and other County organizations. Morgan Tressler suggested that PCEDA develop an email address database for its use in communicating with people in the community.

Staff report:

Michelle Jones discussed some of the details being considered for the branding strategy rollout, including the choosing of ambassadors, a rollout event, plans for public rollout at Farm Fest and beyond. Rollout strategy event will tentatively be held September 12 at Riverbend Brewery. Ms. Jones is scheduled to discuss the brand "manual" with a local printing firm in the next few days to prepare for discussions with local businesses who agree to use the brand in their advertising programs. Sample "elevator speech" of why PCEDA is doing this: Your brand is what people say about you when you're not in the room. If you want to change what people say - because it can cost you business, friends, or opportunities - you change the way you present yourself. *We're putting our best foot forward to promote existing businesses and help attract new investment.*

Ms. Jones discussed a \$388.88 invoice PCEDA received from the Chamber of Commerce for PCEDA's agreed upon share of office operating expenses (electricity, copier costs, etc.) during the past quarter of the year. Patti McLaughlin made motion to pay our share of the office expenses bill, Morgan Tressler seconded that motion. Rich Pluta abstained as President of the Chamber. The motion was approved.

PCEDA has been asked to write two letters in support of Perry County Council of the Arts application for two grants focused on business training for member artists. John Gerner made a motion to authorize Michelle Jones to create letters of support for both, Frank Campbell seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Duane Hertzler talked to a new business owner in Shermansdale who is interested in using our software to create a business plan and inquired if there would be a cost to business owner for use of the software. The software is offered at no cost in the EDA offices.

Old Business:

John Gerner asked how the plans for Farm Fest are going. Marti Roberts and Shawna Weller agreed that it's moving along satisfactorily but that it is hard to get farmers out this time of year.

Jason Finnerty offered congratulations on a great weekend event *Discover Newport*. Frank Campbell said he stopped counting at 800 attendees.

New Business:

None

Adjourn:

Patti McLaughlin made a motion to adjourn, John Gerner seconded the motion. Motion carried.