

## MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING

July 19, 2021

### MONTGOMERY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

#### **CALL TO ORDER**

President Arnette Easley called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Present:        Arnette Easley – Vice-President  
                    Carol Langley – Treasurer  
                    Ryan Londeen – Secretary  
                    Jeff Angelo – Board Member  
                    Byron Sanford – Board Member  
                    Dan Walker – Board Member

Absent:         Rebecca Huss – President

Also Present:   Richard Tramm – City Administrator

#### **OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comment

#### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**1. Approval of Minutes of Public Hearing and Regular Meeting held on June 21, 2021**

Motion to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes for Meeting held on June 21, 2021 was made by Carol Langley and seconded by Byron Sanford. All in favor. (6-0)

## **APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL REPORT**

### **2. Approval of May 2021 Finance Report**

This report was presented at the last MEDC meeting.

Motion to approve the Financial Report for May 2021 was made by Dan Walker and seconded by Jeff Angelo. All in favor. (6-0)

### **3. Approval of June 2021 Finance Report**

Presented by Carol Langley

Sanford asked when the MEDC would receive the final payment for the MISD. Tramm indicated that was scheduled for December but the City may pay off the loan earlier (before the end of fiscal year). This may come up in the next meeting or the meeting thereafter.

Motion to approve the Financial Report for June 2021 was made by Jeff Angelo and seconded by Byron Sanford. All in favor. (6-0)

## **CONSIDERATION AND POSSIBLE ACTION**

### **4. Update on Historical Signage.**

Presented by Richard Tramm.

Londeen noted that there are two versions of the sign, italics text, and non-italics text. Tramm said that was likely because they got ordered at different times.

Angelo asked where the signs would be located. Tramm indicated that they will be located at each location and mounted with the permission of the owners of the property at a location that is appropriate and accessible. There will be mapping that will provide a walking tour to each of the signs. The QR code on the sign will link to a City webpage that will provide extensive information for each site and can be updated easily if needed.

Walker asked how they would be mounted. Tramm said it depends on the location and will be tailored to each site.

Easley suggested mounting the signs on to the structure itself to prevent vandalism. Tramm indicated that some owners may not want to be bring people up to their house.

Easley asked about the cost of the sign. Tramm assumed around \$50 a piece. They are designed to weather the elements. The signs will be covered under City insurance.

Londeen asked if the City will be maintaining the signs. Tramm indicated yes, and the MEDC as well. They will be maintained in a useful working manner.

Sanford suggested taking into consideration the future downtown revitalization and to not plant a pole that may need to be removed in two to three years. Tramm said that the plan will be considered when choosing the location of the signs. Sanford said the improvements will better allow people to walk up to the structures and that he would like to see the signs fastened to the structures themselves. Londeen indicated that, at least for the private houses with fences, it would be best to put them on the fence instead of the structure for privacy reasons. Angelo said it'd be great to put them on the structures but it's not for everybody. Tramm said the goal would be to put it as close to the structure as possible but that they will also be mindful of where owners occupied space is.

Angelo said it's a great thing to bring people to local businesses and to show the historic nature of the town.

Londeen said he liked the signs because they are cheaper than the historic markers. Historic markers take a lot of research and getting the marker can be a long process. You can provide more information with a QR code than with a subject sign. He would still encourage historic markers alongside these signs. They also allow the City to emphasize structures that the state may not care enough to approve a marker. Tramm said that the historic markers definitely have their place and reminded everyone that a grant budget line item is being incorporated into the next fiscal year budget to incentivize historic markers. Meanwhile, these signs help promote local tourism and emphasize locations important to the City that may not qualify on the state level.

Angelo said this is phenomenal for a tourism and everyone is used to QR codes.

Londeen asked if the sample signs have been approved by the property owners. Tramm said his understanding is that they have. Londeen asked if everyone was okay with the signs being in front of their house. Tramm said, yes, as far as he understood. They do not plan on putting signs out where it is not wanted.

## **5. Discussion on setting date for MEDC Budget Workshop**

Presented by Richard Tramm.

Sanford suggested Aug 30<sup>th</sup> as date for the budget workshop. There was no opposition.

