

AGENDA
ALBION CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Tuesday, January 9, 2024

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

Chairperson Ed Knott called the meeting to order at 7:01pm. Roll was taken, members present were: Chairperson Knott, Amy Zaruba, Shelley Lueken, Doug Young and Katie Score. Stacy Gragert was absent. Member Jay Wolf joined via phone (non-voting). Secretary Maggie Smith and City Administrator Andrew Devine were also present. The guest in attendance was Jeff Jarecki 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 October 17, 2023 Meeting

The minutes of the October 17, 2023 meeting were reviewed. Doug Young **moved to approve the minutes as read**, seconded by Zaruba.

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

Motion carried.

REVIEW AEDC SALES TAX RELEASE REQUESTS TO RELEASE SALES TAX FUNDS FOR SUPPORT OF THE LAND PURCHASE IN INTEREST WHILE IT IS BEING DEVELOPED FOR HOUSING OR SALE.

Detail from Request: Albion Economic Development Corporation's ("AEDC") real estate holding company, Albion Development Company, Inc. has purchased land for development of housing (28 20 6 LOT 2 BLOCK 4 ANDERSEN SECOND SUBDIVISION). AEDC requests \$13,000 to service the interest on the loan while working with the City of Albion to develop and sell and/or build on the lots.

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

AEDC President Jeff Jarecki presented. Albion Development Company acquired the Anderson (South Park) Subdivision and Cornerstone Bank is allowing ADC to make interest only payments until development is ready to move forward. Jarecki explained that the focus shifted from this property to the lots at 11th and State because donors to the RWHF were ready to see development take place and the 11th and State lots were build ready, whereas the subdivision was in need of infrastructure build out before development of housing can take place. Zaruba asked for clarification if the lots by Joel Johnson (7th and State) would not be used. Jarecki stated that if a developer comes forward for that property, AEDC is ready to move forward with a project there. He also mentioned that a duplex/triplex has been discussed for that lot, however, reaffirmed that no projects have been decided on that lot and it is available for development.

Knott asked if the RWHF accounts could be used to service that debt. Smith asserted that the RWHF could be used to service the debt, however, once the RWHF money touches the property the 24-month clock to have the property "reasonably ready for occupancy" begins and AEDC feels it would be best to wait until the development plan is finalized. Jarecki mentioned that the lots on 11th and State were paid off with RWHF money. Knott reminded the group that CAC was made

aware previously that there would be interest expense on the land purchased by ADC/AEDC and this was not a new expense/occurrence.

Amy Zaruba moved to **recommend approval of the release of \$13,000 in sales tax funds for support of the interest on the AEDC-owned South Park Subdivision while it is being developed for housing or sale.** Seconded by Knott.

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

Motion carried.

REVIEW AEDC SALES TAX RELEASE REQUESTS TO RELEASE SALES TAX FUNDS FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES, PROGRAMS, AND/OR PROJECTS AND CONSIDER RECOMMENDATION REGARDING THE SAME

Detail from Request: AEDC requests \$22,000 for annual expenses (insurance, taxes, utility bills, etc.), which includes the \$10,000.00 for its annual commitment to Boone Beginnings Early Childhood and Family Development Center, Inc. AEDC further requests \$3,000.00 for miscellaneous expenses regarding the work of this office.

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

Smith stated that the total requested amount for item number two is \$25,000 and it is the same request as in January of 2023. Knott commented on the new format for the treasurer's report and expressed appreciation for the improvements. Knott asked if this was the final payment for AEDC's Boone Beginnings pledge. Smith referred the group to the Reserved Cash Detail on the second page of the treasurer's report showing that 2024 is the last payment to Boone Beginnings. Jarecki affirmed that this request is consistent with what was requested in 2023. Knott inquired about the "office rent" denoted in the report. Smith said the office rent was actually funds received in 2023 from the Albion Arts Council for their rental of an office in the AEDC building. Smith mentioned that the Arts Council is discontinuing their lease. Jarecki asserted that he doesn't believe a new tenant is needed in that office space unless it is the right fit and it furthers development and clarified that this was his opinion and not an official position of the board.

Katie Score moved to **recommend approval of the release of \$22,000 in sales tax funds for AEDC annual expenses and \$3,000 for miscellaneous expenses regarding the work of the AEDC office.** Seconded by Lueken.

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

Motion carried.

REVIEW PROPOSED REALLOCATION OF FUNDS CURRENTLY EARMARKED FOR THE ALBION SPORTS COMPLEX.

Detail from Request: AEDC requests the reallocation of \$18,582.00 from the Albion Sports Complex to building maintenance. AEDC seeks to reinforce and repair the building at 127 S 4th Street and has

received two bids toward that completion in 2024. The Albion Sports Complex funds were allocated to baseball repairs and projects and have not been dedicated for use.

