



Marion County Development

MISSION: *The mission of the Marion County Development Commission (MCDC), a department of county government, is to enhance the quality of life and standard of living in Marion County by promoting and developing Marion County as a quality destination to live, work and visit.*

MINUTES

Marion County Development Commission

Wednesday, July 26, 2023, 3014 East Main Street, Knoxville, IA

MCDC Present:

Megan Weiler Green, Doug Stewart, Barb Kniff McCulla, and Sara Roberts

Ex-Officio Present:

Supervisor Kisha Jahner & Carla Eysink

Others Present:

none

CALL TO ORDER.

The regular meeting of the Marion County Development Commission was called to order by Chair, Megan Weiler Green, at 7:15 a.m., Wednesday, July 26, 2023, at 3014 East Main Street in Knoxville.

A motion was made (Kniff McCulla/Stewart) to approve the June minutes. Motion carried.

A motion was made (Stewart/Roberts) to approve the year-end financial report. Motion carried.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

- **Executive Committee:** Commissioners discussed individuals for the two vacant positions on the commission: Pella and rural. Jacob Crozier (Rural) and Jim Mitchell (Pella Area) were identified to be recommended to the Board of Supervisors for their approval once applications are received.
- **MCDC FY 23-24 Meeting Schedule:** Commissioners reviewed the schedule of meetings and events for FY23-24 noting that additional meetings would be added for the Strategic Plan project and the Housing Study.
- **Budget:** Eysink reported that the Board of Supervisors decided to only appropriate 90% of the budget. MCDC has several line items where the budgeted amount is the actual cost of the contract or program. Commissioners also discussed issues with programs where the cost of the program is paid for by outside resources and the full budget is needed to do the program. Commissioners will discuss issues caused by this or potential requests at the September meeting.
- **FY23-24 Special Projects:**
 - **Marion County Housing Assessment:** Eysink shared information from Maxfield Research for the Marion County Comprehensive Housing Analysis Study and sponsors. Work will begin in August to collect data needed by the consultant prior to the kick-off meeting.
 - **MCDC Strategic & Marketing Plan:** Eysink shared information from UNI's Institute for Decision Making (IDM) for the Marion County Development Strategic and Marketing Plan. The planning task force will have two meetings prior to the stakeholder meeting in October. There will also be a survey of local economic development organizations to better identify gaps, duplication of services and collaboration opportunities.

PROJECT UPDATES:

- **Business Exit Planning Workbook:** Eysink has the exit planning workbook drafted. Committee members are providing edits and comments.
- **Digital Passports:** The A-to-Z passport has launched. Commissioners are encouraged to sign up for the passport. Work has begun on the fall restaurant and bar passport called Feelin' Spicy. This passport will launch in early September and run until the end of November. Staff is also working on the winter TWINKLELAND passport which will run in November and December featuring lighting displays and local retail shops with holiday décor merchandise.
- **Soul of Iowa:** Matador Networking will be filming in Pella and Knoxville during the end of August for the Iowa Tourism Office 2024 Spring Advertising Campaign called Soul of Iowa 2.0. MCDC applied to Travel Iowa and was selected. It will include drone video, standard video, photos, itineraries, and additional digital promotions at no cost to the area.
- **Business Retention & Expansion Program:** Eysink is serving on both the IEDA task force and GDSMP committee to design a new BRE program. Eventually, MCDC will need to select a new CRM program to store data.

COMMUNITY UPDATES:

- Stewart informed commissioners are some changes happening with Spirit of Pella.
- Roberts shared information about a new mural in Knoxville on Pleasant Street as well as facades in downtown Knoxville which are being restored. She also shared that the VA lots have been listed for sale and work is being done to build the new Splash Park. Commissioners also discussed the media coverage of the groundbreaking for the new Habitat house in Knoxville. Habitat is still in need of a lot in Pella.
- Eysink reported meeting with Joe Mrstik, City of Pleasantville, regarding several potential housing projects.

ADJOURN:

Next meeting Wednesday, September 13 at 7:15 at Smokey Row in Pleasantville, IA.