Angelo asked how long the process would be. Tramm said 1 to 2 hours. Staff will prepare a draft budget based on their interpretation of the priorities of the MEDC along with other items that the board may be interested in funding. MEDC will go category by category and choose level of funding.

Easley asked what time it would be. Tramm said it is up to the MEDC board.

Langley asked when the budget needs to be finalized. Tramm said it needs to be in place prior to October 1<sup>st</sup>. The MEDC would need to approve it by its September meeting. City Council would need to approve it in September prior to the MEDC approval meeting. The MEDC could

potentially go into the next fiscal year without a budget being approved if it was an emergency situation such as a canceled meeting.

**6. Consideration and possible action to purchase subscription for custom mapping software**

Mapme.com presented by Richard Tramm.

Angelo asked if it would be embedded into the city website. Tramm said yes, and it would probably be linked to other several locations. The goal is to have it be mobile device friendly to facilitate tourism in the City.

Angelo asked if the user has to download an app to access the software. Tramm said it would be accessible through a link to a webpage. Angelo said it could even be accessed by a QR code. Tramm said it could be included in event handouts, mailers, newsletters, water bills, etc.

Londeen asked if this will replace the Distrx app. Tramm said yes, in the long run. Londeen asked how much the City was paying for the Distrx app. Tramm said nothing at the moment. It is just surviving from the past.

Angelo said he thinks it's better than the Distrx app. Londeen said the problem with the Distrx app is that you have to download an app and no one wants to take the time to download an app. This mapping software appears to be more accessible.

Londeen asked how many layers are provided in a subscription. Tramm said more layers will require more cost. You can start out small and add on more later if it gets traction.

Londeen asked if it has a GPS tracking service to where you can track yourself in relation to the sites. Tramm did not know. Londeen indicated that without GPS, it'd be just as easy to post maps on the webpage or use google maps for free to find businesses. Sanford said that would be very valuable to him and to consumers who are looking for things. Londeen said if it does have the GPS feature then it would be a huge benefit. Otherwise, he is not so sure.

Angelo asked for a link to the software website. He agreed that if it didn't link to your map, then people wouldn't use it, but he couldn't imagine that it wouldn't have that feature.

Langley asked if the price was an initial price. Tramm said this is the initial price with an annual fee to follow up. Sanford said he'd be interested in the number of layers would be provided in the price. Decatur has seven layers, and the City of Montgomery would reach that many layers quickly.

Londeen said he needs to be certain it has the GPS feature and that he may need to try it on his own to make sure he is happy with the features. Sanford agreed.

Londeen said there is an app and wondered if the GPS feature is only a feature of the app. Angelo said, if so, it'd just be duplicating Distrx.

Sanford asked if the downtown businesses had the technology to utilize the tool. Tramm said the City is being discovered on social media by increasing numbers of people and going up.

Sanford said the board needs more information on the program.

Angelo said it looks like it goes monthly after the initial fee. Its not a lot money if it impacts local businesses but agreed that if it doesn't integrate with the map then it's just replicating the Distrx app. He needs more information if it takes you from point A to point B.

Motion to table the purchase of a subscription for custom mapping software until the next meeting was made by Ryan Londeen and seconded by Byron Sanford. All in favor. (6-0)

## **7. Discussion on potential additional elements for Christmas Parade.**

Presented by Jeff Angelo.

### Snow Effect Machines

Three or four machines that create pretend snow for outdoors. Rent or buy three to four machines. Rentals are \$300 - \$400 a day per machine. They are mobile and can be moved one place to the next and can be installed on poles or roofs.

### Parade Video Screen

Interactive screen that will show photos and videos along with business promotion. It will be placed behind dancing area. It may include risers with VIP access. Both will create a focal point in the parade. It can show business e-cards between performances and / or business logos. When dancers show up, there can be an audio system to add more audio and music to the event. Could even do live video that is connected to the screen. The idea is to create a more interactive experience.

Easley asked if this would go with the lighting of the park as well or two separate events. Angelo said two separate events. He said the living snow globe could be done with the lighting of the park.

### Living Snow Globe

A life size snow globe for photo opportunities. It is about a 2-minute process to get people in an out for photos. People can use their own cameras or the City could hire a professional photographer.

