



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES

October 28, 2021

6:00 PM

City Hall Meeting Room

CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Sheets called the Economic Development Committee to order at 6:07 P.M.

Present: Mayor Sheets, Jeannie Cuthbertson, Tony Baker, Christina Wickstein, Nick Ritch, Eliza Mason, Tim Eastridge, David Mills, Stan Salot, Rana Waltz, Todd Nystrom, John Greydanus, Aryeh Frankfurter

On-line via Zoom: Solé Alunbach

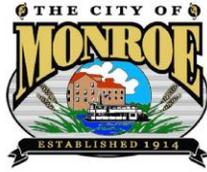
Staff: CA Steve Martinenko

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND GRANT

Grant. The City received a \$10,000 grant from Oregon Cascades West Council of Governments with the help from the Corvallis, Benton County Economic Development Office. This will be used to retain a consultant to help develop an Economic Development plan with a roadmap to help guide the City. The grant will also be used to help with marketing the City and retaining graduate student(s) to help with the research. Some of the deliverables will include how to market the city, developing our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, a SWOT analysis, so that we have a good in-depth view of what the city has, what it has to offer, and how we can put a plan together to make the future work for the City.

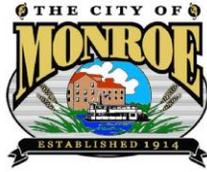
Goals of an Economic Development Plan. The group had a round-table discussion of the potential goals the economic plan should address. Ideas discussed include:

- Attract new business, Services, and jobs
 - An IGA
 - Laundromat
 - Gas Station
 - Pharmacy
 - Car Wash
 - Day Care Center
 - Boys and Girls club
 - Professional Services such as Dentists, Accountants, Realtors
 - Call centers
- Tourism
- Promoting Monroe; figuring out what Monroe is – a marketing plan
- Streamlining ordinances and building development code – making Monroe builder friendly.
- Bringing in more land that can accommodate larger businesses



Group Comments

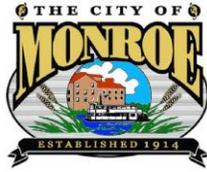
- The threat of being bogged down by “paralysis by analyses” – there are practical considerations such as land availability, regulations, and other key issues that are specific to Monroe and not found in other cities.
 - Just saying ‘economic development’ as a goal could have us wind up going in circles
- The first pieces of the puzzle are what does the city want to be when it grows up?
 - Goal setting and the title of this is economic development committee: how does that come together with the city's vision and mission?
 - We can bring in lots of businesses; but is that, or they, the type the city wants?
- In the past, Council and Planning have talked about being a bedroom community. That doesn't really coincide with what we're talking about now.
 - How much of it is bedroom community?
 - How much of it is industrial?
 - Is it industrial? Or retail?
 - Is it a destination community where we're supporting the arts and crafts that are all over?
 - Is it a destination community that that supports and develops and works with farmers and community to educate people in that realm of the community?
- It comes down to available land, if we don't have the property or the space, then how are you going to attract new business. There's very little property in the core of downtown on 99.
- Converting somebody's property to a different zone can work positively or negatively. And we know we also have issues with floodplain, we have issues with wetlands. Does the strategy of this really say making the best use of the land we have maximizing that with the type of business that works with that? And then as it grows, can it become easier to grow beyond?
- While talking about goals, keep in mind that the goals are based on the strategy or the vision of the city. There is a concern if the goal is not wrapped around a strategy we will get hung up to the point where we're sitting here going in circles.
- It's valid to go back and look at the work that's been done to quickly assess if this is the right vision; determine if the vision accommodates all the goals talked about.
 - The Riverside district plan and comprehensive plan
 - All of the work that's been done assessing what is actually available in the city, as far as buildable land and zone for those areas.
- What comes first, the laundromat or the fire department; the laundromat or the police department? They are really stages of things. The steps we take should be laid out in such a way that one supports the next. Many businesses fail because they come in at the wrong time.
- What an economic development plan does for community is create a positive environment. We can't decide which comes first. That's up to the individual with capital who wants to start that business. But if we can create a positive environment that attracts folks who realize by investing in business here, other businesses will come in with similar nature and similar goals and community support. So, it's creating that baseline of enticing investment.



