

WHARTON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
Minutes - Regular Meeting
April 17, 2023

President Freddie Pekar called the Meeting to order at 12:04 P.M.

Board Members Participating: Freddie Pekar, Michael Wootton, Michael Roberson, Clifford Jackson
Russell Machann and Andrew Armour

Board Members Not Participating: Alice Heard-Johnson

Advisory Members Participating: County Judge Phillip Spenrath, City Manager Joseph Pace
Mayor Tim Barker and Marilyn Sebesta

Advisory Members Not Participating: Cindy Hernandez, Dr. Michael O'Guin, Betty McCrohan, Donald Smith,
Abby King, Kent Hill, Ronald Sanders and Joe Freudenberger

WEDC Attorney Partner Participating: Lauralee Collins

Visitors Participating: Gwyn Teves, Paula Favors, Chris Young, Joe Southern, Christi Padula,
Al Bube', Fernando Guzman, Felipe Guzman and Karen Heintschel

Staff Member Present: Joshua Owens

Public Comments: President Freddie Pekar asked if there were any public comments. There were no public comments.

Minutes of the Regular Meeting held March 20, 2023. Director Russell Machann made the motion to approve the minutes as presented. Director Clifford Jackson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Downtown Master Plan. Mrs. Gwyneth Teves, Director of Planning and Development, with the City of Wharton and City Manager Joseph Pace, addressed the Board and gave a presentation explaining the Downtown Master Plan. Mrs. Teves stated that a Downtown Master Plan is needed to guide, approach and provide revitalization and to reinvigorate and strengthen downtown. The proposed Master Plan would:

- Develop a single vision for the downtown area
- Expand upon the current Central Business District to include a larger footprint
- Include a recommended regulatory/development policy and an in-dept Storefront Recommendation Plan with design guidelines for designated Downtown Area
- Include a Market Analysis of the designated area with real estate market conditions, commercial and residential prices, leasing and sales activity data and recommendations.

Mrs. Teves stated that the city had secured funding in the amount of \$100,000 from the American Rescue Act toward the project totaling \$143,278 and made a funding request in the amount of \$43,278 necessary to complete the project. Mrs. Teves and City Manager Joe Pace answered questions from the Directors. The Board thanked Mrs. Teves and Mr. Pace for the presentation. No action taken.

Approve Resolution No. 2023-04 Expressing Intent To Provide Matching Funding For An Economic Development Administration Economic Adjustment Assistance Grant. Mr. Owens explained that the grant would aid in the expansion and growth of existing and future business along Hwy 60. The \$400,000 matching grant would assist Prime Eco Group in their \$1.6M expansion to upgrade to a 12" water line to loop infrastructure along Hwy 60. It would also allow future businesses, locating along Hwy 60, access to the line. Director Russell Machann made the motion to approve Resolution No. 2023-04 authorizing a matching grant not to exceed \$400,000 for the Prime Eco Group infrastructure. Director Clifford Jackson seconded the motion. All voted in favor. A copy of Resolution No. 2023-04 is attached.

Engineering for 3000 North Richmond Road. The item was discussed in executive session. No action taken.

Report from Executive Director and discussion of:

A. Monthly Sales Tax Report. Mr. Owens provided the Board with copies of the Monthly Sales Tax Report and said that he was waiting for the upcoming report to reflect the significance of the HEB remodel and the opening of Alamo Lumber.

B. Required PFIA 2256.023 Report. Mr. Owens provided the Board with copies of the required PFIA 2256.023 as attached. He noted that some of the money had been reallocated to cover the upcoming annual \$150,000 FM 1301 Expansion Project payment to the city.

C. Balance and Commitments Sheet. Mr. Owens provided the Board with copies of the current Balance and Commitments Sheet stating WEDC's total assets were \$2,318,170 and the total liabilities were \$458,383, net equity being \$1,859,787. WEDC's 2023-2023 commitments were \$458,383. Mr. Owens also stated that Wharton EDC's balance and commitments were on track and that Oak Bend was moving forward with their renovation plans. He also said that Ali Quattom's funding request of \$20,000 would be removed from the commitments as the building had been leased and the request is no longer valid.

D. Statement of Revenues and Expenditures. Mr. Owens provided the Board with copies of the Statement of Revenues and Expenses as of March 31, 2023. Mr. Owens stated Wharton EDC is halfway through the fiscal year and is where it should be at this point.

Mr. Owens stated that the website is fully up and running but needs search engine optimization. Kapeesh Marketing Director, Amy Morales, will attend the next Board meeting to provide an update on the optimization. He said that he had been speaking with land brokers and that had met with WCJC and WorkForce Solutions to develop an internship program for industrial maintenance workers. Director Russell Machann made the motion to approve the Executive Director's report as presented. Director Michael Roberson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Executive Session: According to Teves 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 12:45 P.M.

- A. §551.087 - Deliberation regarding Economic Development negotiations.**
1. Business Negotiations. No action taken.

The Board returned to Open Session at 1:36 P.M.

- A. §551.087 - Deliberation regarding Economic Development negotiations.**
1. Business Negotiations.

Downtown Mater Plan. Director Russel Machann made the motion to support the Downtown Master Plan in an amount not to exceed \$43,378. Director Michael Wootton seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Engineering for 3000 North Richmond Road. Executive Director Josh Owens provided the Directors with copies of the scope of work and cost analysis for the Detention Combined Conveyance Plan, detailing storm water detention/mitigation plan, grading and drainage, for the 3000 block of North Richmond Road. Director Andrew Armour made the motion to approve \$16,300 as quoted by McKim & Creed for the engineering costs at 3000 North Richmond Road. Director Clifford Jackson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

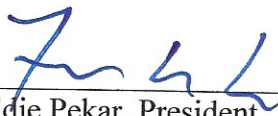
- B. §551.073 - Deliberation regarding Real Property.**

- 1. 1302 North Richmond Road.** On a motion made by Director Michael Wootton and seconded by Director Clifford Jackson the following resolution was adopted: Resolved that the application from Nelson Pleitez, Los Carriros Mexican Grill, be approved for \$10,000 for signage improvements as The Board finds that it will enhance the property located in Wharton and will promote the future expansion of business in Wharton.

Funding will occur in two payments contingent upon the owner obtaining a Certificate of Inspection from the State Health Department, a Certificate of Occupancy form the City of Wharton and the applicant providing paid receipts for the full amount (\$25,000.00) for the signage improvements. \$5,000 will be paid sixty days after the initial date of opening and the remaining \$5,000 will be paid ninety days after the initial date of opening. Except for Director Russell Machann voting against the approval, all voted in favor.

With no further business to discuss, President Freddie Pekar thanked everyone for coming and adjourned the meeting at 1:38 P.M.

WHARTON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BOARD

By: 
Freddie Pekar, President

04.17.2023

Attest: 
Andrew Armour, Secretary