### Parade Route

Angelo suggested rerouting the parade and have everyone spaced out so that it keeps moving. Parade should also include a 20 second stopped performance. Sanford agreed on the reroute idea. Easley said there is a safety element too.

Easley indicated that there would need to be volunteers to handle the various moving parts. Angelo said he already has some volunteers to help out. He said all the businesses can help and participate.

Easley said if it is being taken to the next level then it needs to be promoted earlier. Angelo said they need to begin preparing a parking plan on the web map to help people come see the parade.

Sanford wanted to clarify that the snow machines cost \$1500 to rent. Angelo said those costs were to purchase. They are \$100 per machine to rent.

Easley asked if the machines use soap to create the snow. Angelo said yes.

Angelo said a 9x5 screen is around \$2,400 and more for the audio package. He would also need a 1000-watt generator so that you don't have to borrow power. Easley indicated he has the generator. In total, the additional items would be around \$5,000 but Angelo said he will do more research. Tramm said this can be discussed further at the budget workshop. Angelo said planning needs to start soon because the items sell out quick.

Londeen indicated that he liked the snow globe. It will bring people in. Sanford agreed.

Angelo said the screen and riser may be too much this round. These are just ideas right now.

Sanford said stuff like the snow globe will attract people to come to City.

Sanford asked if the budget for the parade was \$2,500. Tramm said he isn't sure. The Christmas parade expenses straddle two fiscal years. Angelo asked if this could be considered for next fiscal years budget. Tramm said the idea is to include this in the next year budget but that the MEDC always has the ability to amend the budget sooner. If an expense needs to be timed a certain way, the board has the ability to go one way or the other.

Angelo said if there is interest from the board, he can help facilitate getting the items together. Tramm seemed to think there was plenty of interest from the board.

Easley said \$5,000 is a small amount to pay to bring attention to the City. Tramm said a lot is about how you target the money and used the water party event as an example. This has the potential to bring a larger number of people.

Sanford said some of the cost for the parade route may be reduced by a reroute away from SH-105. Tramm said that is a conversation that needs to happen with the Police chief. The other component of the route is to have enough space for the line setup. Angelo said some participants can line up some of the side streets along Clepper. It will also bring attention to the winter wonderland event. Tramm said you just need to make sure there is enough room to fit everyone. Angelo said it can't be much longer than Clepper and a few side streets. Angelo said parade management is not too hard including numbering system, time limits, etc to control the experience. Some more effort could be put into the parade to create continuity.

Angelo said he will put numbers to each of these items.

**8. Review of social media program for marketing the City of Montgomery.**

Presented by Richard Tramm.

Angelo commended President Huss's work with running the social media program.

Sanford said it is tremendous progress. He suggested adding Plantersville area to the list. There is a lot of people settling just west of Dobbin. Tramm said you can boost by general region but not specific locations. The results that are being shown is where the social media posts are getting views and responses.

Angelo asked if the post responses are tracked and if those people are invited to like the social media page. Tramm said yes. They are invited to like the page and a lot of them do.

Angelo said its amazing to see the power of social media.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REPORTS**

**9. City Administrator's Development Report**

Presented by Richard Tramm

Easley asked about the status of the HEB development. Tramm said they still own the property. He has talked to the neighboring property owners that are closer to SH-105 and they were asking questions about sizing of utility lines and things like that. Sounds like they are evaluating whether their timing will be sooner or later. There are is a lot of new growth in the area with new homes down FM-2854. They seem to be asking questions that are important questions before moving forward with a project.

Angelo asked if there is any reason why the MEDC could not share the compelling images of the development of the downtown area. Londeen suggested that they wait until the report is finalized. Tramm said when the report is approved, he is sure it will get posted. This is not a final step. Its more of a conceptual idea and more steps will need to be taken.

Sanford asked if there is a plan to work in earmarked funds for the plan. Londeen said that wedging in a budget item was talked about at the last meeting. Tramm said that was a first step in that direction in an attempt to put a name to that money so that it doesn't get spent elsewhere.

Sanford said he feels like TxDOT grants in conjunction with City spending is more in line with traffic flow issues on SH-105 and FM-1097 and the MEDC should be more focused on the downtown revitalization. Tramm said quality of life, tourism, driving development, etc. all go to the heart of the MEDC. Planning for some of these items will be covered in the budget workshop.

