

WHARTON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Minutes - Regular Meeting

August 21, 2023 12:00 P.M

President Freddie Pekar called the Meeting to order at 12:01 P.M.

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

Board Members Not Participating: Larry Pittman and Alice Heard-Roberts

Advisory Members Participating: City Manager Joseph Pace, Mayor Tim Barker, Marilyn Sebesta, and Ron Sanders

Advisory Members Not Participating: County Judge Phillip Spenrath, Abby King, Betty McCrohan, Dr. Michael O'Guin, Kent Hill, Cindy Hernandez, and Joe Freudenberger

WEDC Attorney Participating: Ashley Tegeler-Kleiman

Visitors Participating: Gwyn Teves, Joan Andel, Paula Favors, Chris Young, Jason Mills, King Satterwhite, Russell Baird, Stephanie Konvicka, Christie Padula, and Chief Terry Lynch

Staff Member Present: Joshua Owens and Louisa Jimenez

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

Minutes of the Regular Meeting held on July 17, 2023. Director Russell Machann made the motion to approve all minutes as presented. Director Michael Wootton seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Hesed House Proposal. Hesed House Executive Director Stephanie Konvicka addressed the Board and gave a presentation on their infrastructure support request. The problem/needs at this time are: infrastructure construction challenges due to FEMA restrictions, loss of Dinosaur Park parking lot during levee construction, ADA accessibility, and parking spaces for 30+ vehicles to support workforce development programming. Mrs. Konvicka requested \$75,000 to support parking lot construction and \$25,000 for ADA accessible paths to connect facilities. The total amount requested is \$100,000. Executive Director Josh Owens thanked Mrs. Konvicka for the presentation. No action taken.

Main Street Sidewalk Project. Mrs. Gwyn Teves, City of Wharton Director of Planning and Development, and Joseph Pace, City of Wharton City Manager, addressed the Board and gave a presentation explaining the request for mitigating the financial gap for the Main Street Sidewalk Project. President Freddie Pekar thanked Mrs. Teves and Mr. Pace for the presentation. No action taken.

Wharton Chamber of Commerce. Wharton Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Ron Sanders addressed the Board with a funding request for the renovation proposal for the Wharton of Chamber of Commerce building. Repairs are needed on the south and east facades, which have been caused by infiltration of water by two failing roofing systems. The total amount requested is \$30,435.25, half of the total cost of the project. No action taken.

Report from Executive Director and discussion of:

A. Monthly Sales Tax Report. Mr. Owens reported that monthly sales tax is ahead of the projected 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 reported that funds will be reallocated to other Wharton EDC bank accounts to make sure adequate funds are in each account.

C. Balance Sheet/Commitments. Mr. Owens provided the Board with copies of the current Balance Sheet stating WEDC's total assets were \$2,451,532 and the total liabilities were \$328,161, net equity being \$2,123,371. WEDC's 2022-2023 commitments were \$328,161.

Mr. Owens reported the following:

- 1) **Wharton Feed & Supply**-stated Wharton EDC continues to support the project and is working to complete the performance agreement.
- 2) **Outlar Fencing**-continues to work with the City of Wharton and TxDot; also including Wayfinding
- 3) **OakBend Medical Center Project**-has not received any recent updates on the development.
- 4) **Downtown Master Plan**-well underway with the project.
- 5) **Rebates**-should roll-off commitment sheet at the end of the fiscal year.
- 6) **Los Charritos Mexican Grill**-client is half-way through the sign grant.

D. Statement of Revenues and Expenditures. Mr. Owens provided the Board with copies of the statement of Revenues and Expenses as of August 21, 2023. Wharton EDC is nearing the end of the fiscal year. Infrastructure funding was used to assist Alamo Lumber with the pipeline project.

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

- 1) **Website**-no dramatic increase but Wharton EDC has not executed the website marketing plan.
- 2) **2023-2026 Strategic Plan**-working with large landowners to bring developable sites to market. Mr. Owens will be attending the Greater Houston Partnership Trade Mission to Chicago to promote the available land. On August 31, he will attend Retail Live Austin. Mr. Owens continues to work with landowners on frontage road to market the property to potential investors.
- 3) **Schools to jobs pipeline**-recently met with WCJC and discussed adding a CDL and Forklift program. Mr. Owens also met with members of Wharton ISD and WCJC to discuss the ROAR dual credit, and P-Tech Program.
- 4) **Reconnect Grant**-Wharton EDC will be applying for the Economic Development Administration grant, due October 5, 2023.

Director Russell Machann made the motion to approve the Executive Director's report as presented. Director Michael Wootton 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 12:33 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.

- B. §551.072 - Deliberation regarding Real Property**
 - 1. **135 W. Burleson.** No action taken.
 - 2. **421 W. Colorado St-Hesed House.** No action taken.
 - 3. **225 N. Richmond Rd-Wharton Chamber of Commerce.** No action taken.

The Board returned to Open Session at 1:40 P.M.

- A. §551.087 - Deliberation regarding Economic Development negotiations.**
 - 1. **Negotiation on Sites.** No action taken.
 - 2. **Business Retention and Expansion.**

Main Street Sidewalk Project-On a motion made by Director Russell Machann and Seconded by Director Andrew Armour the following was unanimously adopted: Resolved that the funding request made by the City of Wharton be approved for \$22,899 for the Main Street Sidewalk Project. All voted in favor.

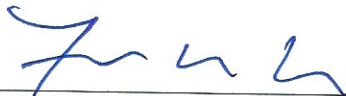
- B. §551.072 - Deliberation regarding Real Property.**
 - 1. **135 W. Burleson.** On a motion made by Director Russell Machann and seconded by Director Michael Wootton the following was unanimously adopted: Resolved that Wharton Economic Development move forward in the sale of the building at 135 W. Burleson for the price of \$5,000 to Mr. Russell Baird with the contingency that the building is developed by September 1, 2025 or the title will return to current owner at no cost to current owner. All voted in favor.

 - 2. **421 W. Colorado Street-Hesed House-**On a motion made by Director Michael Wootton and Seconded by Director Andrew Armour the following was unanimously adopted: Resolved that the funding request made by Hesed House Executive Director Stephanie Konvicka be approved for \$50,000 for the purpose of job creation and Workforce Development. Funding will be contingent upon Hesed House raising additional funds for the remaining balance of \$50,000. All voted in favor.


3. **Wharton Chamber of Commerce**-On a motion made by Director Andrew Armour and seconded by Director Michael Wootton the following was unanimously adopted: Resolved that the funding request made by Wharton Chamber of Commerce and Agriculture Executive Director Ron Sanders be approved for \$30,435.25 with the contingency that Mr. Sanders raise additional funds for the remaining balance within six months. All voted in favor.

With no further business to discuss, President Freddie Pekar thanked everyone for coming and adjourned the meeting at 1:53 P.M.

WHARTON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BOARD

By: 

Freddie Pekar, President
08.21.2023

Attest: 

Andrew Armour, Secretary