

# MINUTES

## ALBION CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, February 29, 2024

ALBION CITY HALL – COUNCIL CHAMBERS; 7:00 P.M.

Chairperson Ed Knott called the meeting to order at 7:00pm. Roll was taken, members present were: Chairperson Knott, Shelley Lueken, Stacey Gragert and Katie Score. Jay Wolf, Doug Young & Amy Zaruba were absent. Secretary Maggie Smith and City Administrator Andrew Devine were also present. The guests in attendance were Jeff Jarecki and Tony Levander from AEDC. All proceedings hereafter shown were taken while the convened meeting was open to the attendance of the public. The meeting was recorded using an audio recording device and such recording is available for inspection at the office of the City Clerk.

Approve minutes of the January 9, 2024 Meeting

The minutes of the January 9, 2024 meeting were reviewed. Katie Score **moved to approve the minutes as read**, seconded by Gragert. **Vote:** (Yes) Knott, Gragert, Lueken, Score (No) None (Absent) Wolf, Young, Zaruba

REVIEW AEDC SALES TAX RELEASE REQUESTS TO RELEASE SALES TAX FUNDS FOR SUPPORT OF BUILDING MAINTENANCE

Chairperson Knott read the details regarding this agenda item from the submitted request and invited Jeff Jarecki of AEDC to comment on the proposed request. Jarecki explained the work on the AEDC building to tuck point brick, reinforce the exterior structure and stucco the back wall have been completed. Jarecki commented that the work done is of excellent quality and the bid from Tornez Stucco was substantially lower than another bid that was received. Smith clarified that the requested funds are to pay the final invoice (\$10,500) after \$18,500 of previously reallocated funds had been applied to the \$29,000 balance. The request also included \$485 for future gutter placement on the back of the building and \$70 for material disposal from completed work. Jarecki relayed that with a recently replaced roof and this work have solidified the structure for many years to come.

Knott **moved to recommend the release of \$11,055 in sales tax funds for support of building maintenance at 127 S 4<sup>th</sup>**. Lueken seconded the motion.

**Vote:** (Yes) Gragert, Lueken, Knott, Score (No) None (Absent) Zaruba, Wolf, Young

REVIEW AEDC SALES TAX RELEASE REQUESTS TO RELEASE SALES TAX FUNDS FOR SUPPORT OF THE VENUE AS A DOWNTOWN EVENT SPACE AND DOWNTOWN COMMUNITY EVENTS BOTH SUPPORTING QUALITY OF LIFE AND INCREASED TOURISM

Chairperson Knott read the details regarding this agenda item from the submitted request and asked for discussion.

Smith presented a quote received from StageDrop for weatherproof, portable staging in the amount of \$16,176.28, which would provide a 16x20 stage for use in The Venue during the Albion Arts Council Summer Concert Series. AEDC is requesting \$10,000 in sales tax in support of the stage purchase and intends to reach out to community partners to flesh out the remaining amount. Smith shared that AEDC intends for this stage to be utilized for any community events taking place in downtown Albion, by groups such as the Albion Chamber, Boone Central Alumni, etc. Smith gave comment on the appreciation of AEDC to the Boone County Fair Board for the use of their trailer stage. Smith commented that for safety reasons, ease of travel to and from the fairgrounds, convenience in format and elevation of the space, the Arts Council and AEDC discussed looking into a different staging option. AEDC hopes the availability of this type of staging will assist in attracting more events to The Venue as well.

Knott pointed out the shortfall in available cash in the AEDC budget and asked if the board felt this type of project aligned with priorities. Jarecki responded that the shortfall is partially in reference to \$50,000 in funds that have not been recaptured from infill lot purchases. He relayed that the intent is to utilize those lots for rural workforce housing development, but with no current developer on board AEDC does not want to start the clock for development (24 months to occupancy) on the lot. Jarecki voiced appreciation for Knott's comments on wanting AEDC to align with priorities and be fiscally prudent. He also relayed that the board wants to continually reinvest the captured sales tax funds back into the community for the benefit of Albion rather than letting them sit.

Gragert asked if other quotes were received. Smith confirmed that she researched multiple companies and based on what this quote provides (weatherproof surfaces, ability to be set up multiple ways) and information shared by Arts Council on the size of stage requested in many contracts, this company offered the best fit. Tony Levander commented that he participated in reviewing potential stage options and this company allowed for future additions to the stage with a truss system roof for weather and sun relief where others did not.