Londeen asked when the MEDC would be receiving the report. Tramm said it is due within two to three weeks. The staff will look at it and coordinate on changes. Then the MEDC will be given the final report. The MEDC will have a chance to review the report before Gunda presents to the board.

Easley said the success of Montgomery is widely based on the mobility problem through the City. He said he didn't know what it would take to spur TxDOT on. The traffic is disheartening, especially during school hours. Sanford there is a potential to get some things moving forward on the west bound turn lane on 149. Tramm said the north to east turn lane should be starting soon. The south to west turn lane involves a property related issue. Sanford asked if TxDOT is good to go on that particular turn lane. Tramm said any work with that turn lane would likely be connected with the rest of the work associated with the 149 corridor through the downtown area but that would be post 2024. TxDOT backed off on that project to allow the City to finish its downtown plan.

Angelo asked how big the Grace Point Homes development is going to be. He also asked if the decertification of the tract from Dobbin Plantersville WSC was to give the City of Montgomery rights to provide utilities. Tramm said it is partly in the City and partly in the City's ETJ. The parts that are in the City would have to be serviced by City utilities. The parts outside are in the Dobbin Plantersville's service area. The developer would prefer that the entire development be serviced by one entity. They are working with the Dobbin Plantersville corporation to be removed from their service area and believes that has already happened.

Angelo asked about the number of homes. Tramm said around 500. Angelo asked if it is a master planned community. Tramm said yes. Angelo indicated that it would a great economic



benefit to the community. Sanford mentioned that they are going to be \$500,000 homes. Tramm said they will be large lot size homes.

Angelo asked if there is a way to push that along a little bit since it is an economic windfall for the City. He also asked if this was a City Council endeavor instead of a MEDC endeavor. Tramm said that is correct and is not sure where the MEDC can be involved at the moment. Tramm said building 500 homes in the next couple of years will bring more businesses into that area. He indicated that this is the beginning of the development wave.

Londeen indicated that there is a shortage of homes for sale in the City. Two subdivisions are under construction now but they only have a few homes for sale. He asked how many homes the Hills of Town creek have available. Tramm said 30. Estates of town creek crossing is 199. Londeen indicated the main source of new homes will be Estates of Town Creek Crossing with the Kammerer tract being in the longer term. Tramm indicated that Estates of Town Creek Crossing will have a second section and the Hills of Town Creek have additional land for future development. There are developers that the City talks to periodically that talk want to develop near and around the City including questions about annexation. Sanford said he hopes they are more affordable housing. Londeen said that his understanding is that the price of home in the City is a deterrent for a lot of people. He sees a higher supply of higher end homes and not a lot available for lower priced homes. Walker said the cost of the land is the big factor. Londeen agreed that tighter lots mean cheaper houses.

Angelo said that knowing when these developments are nearing completion will help the board create a vision to bring businesses into the area which is the focus of the MEDC. He said the 500-home development will be good. Londeen said it will be a huge economic boost to the City and development on the west side of the City will bring people to the historic center. Tramm said as they get information on their likely timeline of development, he includes that information in the development report. A lot of times they just don't have the information available to provide to the MEDC. The hills of town creek will come quickly, and the estates of town creek will start at the end of summer. Sanford said there is a phase 5 of Hills of town creek that will have an additional 30 homes that will be reasonably priced. Walker indicated starter homes are at \$250,000.

Londeen asked if the Estates of Town Creek is going to be MUD and if that’s why they can push out houses quicker than the Hills of Town Creek. Tramm said the Estates of Town Creek Crossing is a MUD and is probably why they can develop more houses. Londeen asked if the Kammerer tract will be a MUD as well. Tramm said they did inquire but he not sure. They will need City approval to develop an in-City MUD.

**10. City Engineer’s Report**

Presented by Richard Tramm

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**CONSIDERATION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON ITEMS FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION.**

None

**BOARD INQUIRY**

None

**ACTION ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS**

<i>ACTION ITEM</i>	<i>ASSIGNEE</i>	<i>DUE DATE</i>

**ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by Dan Walker seconded by Ryan Londeen to adjourn the meeting at 7:16 p.m. All in favor. (6-0)

Submitted by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

Richard Tramm, City Administrator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Rebecca Huss, MEDC President