

MINUTES
HERMITAGE COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
DECEMBER 8, 2011

The Hermitage Community & Economic Development Commission held a regular meeting December 8, 2011 at the Hermitage Municipal Building, Conference Room #302, Hermitage, PA.

HCEDC Members Attending: Rex Knisley Members Absent: Michael Walton
 Bob Cucitrone
 Meg Grober
 George Kraynak
 Tony Pagliaroli
 Angela Palumbo

HCEDC Commissioner Representative: Bill Moder

Others in Attendance: Gary P. Hinkson, City of Hermitage
 Gary Gulla, City of Hermitage
 Marcia Hirschmann, City of Hermitage
 Lynn Brest, City of Hermitage
 Jeremy Coxe, City of Hermitage
 Amy Gargiulo, City of Hermitage
 Paul Young, City of Hermitage

I. GENERAL

A. Call to Order

Rex Knisley called the meeting to order at 7:31 a.m.

B. Consideration of Approval of Minutes

The minutes were reviewed from the August 17, 2011 Regular Meeting. Bob Cucitrone moved to accept the minutes. Angela Palumbo seconded the motion. All members approved.

II. BUSINESS MEETING

A. Monthly RLF Reports – October

The Revolving Loan Fund Repayment Reports for October were reviewed by Lynn Brest. All payments were current. For October the RLF program balance was \$243,724.22. Total available for loans based on projected repayments through the end of the year was \$261,782.58. The Landscape and Façade Improvement program balance was \$107,273.62. The total available for loans based on projected repayments through the end of the year was \$110,176.64.

George Kraynak moved to accept the RLF reports. Meg Grober seconded the motion. All members approved.

B. 2011 Project Review

Gary Hinkson summarized that although the City has appropriately been focused on LindenPointe over the last year the focus will shift to City-wide projects. The City appreciates the input from the HCEDC and he requests that a work plan be developed.

Jeremy Coxe reviewed a handout of a PowerPoint presentation reviewing projects that have occurred in the City during 2011. A summary of the projects is as follows:

eCenter@LindenPointe – The eCenter@LindenPointe is committed to promoting innovation and entrepreneurship in the Oh-Penn region and providing professional and technical assistance to help new and emerging STEM companies grow and prosper. The eCenter will create new jobs and attract new companies fueling economic growth and prosperity of the region. The Facility Dedication Ceremony was held October 19, 2011.

Training & Workforce Development Center @LindenPointe – Opened in 2010 and is located next door to the eCenter@LindenPointe. The facility is available for employers, educational organizations, training providers and other entities for workforce development and training needs.

North Buhl Farm Drive Pedestrian Facilities Improvement Project – A \$500,000 Elm Street Program grant was used to make improvements to the North Buhl Farm Drive Corridor including the installation of sidewalks along the west side of N. Buhl Farm Dr. and intersection improvements at N. Buhl Farm Drive/Hazen Road. The project was completed this past summer.

Buhl Park Casino Renovations – Buhl Park received approximately \$1.25M in State and Federal grant funding used to complete renovations to the Buhl Farm Park Casino.

Hunter's Woods Stormwater Improvement Project – A stormwater detention basin and emergency spillway was constructed east of N. Hermitage Rd. between NorthStar Power Sports and the Hermitage Vet to alleviate uncontrolled stormwater runoff from the Hunter's Woods Development Area. The project was completed in August 2011.

Maple Drive/East State Street Intersection Improvement Project – The City received \$600,000 in funding to make improvements to the intersection. A third lane was constructed on Maple Drive for turning; new mast arms, traffic signals and pedestrian facilities were constructed. Construction was completed in July 2011.

Neighborhood Investment Program Block A – Woodside Drive Area – Improvements were made to Woodside Drive, Pine Tree Lane, Richmond Drive, Cohasset Drive and Lyle Drive. The project is 95% complete. Grass and signage will be complete in the spring.

Neighborhood Investment Program – Rombold Road Area (CDBG Program) – Over the past two years the City completed a stormwater and roadway infrastructure improvement project in the Rombold Road Area. Total cost of Phase I, II and III is over \$600,000.

Police Department City Building Communication / Network Infrastructure – Police Department communications infrastructure was upgraded with funds from the City

Capital Reserves and Municipal Building computer infrastructure was upgraded and extended.

Hermitage Athletic Complex: South Darby Road – The project was completed in 2010 and in 2011 the fields were used by the Hermitage Softball Association. Project cost was \$2M. There is room to grow in the future when funding is available.

Hermitage Municipal Authority Projects – Cost of the Wastewater Treatment Plant Expansion and Renovation Project is \$32M. Phase I of the project has been completed. Work will begin in the near future on the municipal sewer system along Hoezel Rd., Krivosh Lane and Overlook Dr. to eliminate several failing on-lot systems in that area.

