**Minutes of Board Meeting**

**August 10, 2023**

**Perry County Economic Development Authority**

**Perry County Business and Tourism Center**

**New Bloomfield, PA.**

**Attendees:** Rich Pluta, Marti Roberts, Frank Campbell, Russ Hoover, Duane Hertzler, Patti McLaughlin, Brenda Watson, David Misner

**Virtual participants:** None

**Staff:** Michelle Jones, Kyleigh Spidle

**Absent:** None

**Excused:** John Gerner, Dee Anderson

**Visitors:** Jason Finnerty

**Call to Order:**

The August 2023 PCEDA Board Meeting was called to order by Chair Marti Roberts at 8:31 AM.

**Public Comment:**

Jason Finnerty, the County Planner, reported as follows:

* Six land development plans were received for review last month, with the total to date being 7 down from last year at this time. It has been a very slow month. A land development plan for an Auto Zone store adjacent to the Giant shopping center in Howe Township has been reviewed and forwarded on to the township. The store is on the former Orrstown bank site.
* Spring Township passed its first Zoning Ordinance last month, which it has been working on since 2017. A land use map was also approved, along with a Zoning Officer. They are now working on a fee schedule.
* Rich asked about proposed signage change in Howe Township. Mr. Finnerty advised that the current plan focuses mainly on sign structure issues and not on sign messaging. Mr. Pluta questioned whether it provides for the “grandfathering” of existing signs. Mr. Finnerty advised that typical ordinances of this type do provide for existing signs. He went on to say that townships can ask the County Planning Commission to develop draft ordinances for their consideration.
* Liverpool is the last borough to adopt the Picture Perry Comprehensive Plan. All nine boroughs have now signed onto the plan. Mr. Finnerty said he is now working on creating five work groups. He said he will want PCEDA staff in municipal work groups. He hopes to get all five meetings in September to start implementing the plan.

Brenda Watson advised as follows:

* DEP has recognized that its permit approval process is too slow in processing permits in PA. They are looking at bringing in outside help to augment the process. They estimate they have an 18-month backlog.
* Perry County has submitted two $10M grant requests to the state’s broadband funding agency for projects in the county. The Comcast proposal provides for a fiber optic network beginning in the Newport area and extending west toward New Bloomfield. Comcast will provide $3-5M in matching funds to build out the system. The BrightSpeed proposal provides for a fiber optic network beginning in the Blain area and extending east toward Ickesburtg. Next round will be tower based systems covering the less densely populated/harder to serve areas of the county. Grant applications were submitted yesterday (August 12th), and an announcement of awards is expected in January. Companies will begin work in Spring 2024 with 1.5 years to complete.

**Secretary’s Report:**

Russ Hoover presented the minutes of PCEDA’s meeting on July 13, 2023, which had been distributed to all board members in advance of today’s meeting and were presented for review and approval. Frank Campbell proposed a motion to accept the minutes as presented, Marti Roberts seconded the motion, and the motion was approved by a voice vote without dissent.

**Treasurer’s Report:**

* Patti McLaughlin presented the Financial Report for the period ending July 31, 2023, prepared by Robert Morris & Co., which was distributed to all board members in advance of today’s meeting. Ms. McLaughlin advised that the report reflects normal monthly expenses and payroll and included receipt of a $30K reimbursement from the USDA for expenses incurred under the RCDI program. Russ Hoover proposed a motion to accept the Treasurer’s Report as presented, Duane Hertzler seconded the motion, and it was approved by a voice vote without dissent.
* Ms. McLaughlin announced that the audit of PCEDA’s 2022 financial records has been completed and a clean audit report has been issued. Russ Hoover proposed a motion to accept the audit report, Frank Campbell seconded the motion, and it was approved by a voice vote without dissent.
* Ms. McLaughlin went on to report that an audit of the financial records of our first grant from DCED has been completed and a clean report issued. Michelle Jones advised that results of the 2022 audit have been published in the local paper and forwarded to the PA industrial development authority. Ms. McLauglin requested a motion to pay the $3,000 invoice for the 2022 audit and the $1,250 invoice for the DCED grant audit. Frank Campbell proposed a motion to pay the two invoices submitted by the audit firm, Russ Hoover seconded the motion, and the motion was approved by a voice vote without dissent.