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

Jarecki informed the board that the initial \$20,000 allocation to the sports complex was completed in 2019 for the baseball program. Board members followed up with Mike Malander (lead of the baseball program at the time of award) in February of 2023 and asked for a plan for the funds in the first part of March. A desired use was presented but no funds timeline was given. The funds were to be paid out upon completion of the projects. AEDC followed up in the fall of 2023 and determined that the project was not scheduled, other fundraising had taken place for some of the needs and that the money would not be used immediately. Jarecki said that many people in the community sit on a variety of boards and these projects simply did not rise to a top priority at this time. When it was conveyed that the money would not be used anytime soon, the AEDC board considered utilizing those funds for repairs on the exterior of the building at 127 S 4th Street. Jarecki said those on the receiving end of the funds were given fair warning that they needed to be used.

Smith stated that the fundraising efforts happening in the Fall of 2023 for the sport complex were a part of the softball group's efforts, where the previously allocated funds were given to baseball. Traci Hedlund stated the current fundraisers were aware of this fact and had not planned on this money for their projects. Devine mentioned that softball is looking to purchase a new scoreboard. Smith stated that the AEDC board is more than willing to hear a future request for baseball projects when those projects are shovel ready. Devine affirmed implementing a sunset timeline for the use of funds when future projects are planned. Knott noted that the group did use a small amount of the additional award. Zaruba stated that it is only fair if the group has not used the money or made firm plans to use the money that it be returned to the budget for another use. Jarecki stated that it is not a "no" to the project but rather a reallocation so the funds can be used now and then a later approval for future projects.

Amy Zaruba moved to **recommend approval of the reallocation of \$18,582 in sales tax funds currently earmarked for the Albion Sports Complex to AEDC building maintenance.** Seconded by Knott.

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

Motion carried.

REVIEW AEDC SALES TAX RELEASE REQUESTS TO RELEASE SALES TAX FUNDS FOR SUPPORT OF DOWNTOWN FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS.

Detail from Request: AEDC requests the release of \$5,000 for support of the Downtown Improvement Rebate Program. These funds would support façade improvements for Main Street Sports, a sporting goods business being operated by John and Wes Buck and slated to open in 2024.

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

Jarecki said AEDC was approached by Bucks for downtown improvement rebate funds for their business that is opening and AEDC is looking to award the maximum amount allowable under that program. Jarecki said the AEDC board placed a stipulation on the award with it being paid on the first day Main Street Sports is open for business. Jarecki said the board is excited about a new business opening downtown. He affirmed the entrepreneurial nature of Albion and its downtown and that AEDC is happy to support that development. Jarecki stated that the board asked Bucks to present to the board in January with their business plan. Smith said John and Wes are working with Loren Kucera from the Nebraska Business Development Center on their business plan and will have it ready in January.

Young asked if they had presented a plan for what the money requested would be used for. Smith said that John Buck submitted a detailed application along with two potential projects with two bids for each project, signage and windows on the east side of the building. Smith stated that under AEDC's Downtown Improvement Rebate Program that maximum amount of award is 50% or \$5,000 whichever comes first.

Knott inquired about the already existing amount in the façade improvement line item on the treasurer's report. Smith confirmed that there is still just over \$4,100 in the account, but AEDC knew that the Main Street Sports ask would wipe out that account. AEDC is hoping to maintain that account for future smaller requests throughout 2024. Jarecki stated that AEDC has a history of helping new businesses with signage and they would like to continue.

Doug Young moved to **recommend approval of the release of \$5,000 in sales tax funds for support of downtown façade improvement projects, including the project by John & Wes Buck, Main Street Sports.** Seconded by Score.

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

Motion carried.

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

Smith presented the board with a 2023 Impact Report showing a highlight of most visible efforts of 2023. Smith discussed the two new homes being built on 11th and State and the future that is hoped with the Rural Workforce Housing Funds. The homes will be completed early this summer and AEDC has already communicated with local realtors on details of the homes and a set commission available to them if they sell the home. Smith also discussed the hope of collecting information on infill lots and creating a pamphlet on them to distribute to contractors with RWHF information to encourage builds.

Smith highlighted that in 2023 over 1600 people attended events in The Venue and admitted that this was a conservative estimate. Smith voiced appreciation for the work of the Albion Area Arts Council in bringing sizable crowds to downtown for the summer concert series and to the Albion Chamber of Commerce for hosting a large tour group and Tour de Nebraska in downtown. Smith

will be working with Nick Krohn and Jerene Kruse to plan for a future gallery experience in the AEDC office in mid-2024.

Young inquired about the status of the summer concert series. Smith said that in a recent arts council meeting she heard that the kickoff concert on July 4th has been confirmed. Smith stated that in 2023, the concerts for the summer were fully confirmed in approximately February.

Smith reported the AEDC Facebook page and the new and improved website for AEDC and the City of Albion have been great marketing tools.

Jarecki stated his appreciation for Smith in her role, which Knott confirmed.

Devine stated that the Eli Porter Memorial Accessible Playground is within \$19,000 of its total goal of \$430,000 and that the fundraising only began in fall of 2023. The playground has received donations from the Boone County Big Give, the Boone County Foundation Fund, the Nebraska Community Foundation, and a \$24,999 award from the Christopher Reeve Foundation. The project will commence this year if the funds are raised. Devine stated that the lead time on equipment is 8-10 weeks, so a 2024 completion date is possible.

Seeing all discussion exhausted, Chairman Knott announced the meeting adjourned at 7:35pm.