

December 14, 2020
Yoakum City Hall
Conference Room – 11:30 AM

REGULAR MEETING OF THE YOAKUM ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
CORPORATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

PRESENT: Gery Maneth.....President
Whitney Boone.....Vice-President
Arthur Hermann.....Secretary
Sean Mooney.....Director
Anita R. Rodríguez.....Director
Linda Schmidt.....Director
Terry Stokes.....Executive Director
Kevin M. Coleman.....City Manager
Theresa A. Bowe.....City Clerk

ABSENT: Zenith Stevens.....Director

President Maneth called the meeting to order at 11:36 AM and guests were welcomed.

Director Schmidt made a motion to adopt the minutes of the meeting of November 16, 2020 as presented. Motion was seconded by Secretary Hermann and carried unanimously.

Under the President's Report, President Maneth announced that Director Zenith Stevens had submitted her resignation from the Board, effective December 14, 2020. Information was presented regarding the recently purchased property at 306 Irvine Street. The contractor has completed the asbestos removal and will be providing the State certification to the demolition contractor. Ms. Rebecca Borchers was present to speak regarding the property. She detailed the historic value that the building represents and disagrees with the demolition of the building, and believes that the need for parking is not as critical as keeping the historical structure. She indicated that she would like to see a commitment by the YEDC and the City to maintain the downtown historic buildings. President Maneth provided specifics on the condition of the structure, as well as, details on complaints received regarding the need for additional parking in the area. Ms. Borchers made suggestions to re-enter the Main Street Program, suggested trying to renovate the façade and incorporate landscaping to ensure the beautification of the area, and to increase advertising of the available assistance through the YEDC. Director Mooney indicated that he would like to see the old to be made new and does not like the idea of tearing down historic buildings, however, it will make the situation worse if the buildings are left to deteriorate. The need was expressed to increase the curb appeal of Yoakum. City Manager Coleman reported that the taxes have been paid for the property.

Reports were provided from the YEDC liaisons to our area government partners. Director Rodriguez met with the Planning and Zoning Commission to inform them of the purpose of the relationship and open a channel of communication. Director Mooney provided information on the City Council discussion regarding additional code enforcement assistance through a volunteer staff. Three categories of code enforcement were discussed: 1) Aesthetics, 2) nuisance, and 3) hazards. Further discussion will be held to define the volunteer program and address the aesthetic violations. The Council will be looking at the main thoroughfare entrances to the City to improve the aesthetics including painting of the underpass on Hwy 111 to the east, and placing welcome signs.

Under the Executive Director report, information was provided for review. A retail business enhancement grant request from Soehnge Do it Center for the purchase of a walk-behind ditch trencher. The business is requesting a grant of \$7,900 which would be one-half of the total purchase price. Discussion was held regarding the ability of the equipment to improve its overall sales and generate increased amounts

of sales tax. After discussion, Director Mooney made a motion to deny the grant application. Motion was seconded by Director Hermann and carried unanimously.

A Community Services Program Grant application was received from the Yoakum Oak Grove Cemetery Association. A cover letter was provided from the Association's Executive Director outlining the program and a quote was presented from a local contractor for the rebuild of the pavilion at the cemetery. Discussion was held for a request in the amount of up to \$10,000. The pavilion appears to have been neglected for many years. After discussion, Director Rodriguez made a motion to award the grant in an amount not to exceed \$5,000. Second was made by Vice-President Boone and motion carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Director Mooney to approve the proposed Strategic Priorities for inclusion in the YEDC's 2021 Strategic Plan Update Project as presented. Director Hermann seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Information was provided on revised grant programs, community improvement matching grant funds, exterior improvement grant funds, and micro-business assistance. After review, Director Mooney made a motion to approve the proposed YEDC Grants and Incentives Program as presented. Second was made by Director Rodriguez. Motion carried unanimously.

The formation of two new committees of the Board was presented. The intent of the committees would be to expand the talent pool of the existing Board. Potential committees may include a finance committee and a recruitment/nomination committee. Continued discussion will be held at a future meeting.

An update was provided on plans for the 2021 Happy 175th Birthday, DeWitt County! year long Celebration. The agenda for the celebration activities was presented for review. Additional information as plans develop will be discussed at future meetings.

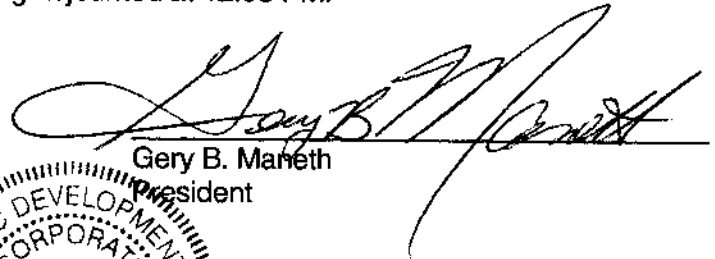
Information was provided on the Golden Crescent Regional Planning Commission's progress toward creating an organization that will be responsible for marketing the region to the rest of the Texas, the nation, and globally.

Economic development related articles was presented for review.

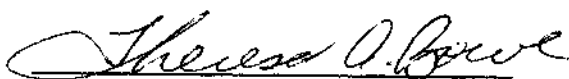
Discussion was held regarding an industrial park as listed under strategic priorities. Further research will be performed on the need for this type of facility. The intent is to have the community in a competitive position, and an industrial park would be a benefit to build the City's standing.

President Maneth thanked the guests for their interest and participation in the discussion. The need for resources for the rehabilitation of structures was reiterated.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:58 PM.


Gery B. Maneth
President

ATTEST:


Theresa A. Bowe, City Clerk