City Marketing Efforts – The new promotional DVD was completed in August 2011. Print and on-line advertising has run in the Youngstown Business Journal, OH-PENN Economic Development Magazine, Sharon-Herald Business Chronicle and Mercer County Visitors Bureau.

C. 2012 Budget & Project Update

Gary Hinkson stated that all the 2011 projects previously discussed were primarily funded with grant money or bond issue proceeds. The City's operating costs have stabilized over the past few years, but each year the City has shrunk the capital improvement funding to the point where there would not be any money to do any paving city-wide, anything in the Neighborhood Investment Improvement Program or address any stormwater issues. The Board agreed with the proposal to raise revenue by increasing the local services tax (formerly known as the occupational privilege tax) from \$10 per year to \$52 per year. This revenue will be dedicated to capital infrastructure projects. Other municipalities had previously elected to increase their local services tax when the option first became available.

The City will also move forward on a small bond issue to address some immediate needs including over \$700,000 in stormwater problems and some major street reconstruction projects.

The City must complete the expansion of the Wastewater Treatment Plant and have it operational by the end of 2012. This is a \$32M expansion and renovation project. The City's anaerobic digester equipment will convert waste food products into electricity and the sludge can be applied to land as a fertilizer. Operational costs will significantly decrease. The waste food products used could come from industries such as Joy Cone, Dean Dairy and cheese plants.

A result of the Marcellus and Utica gas and shale industry is that there are now companies willing to buy the effluent water that comes out of the plant to use for fracking the wells. Companies are looking at sewage treatment plants for cheaper water supplies which could be a source of revenue for the City.

Beginning in January 2012 all City sewer billing will be converted from quarterly to monthly. The monthly sewer bill will be \$42 per month. By spring the City hopes to

implement other bill paying options that will enable residents to be able to pay in advance, pay through automatic debiting from their checking account, or make credit card payments.

The sewer authority is also rehabilitating the Pine Hollow Main Line. They identified some sewer system issues along Rombold Road regarding inflow and infiltration work and they will extend the sanitary sewer system to pick up properties near Hoezle Road and Lynnwood Drive because of failing on-lot septic systems. Corrective action work will be done on Rombold Road and Woodlawn Drive.

The City's Community Development Block Grant Program includes \$59,360 – Program Administration; \$120,000 – Housing Rehabilitation; \$42,242 – Removal of Architectural Barriers at Buhl Park Shelter #3 public restroom; and, \$108,179 – street/infrastructure improvement project in northern Patagonia.

Commercial district developments are anticipated in 2012 including Kohl's at the intersection of Rt. 18 & Rt. 62 which will necessitate a new traffic signal on the Freeway near the Tractor Supply area. There will be no access to Morefield Road from the development. McDonalds, Tim Horton's/Cold Stone Creamery and Chipotle will be constructed on the former middle school property.

A pedestrian bridge will be constructed over Indian Run linking sidewalks between Walgreen's and the new development on the former middle school property on Rt. 18.

Miscellaneous projects include the installation of signage at the Hermitage Athletic Complex; seal coating trails at LindenPointe, Rodney White Olympic Park and the Municipal Building parking lot; and, replacing the telephone system at the municipal building.

Capital equipment purchases include a new dump/salt truck and mowers for the Street Department; 2-3 police cars and an electronic fingerprinting system for the Police Department; a new car for the Fire Department; and, new computers for the Finance Department.

Stormwater projects the City will address include those on Cohasset Drive, Ridgewood Drive, North Darby Road, Catalina Place, Butterfly Lane (Phase 2) Indian Run (Phase 4), MS4 Compliance and SW Facility Maintenance.

Capital paving projects include the Longview Road Reconstruction; Morefield Road Reconstruction; NIP, Block A, Phase 4; Clarksville Road Paving Repair; seal coating; crack sealing; and, line painting.

The City Wage Tax Office will be eliminated in 2012. Beginning next year the earned income tax will be collected by Berkheimer & Associates. The Receiver of Taxes will be retained to monitor the City's earned income tax revenues, but 2.5 positions in the City will be eliminated. Berkheimer needs to maintain an office in Mercer County and will lease space in the Municipal Building.

The HCEDC will be needed to reevaluate the City's marketing plan and decide which direction to go in the future. Recently the focus has been on LindenPointe, but now they should get back to focusing on the quality of life issues. Another focus should be on the Planned Technical Park Ordinance update.

A Stull Farm Committee has done some preliminary work on possible uses for the property and it is the intention of the Board that the property be an educational, environmental-type facility. The Board has authorized an architectural review of the structures on the property to determine their condition.

The former PMI building has been designated as the Community Foundation Regional Training Building. LTI is expanding into it and short term training programs are being developed to meet the need of area employers.

Tony Pagliaroli moved to adjourn the meeting. Bob Cucitrone seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 9:13 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amy Gargiulo
Recording Secretary

Draft as of 1/3/12
Pending approval 1/5/12