

MINUTES
HERMITAGE COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
FEBRUARY 8, 2007

The Hermitage Community & Economic Development Commission held a regular meeting February 8, 2007 at the Hermitage Municipal Building, Conference Room #303, Hermitage, PA.

CEDC Members Attending: Rex Knisley Members Absent: None
 Bob Cucitrone
 John Holliday
 George Kraynak
 Angela Palumbo
 Tony Pagliaroli
 Tony Zucco

Commissioner Representative: Bill Moder

Others in Attendance: Gary Gulla
 Gary Hinkson
 Lynn Brest
 Jeremy Coxe
 Amy Gargiulo
 Ian Garfoli (arrived 8:03)
 Larry Gurrera
 Marcia Hirschmann
 Joe Pinchot

I. CALL TO ORDER

Rex Knisley called the meeting to order at 7:33 a.m.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes were reviewed from the January 4, 2007 Regular Meeting. Tony Zucco moved to accept the minutes for January. John Holliday seconded the motion. All members approved.

III. BUSINESS MEETING

A. Community & Economic Development and RLF Reports – December

The Revolving Loan Fund Repayment Reports were reviewed for December. All payments were current. For December the RLF program balance was \$244,612.44. Total available for loans based on projected repayments through the end of the year was \$44,612.44. The CDBG program income balance was \$22,155.72. The Landscape and Façade Improvement program balance was \$176,868.73. The total available for loans based on projected repayments through the end of the year was \$176,868.73.

John Holliday moved to accept the RLF reports. George Kraynak seconded the motion. All members approved.

Gary Gulla reported on the Community Development Block Grant projects. He stated that work is being done on the final design for the 2005-2006 public facilities project on

Adelaide Street, Crawford Drive and Marshall Street. Included in that is a bid for some site work at the Patagonia Volunteer Fire Station. These projects will go out to bid in the spring. Repair work was done on the Patagonia Volunteer Fire Station as a separate project and is substantially complete. Some punch list items still need to be completed.

Mr. Gulla reported that he attended the Technology Collaborative Annual Dinner in Pittsburgh in December. It provided an opportunity to interact and network with individuals that have design teams in Pittsburgh.

Design of the Transportation Enhancement Project on Highland Road is nearing completion. This project includes pedestrian facilities from Buhl Farm Drive to Kerrwood Drive. The City has been working with Penn DOT on some of the design issues and the project should go out to bid and be completed this year.

The City newsletter was sent out in mid-January and the next will go out the third week of April. This will be a joint newsletter with the Summer Parks and Recreation Program.

Rex Knisley questioned the status of the Tech Center project. Mr. Gulla stated that the City continues to work with different funding organizations and is looking at three funding venues: 1.) the Economic Development Administration (EDA) - which requested the City to update the pre-application in September 2006 and has since asked for a training outline and an outline addressing some funding priorities of the EDA; 2.) the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) - which has asked the City to submit a final application. If there is a Federal budget and there are adequate funds appropriated in both EDA and ARC, the Tech Center project is the top rated project in the area; and, 3.) the City continues to have dialogue with the Governor's office under the Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program. No recent releases have been made, but they are encouraged just by the continued dialogue and requests for more information.

B. Community Marketing Program

- web site update

Gary Hinkson introduced Jeremy Coxe who has filled a new position in the City as Community Planner. Mr. Coxe will report directly to Marcia Hirschmann, will take over administration of the Community Development Block Grant program, will oversee the City website and will work with Mrs. Hirschmann on various planning duties.

Mr. Coxe reviewed the updated City website. One of the main recommendations from the January HCEDC meeting was to have quick links on the home page for businesses, residents and visitors to access information they would be most interested in more readily. As many City forms as possible will be available on the website (recreation program forms, building permits, wage tax information, etc.). Testimonials and more pictures of the community will also be added. Some of the information now available on the site includes the entire Code of Ordinances; demographic information; the city newsletter; pages for the Hermitage Business Association, Hermitage Community and Economic Development Commission and Hermitage Planning Commission; a public meetings page; and, calendar of events page. The Hermitage promotional video will be added when it is complete.

- **digital marketing project**

Rex Knisley, George Kraynak, Gary Hinkson, Gary Gulla, and Bill Moder met with Rongaus Creative Group and reviewed themes and layouts of packaging for the City's marketing material. Rongaus Creative Group recommended a package including a DVD and postcards of the community. They identified individuals in the community who could provide testimonials and recording is scheduled for February 20, 2007. The project is moving forward should be complete in a month to 6 weeks.

C. Review of The Town Center Project

Gary Gulla gave a brief history of the Town Center Project. Approximately 2 ½ years ago, the HCEDC began discussing the project out of a recommendation of the Route 18 North Corridor Study that suggested taking a closer look at the town center and the impact the widening of Route 18 has had on that area. A firm specializing in urban design was brought in to discuss how to approach a project of this type. Mercer County Regional Planning Commission obtained a grant from Penn DOT to fund the project. After a lengthy selection process, a consultant was selected and the project began in late 2005.

Marcia Hirschmann explained that a steering committee was formed including members of the HCEDC and the Hermitage Planning Commission. After a number of meetings with the committee and a day of extensive public input sessions, the consultant went forward and developed the final plan which was presented to the HCEDC, the Hermitage Planning Commission and the Board of Commissioners at the January 23, 2007 meeting. She would like to ask the Board of Commissioners to accept the study. She stated that the plan is a vision of what the area around East State Street and Hermitage Road could be. It does not mean that everything in the plan is necessarily going to evolve exactly as it is in the illustrations. It provides a way of looking at some of the possibilities beyond what is there today and a way of addressing problems such as traffic flow. The Hermitage Planning Commission has already made a recommendation to the Board of Commissioners to accept the plan.

Mr. Knisley stated that he thought the plan was a vision, is about walk-ability and creates a sense of community. Three buildings are already in place at the intersection and once other businesses see that there is a plan there they might have interest in relocating to the area. Mrs. Hirschmann indicated that shortly after an article was in the newspaper about the plan, a business owner contacted her and is interested in moving his business to the Town Center where his employees could walk to lunch, stores, etc.

Mr. Cucitrone stated that you have to have some sort of vision. He thought it was a great idea and that you have to attempt to accomplish something.

Mr. Holliday said that a plan is only as good as its flexibility. If you don't try then nothing will ever happen. If only 30% of it happens, 30% will happen in a structured environment. It's a plan of consistency with flexibility.

John Holliday made a motion to accept the study plan as presented. Angela Palumbo seconded the motion. All members approved.

The plan is available on the website. It is a very large file, but if someone would like a copy on disk or hard copy they can contact the Municipal Building.

John Holliday moved to adjourn the meeting. Tony Pagliaroli seconded the motion. All members approved.

The meeting adjourned at 8:14 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amy Gargiulo
Recording Secretary