Smith commented the current assets are stretched, however, given the amount of funds still available in the sales tax fund the AEDC board felt comfortable coming to CAC with the current request. Knott commended AEDC for taking well considered risks for the benefit of Albion and asked if before a motion was made the CAC could also discuss request item number 3, the land purchase near to Clark Street Park.

#### REVIEW AEDC SALES TAX RELEASE REQUESTS TO RELEASE SALES TAX FUNDS FOR PURCHASE OF ONE LOT WITHIN ALBION, NEBRASKA

Chairperson Knott asked Jarecki to make some opening comments regarding this agenda items.

Jarecki shared that the AEDC board has discussed, and it is his opinion that, starting one project (either quality of life or business related) yearly that will contribute to Albion and improve it is a good way to build and support the community. Jarecki commented that investing in a significant way in that part of town will have positive impacts on housing development there with many open lots existing. The AEDC board has considered the possibility of this lot being an extension of the Clark Street Park and believes that a park expansion would be such a significant development. However, Jarecki stated that AEDC is understanding that this park idea may not be

able to come to fruition and that even if it doesn't, having additional lots for housing development still fits well with AEDC's priorities given the LB840 economic development plan. Jarecki feels that by adding one really nice amenity to our community every year it is exciting to consider what our community may be like in 10-20 years.

Knott stated that he can get behind AEDC owning the lot. He also believes the Clark Street Park footprint is large enough already and he would like to see AEDC develop housing on the potential purchase. Knott stated that he believes development of a park project (seeking grant funding and planning) would be best as a collaborative project with AEDC and the City. Devine commented that the Porters who are developing the new project in Fuller Park also purchased replacement equipment for Clark Street Park. Smith commented that in the AEDC board's discussion of the lot purchase housing was considered and although the park expansion is the "big dream" all options for the lot are still on the table. Gragert commented that although she loves the concept sketch, she considers housing for that park of town to be bigger need. Score commented that she also loves the expansion idea presented but has concerns about the upkeep of a new park when the City's resources for Parks are already stretched.

In closing Devine mentioned that although he may not agree with all the elements of the "dream" plan, he does agree with the land purchase and that the details of the land use can be worked out at a later time. Devine also voiced support for the investment in the stage for The Venue. He encouraged AEDC to ensure that details are worked out for agreements to use the stage and be responsible for care of it during use. Knott asked how the Arts Council is supporting this purchase and Jarecki and Levander voiced that the AAAC is putting out a tremendous amount of money (Smith stated \$10,000-\$15,000 per summer for all acts.) for the Summer Concert Series.

After discussion was exhausted, Knott reviewed both of the items under discussion. Katie Score **moved to recommend the release of \$10,000 for the purchase of portable staging for use in The Venue (129 S 4th) and in support of community events taking place in downtown Albion.** Gragert seconded the motion.

**Vote:** (Yes) Gragert, Lueken, Knott, Score (No) None (Absent) Zaruba, Wolf, Young

Knott **moved to recommends the release of \$33,800 for land acquisition on West Clark Street, adjacent to Clark Park. AEDC seeks to utilize this land for expansion of Clark Park coupled with a park rehabilitation project.** Score seconded the motion.

**Vote:** (Yes) Gragert, Score, Lueken, Knott (No) None (Absent) Zaruba, Wolf, Young

Discuss recommendations for the City of Albion Economic Development Plan, and/or future activities.

Devine noted the previous discussion of the Economic Development (LB840) Plan and the approval of the City Council to place the plan before voters in the 2024 Primary Election ahead of the 2028 sunset. Devine clarified that the tax rate would not increase, but rather the allocation of the sales tax collected in the City of Albion would be adjusted. One quarter of one percent of the sales tax currently allocated to Capital Improvements would be reallocated to Economic Development. Devine

further commented that AEDC intends to utilize these additional funds for more employable resources for new capital improvement (nee infrastructure) expenditures, which would benefit development timelines and processes while also marrying well with the development work AEDC is tasked with undertaking. It does not change anything regarding the processes of releasing funds. Jarecki and Devine both comment that AEDC can more nimbly employ these resources for infrastructure development and incentivize the development of infrastructure with these funds. Knott reiterated that sales tax would not increase as a result of this vote.

If approved by voters, one half of one cent would then support the economic development plan and that plan ten-year timeline would start over in October of 2024. The primary election will be May 14, 2025.

8. Adjourn 7:41pm