

**WHARTON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**

**Minutes - Regular Meeting  
September 26, 2022 12:00 P.M**

President Freddie Pekar called the Meeting to order at 12:02 P.M.

Board Members Participating: Freddie Pekar, Michael Wootton, Michael Roberson, Clifford Jackson, Russell Machann and Alice Heard-Roberts

Board Members Not Participating: Andrew Armour and David Schroeder

Advisory Members Participating: City Manager Joseph Pace, Mayor Tim Barker, Ronald Sanders, Marilyn Sebesta, Mark Castillo and Donald Smith

Advisory Members Not Participating: Abby King, Betty McCrohan, Billie Jones, Dr. Michael O'Guin, Kent Hill, Cindy Hernandez and Joe Freudenberger

WEDC Attorney Not Participating: Kari Lutringer

Visitors Participating: Joe Southern, Gwyn Teves, Joan Andel, Paula Favors Jason Mills, Terry Freese, Kristi Kocian, Russell Baird and Christi Padula

Staff Member Present: Joshua Owens and Louisa Jimenez

**Public Comments:** President Freddie Pekar asked if there were any public comments. Kristi Kocian of Custom Creations addressed the Board and provided information to construct a 6' simulated stone structure around the north, east and south sides of the property, adjacent to Caney Street. Kristi stated the stone structure will be able to withstand a hurricane, is graffiti resistant and is made in the USA. President Freddie Pekar thanked Kristi for the presentation.

**Minutes of the Regular Meeting held on August 15, 2022.** Director Russell Machann made the motion to approve all minutes as presented. Director Clifford Jackson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

**Presentation by Russell Baird regarding the West Milam Street properties.** Mr. Russell Baird addressed the Board regarding the West Milam Street properties. Mr. Baird is requesting assistance for the properties on the 300 block of Milam Street (307, 309 and 311 Milam Street). Mr. Baird stated it was discovered that there is no access to public water at 307, 309 and 311 West Milam Street. Mr. Baird stated the approximate cost to restore water to the properties is \$50,000. Director Russell Machann thanked Mr. Baird for his work in revitalizing downtown Wharton. No action taken.

**Strategic Planning.** Executive Director Joshua Owens opened discussion regarding Strategic Planning. Mr. Owens reported meeting with all Wharton EDC Directors to discuss Strategic Planning for the next 12-24 months. Mr. Owens stated there are (3) major projects down the pipeline and preparation is a must. In the context of preparing, Mr. Owens stated there must be developable sites to market, retail recruitment, strengthen the school to jobs pipeline, invest in infrastructure for Economic development and revitalize downtown. Director Michael Roberson thanked Mr. Owens for the presentation. No action taken.

**Report from Executive Director and discussion of:**

**A. Monthly Sales Tax Report.** Mr. Owens reported that monthly sales tax is above the FY 2021-2022 budgeted amount.

**B. Required PFIA 2256.023 Report.** Mr. Owens provided the Board with copies of the required PFIA showing the distribution of assets. Mr. Owens stated funds will be distributed to other accounts to keep the main account at Prosperity Bank below \$250,000. CD accounts for TexPool and Edward Jones have been created and will allow the accounts to waterfall as each matures at six months.

**C. Balance Sheet/Commitments.** Mr. Owens provided the Board with copies of the current Balance Sheet stating WEDC's total assets were \$3,210,520 and the total liabilities were \$343,934, net equity being \$2,866,586. WEDC's 2021-2022 commitments were \$343,934.

Mr. Owens reported the following:

1) **OakBend Medical Center Project-** reimbursement in the amount of \$41,765.85 has been completed and demolition project is in full swing.

**D. Statement of Revenues and Expenditures.** Mr. Owens provided the Board with copies of the statement of Revenues and Expenses as of August 31, 2022 and reported Wharton EDC is closing strong for FY 2021-2022.

**E. Strategic Goals.** Mr. Owens reported the following:

- 1) **Website-** all content will be revised at the end of the month. There has been a switch in vendors for the main property locator.
- 2) **Downtown WiFi-** exploring competitive pricing

Director Michael Wotton made the motion to approve the Executive Director's report as presented. Director Russell Machann seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

**Executive Session: According to Texas Government Code (Chapter 551, Open Meetings), the Board may conduct a closed executive session for the following reasons: Consultation with attorney §551.071, deliberation regarding real property §551.072, deliberation regarding prospective gift §551.073, personnel matters §551.074, deliberation regarding security devices §551.076, deliberation regarding economic development negotiations §551.087. Final action, decision, or vote, if any with regard to any matter considered in Executive Session shall be made in Open Meeting.**

**The Board went into Executive Session at 12:49 P.M.**

**A. §551.087 - Deliberation regarding Economic Development negotiations.**

1. **Negotiations on Sites.** No action taken.
2. **Business Retention and Expansion.** No action taken.
3. **Retail Live.** No action taken.
4. **Legal Representation.** No action taken.



**B. §551.072 - Deliberation regarding Real Property**

1. **238 West Milam Street.** No action taken.
2. **246 West Milam Street.** No action taken.
3. **307 West Milam Street.** No action taken.
4. **309 West Milam Street.** No action taken.
5. **311 West Milam Street.** No action taken.
6. **106 West Boling Hwy-R2G.** No action taken.
7. **202 North Houston Street.** No action taken.

**The Board returned to Open Session at 1:41 P.M.**

**A. §551.087 - Deliberation regarding Economic Development negotiations.**

1. **Negotiation on Sites.** On a motion made by Director Russell Machann and seconded by Director Michael Wootton the following resolution was adopted: Resolved that Wharton EDC can move forward on civil engineering for Ace Hardware.
2. **Business Retention and Expansion.** No action taken.
3. **Retail Live.** No action taken.
4. **Legal Representation.** No action taken.

**B. §551.072 - Deliberation regarding Real Property.**

1. **238 West Milam Street.** No Action taken.
2. **246 West Milam Street.** No action taken.
3. **307, 309 and 311 West Milam Street-** On a motion made by Director Michael Roberson and seconded by Director Michael Wootton the following resolution was unanimously adopted: Resolved that the funding request be approved for \$25,000 towards waterline improvements to the properties. The applicant shall provide Wharton EDC paid receipts for the full amount of the waterline improvements. All voted in favor.
4. **106 West Boling Hwy-** On a motion made by Director Russell Machann and seconded by Director Michael Wootton the following resolution was unanimously adopted: Resolved that the funding request be approved for \$6,291.85 for signage improvements to the property. The applicant shall provide Wharton EDC paid receipts for the full amount of the signage improvements. All voted in favor.
5. **202 North Houston Street-** No action taken.

With no further business to discuss, President Freddie Pekar thanked everyone for coming and adjourned the meeting at 1:47 P.M.

**WHARTON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BOARD**

By:   
Freddie Pekar, President

Attest:   
Andrew Armour, Secretary