**Chair Report:**

Marti Roberts reported as follows:

* As reported last month, Fair Board members met recently with Rich Pluta, Patti MacLaughlin, and Marti to discuss PCEDA’s $50k allocation (DCED3/4) of planning funds for an enhanced events building on the fairgrounds. The Fair Board members provided their assessment of needs for the whole fairground’s property and articulated their desire to seek help in scoping projects to address this larger list of needs rather than just a new event building. It was agreed that PCEDA would send out an RFP/RFQ to get estimates on getting professional help for their wish list. Ms. Roberts reported that she developed an RFP for this scope of work and coordinated it with Larry Rissinger, who is a member of the Fair Board. Frank Campbell advised that he has distributed that RFP to four engineering firms and has been told that at least three firms have agreed to provide proposals. Those proposals are due on October 1, 2023, and the funds must be spent by June 30, 2024. Frank Campbell also advised that that he has heard that CEDA-COG has reached out to the Fair Board regarding the possibility of funding for fairground improvements.
* Keystone Communities staff has provided feedback on our requests for reimbursement of costs incurred under our Façade Improvement Grants project. They have provided a list of additional documentation, such as non-discrimination statements, certificates of liability coverage, and bidding processes. With the recent passage of the state budget, funding is available for some line items, but not for items funded with appropriation funding. We have put a halt to approving new façade improvement submissions, but there are a number of projects that have been completed and the business owner is expecting reimbursement of costs incurred. We have advised the business owners of the additional information that Keystone Communities is asking for and must wait for that data to come in. This situation prompted a discussion about how to communicate the issues and the impact on PCEDA reputation in the community and how it could play into future projects. Patti McLaughlin proposed a motion to reimburse business owners for the grant funds they are owed when they have provided the requested information in advance of the state reimbursing us up to $22K. Rich Pluta seconded the motion, and it was approved by a voice vote without dissent. Ms. Jones advised that we have 12 projects active so far and four new applications on hold. $70K has been committed for the approved projects out of a budget line of $100K.
* The search for new Board members is continuing and a number of prospects have expressed interest. We should look at scheduling interviews with prospective candidates in the near future.

**Staff Reports:**

Michelle Jones prepared a written report of her activities during the past month and a copy is attached to these minutes. Ms. Jones provided highlights as follows:

* Ms. Jones has recently been advised of the availability of funding to assist small businesses with startup costs or for the purchase of an existing business. These funds, referred to as “Catalyst Funds” are being administered by an agency out of Chester County and up to $90K has been budgeted for use in Perry County. Ms. Jones is working on a letter of support for a small business owner that PCEDA has been counseling and there is a second potential prospect.

Kyleigh Spidle provided a written report on her activities during the past month and a copy is attached to these minutes. Ms. Spidle provided highlights as follows.

* Pickleball Tournament flyers are available for distribution. A number of sponsors have signed up and the participant list is growing rapidly. Five food trucks plan to be on-site for the event. T-shirts have been developed for event volunteers and game participants. In addition, merchandise promoting each borough has been developed and will be available for purchase at the tournament. It is estimated that we could net $1500 out of this whole event. Job descriptions for each of the volunteer jobs are being developed. Gift bags for volunteers and game participants are being assembled by the Chamber staff.
* Planning is going well for upcoming events in each borough over the next few months. With the success/positive outcomes of passed cleanup events, many of the communities are looking for ways to enhance the teambuilding experience.
* The networking event between PCEDA, the Chamber of Commerce and the nine borough revitalization teams is scheduled for the evening of August 22nd. It will run from 6:00 to 8:00 pm at the Bank of Landisburg building in Landisburg. All participants are requested to register in advance with the Chamber. Ice cream will be provided. in two weeks. Two ice cream trucks and live music.
* A display of merchandise for sale at the PCEDA booth at the fair was presented. An I-pad based credit card transaction system will be used for purchases and orders.

**Old business:** None

**New Business/Announcements:**

* Frank Campbell had none!!!
* Jason Finnerty advised that Liverpool Township is drafting two Zoning/SALDO ordinances to address the issue of “pot handle” properties – properties that are set back from the public road inside another property and are served by a long, narrow drive. These driveways often present long-term maintenance issues for the property owners as well as the municipalities.

**Adjourn:**

* Russ Hoover moved to adjourn the meeting. Duane Hertzler seconded the motion, and the meeting was adjourned by acclamation at 9:45 AM

E.D. Staff report:

Fair prep: here’s the sign up. I am unavailable Sunday to tear down (delivering my first born to college that day—pray for me!)

A close up of a computer screen

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* Worked with several small businesses on plans and two, who are in the process of buying existing small businesses. We need funding to help them.
* Met with CREDC re: funding options.
* Vacation for week of 31st through 4th.
* Connected Susquenita reps with the nurse aid training initiative to secure classroom space in the county. Classes should start in October.
* Attended a virtual summit to roll out the regional CEDS plan.
* Coordinating with Kyleigh, PCCA on Placemaking/arts project, including some intervention with a few towns.
* Coordinating with Marty Malone on funding strategy for multimodal initiatives.
* PCEDA Audit completed and attached. Annual IDA report submitted to state. Awaiting cashed check and acceptance of DCED1 grant close out.

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