- We need to make sure there are only certain places here that are available. We want to make sure that they go to businesses that we support in our comprehensive plan, that are valued.
 - But if somebody owns a piece of property and want to start a business, what business is the City's to say they can't start a business?
 - The city absolutely has the need to establish those questions of business and investment; it may be the city doesn't have \$10 million to invest in any kind of business. So, all the City can do is create the policies, goals, and the regulations.
 - That's the key. The economic development plan needs to establish that. So in fact, we wind up with clean business as opposed to businesses that would damage the water, damage the land, or the same people that just want to come in and buy cheap and sell high.
- Can we prohibit certain companies from coming here?
- Can we go out and individually court companies to come in? How do we make it enticing for them?
- One thing that's going to come up is the water and sewer in all this. Do we have adequate supply of water? Do we have adequate sewer?
- A town that's successful and has life and one that doesn't is always because there is one of the three anchor businesses. Those are a grocery store, a café, and a pub. Once those anchor businesses are there, everything else follows and you start getting the satellite businesses that basically exists off of the base.
- I wouldn't consider us an anchor business, but we have a lot going on at Monroe arts, we have a boutique, we have an art gallery, and then we have a whole section of the building for classes for adults and children, preferably first, you know, and for drama, dance, music and art. So going forward, we're definitely going to have a lot of people from all over.
 - You've just described the anchor. It's a destination location. It's a place people come to.
- We need to also take advantage of the businesses we already have here. Basically, they're bringing people into Monroe because we're perfectly in the middle of Eugene and Corvallis and taking advantage of that traffic.
- There is a big community of artists and farmers and artisans. They help support the whole community because we already have those anchor spots such as food establishments if we give people a reason to stay longer after they eat.
- We don't have a lot of parking; there's nowhere for trucks to stop. And if the truckers could stop and eat and do other things, that might help.
- There is a lack of Day Care or a daycare center. Some parents will take their kids all the way up to Corvallis to do Boys and Girls Club, or they have daycare in Scio, or they have daycare somewhere else. We need more of this locally.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Oregon Main Street Program. Mayor Sheets commented the City is rejoining the Oregon Main Street program that can help with grants to restore downtown areas, such as reconstructing facades.



Rezoning. CA Martinenko mentioned that while the City cannot force people to do things, the City, through policy and regulation, can help them along with friendly, enthusiastic, positive messages of what we would like and the support to do that. Efforts are being made to look at rezoning the entire city starting with Commercial Street between 6th and 7th streets.

Development. The city is looking closely at all city-held property as possible lease for business opportunities that fit within the goals and vision of the planning we have done. As an example, the city found it owns a section of the gravel lot south of the library – this might be used for parking or perhaps a visitor center. The city is also close to signing a 100 year lease with Benton County for the land between Ash Street and Cemetery Road. This would be used as a multi-use park for events and parking. It also ties into the rail easement pathway and multi-modal transportation as outlined in the Riverside District Master Plan. In addition, one of the owners of the former Wilbur-Ellis property would like to expand their wholesale operation to include a gas station and café. Last, the brickyard area received a huge boost when the Brownfield coalition EPA assessment came back with a clean bill of health. This could open the door for development that can include not just homes but the kind of commercial development discussed.

Another issue discussed is the property to the west of the Red Hills development. This is being discussed as a 33 home development with 1-2 acre lots. The owners have approached the City for water and sewer connection, which may be necessary because of the soils and potential for septic tank runoff into Red Hills. Possible annexation was discussed.

CA Martinenko commented on the on-going discussions with the USDA, Business Oregon, and the DEQ to secure funds for the infrastructure upgrades as outlined in the Master Plans. As presented, there is the likelihood of a 75% grant on an 8.5 million dollar package. The city also has about 1 million in SDC funds that could also be used and additional development may bring in the remainder of the funds necessary to improve the infrastructure to handle projected development. The timeframe would be in the three year range for most of the work, once the funding is awarded.

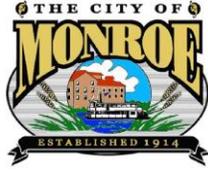
SUPPORT FOR LOCAL AREA BUSINESSES

Mayor Sheets mentioned that it is also important to support the existing business. Business Area Monroe (BAM!), the Tri County Chamber, and the Oregon Main Street Program are all resources. CA Martinenko also mentioned the Mid Valley Partners (MVP) that comprises 8 cities in the mid-valley. The MVP recently was awarded a RAIN grant to help promote our region for economic development and revitalize businesses.

OUTCOMES OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

In addition to marketing and promotion, Mayor Sheets mentioned activities such as the Monroe Festival and community engagement activities such as the Halloween Spooktacular, food drive, and Bizarre just after Thanksgiving. Marketing was discussed and Mayor Sheets said most of the work to market these activities is between him and city staff. It is a small operation.

John Greydanus mentioned consortiums such as the South Valley Wine consortium that are looking at producing wine tour maps.



Ayreh Frankfurter made a comment the concept of branding and how big a boost to towns that is when they are known for something.

The group discussed the concept of Monroe being known as a destination spot for a variety of activities such as bicycling, bird watching, food, music, and outdoor activities.

CLOSING COMMENTS

The group discussed future meeting activities that include revisiting the goals and vision of the planning already in place.

ADJOURN: Mayor Sheets adjourned the meeting at 8:06 PM