

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING

March 21, 2022

MONTGOMERY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

CALL TO ORDER

President Rebecca Huss called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Present: Rebecca Huss – President
Jeff Angelo – Vice-President
Ryan Londeen – Secretary
Dan Walker – Board Member
Wade Nelson – Board Member

Absent: Byron Sanford – Board Member
Carol Langley – Treasurer

Also Present: Richard Tramm – City Administrator
Dave McCorquodale – Assistant City Administrator
Amy Brown – Events Coordinator

OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. **Consideration and possible action regarding the Minutes for Regular Meeting of February 2022.**

Motion to approve meeting minutes for the February Regular Meeting was made by Jeff Angelo and seconded by Dan Walker. All in favor. (5-0)

APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL REPORT

2. Consideration and possible action regarding the Financial Report for February 2022

Presented by Richard Tramm.

Motion to approve the Financial Report through February 2022 was made by Jeff Angelo and seconded by Ryan Londeen. All in favor. (5-0)

CONSIDERATION AND POSSIBLE ACTION

3. Discussion and consideration to reconsider declined economic development grant request application from Troy Tep LLC.

Presented by Richard Tramm

Angelo mentioned that this was all done under a different MEDC board and before Tramm was the City Administrator. If the EDC comes up with more specific guidelines for signage it would make it easier. There is a lot of development that is going to help. The EDC needs to give Mr. Tep some more guidelines.

Londeen thought that the precedent was weird. There are a lot of things on the document that he is not sure he would have approved. The MEDC had the privilege of being a little more choose-y on what it's incentivizing.

Huss agreed with Londeen's previous comments that the amount of funding will expand with the guidelines rather than limiting.

Londeen asked Tramm what the MEDC's budget is in this category. Tramm answered that there is \$15,000 left for the fiscal year.

Motion made to table until the guidelines are created was made by Jeff Angelo and seconded by Ryan Londeen. All in favor. (5-0)

4. Discussion and consideration of an economic grant request from Montgomery County United.

Huss asked how many people are to be expected at the event. Easley answered that it varies. His best guess is 500-1000. This event started in 1954.

Angelo stated that he supports everything Montgomery County United does and wanted the MEDC to help as much as they can.

Londeen asked how much is going towards security. Brown answered that it's \$800.

Angelo asked how long the parade is expected to last and what time it starts. Easley answered that the parade will last maybe an hour and a half at most, and it starts at 9am. It's a 2-day event.

Huss mentioned that every event put on is meant to attract different types of people and bring them into the city.

Jeff Angelo made a motion to approve the \$4000 grant as outlined in the request. Ryan Londeen seconded. All in favor. (4-0)

5. Discussion and consideration of establishing a policy for MEDC's financial participation in signage grants.

Presented by Richard Tramm.

Angelo mentioned that if the MEDC decides to do this than the city will get some recognition. This is a very good starting point. The EDC should encourage branding. He asked how Tramm came up with this? Tramm answered that basic signage is part of a business. Something beyond that, like adding Texas flags or applying a more historic look could be incentivized. The Woodlands has wooden signs for all the businesses, which obviously costs more than a basic sign. The EDC would consider paying the additional cost for a sign if it fit the criteria mentioned.

Angelo agreed that the MEDC needs to decide and put some direction together some guidelines. Businesses are asking about this and would be ready to move on it.

Londeen asked if it would include examples of the guidelines.

Huss disagreed that a specific guideline needs to be put in place. She read an article that promoted a loose, overarching policy. Each sign needs to reflect the historic character of the building itself. Huss found an article from Beatrice, Nebraska with a lot of dos and don'ts of historic signage. She read part of the article with some of the tips.

Angelo asked what exactly the MEDC is deciding here. The city is the one to come up with guidelines for signage and the MEDC should decide to what extent it will participate.

Londeen explained that the intent is to incentivize historic signs. He is afraid it's going to get too convoluted with ordinances and subordinances. The EDC doesn't need to have a 2-hour conversation about each sign that comes up. Loosely setting guidelines is probably the best way to go. Maybe one ordinance with a "plan A," but if you want economic assistance, there's a "plan B." Angelo agreed that that would be a good approach. There should be some quid pro quo strapped to that.

Huss explained that what the EDC wants is a higher standard than just a basic sign. The EDC wants these things to reflect historic Montgomery.

Nelson thought that the current guidelines are too loose. Businesses can pick and choose whatever they want and creating the presence that you're here. Otherwise, it gets lost in the mix. There must be some guidelines. Businesses are going to pick the cheapest route every time.

Londeen asked if the EDC could get some opinions from an architect. It should not be based off subjective opinions. Preserving the historical nature of the city is economic development.

Walker agreed that everything should have a commonality. It doesn't need to be exactly alike but should be tied together.

Londeen agreed that incentivizing the upgrade is good but agreed to pay more for a sign if they're willing to upgrade it. Otherwise, businesses are just going to choose the base sign instead of going through the effort to do something nicer.

Tramm said that he can come up with a more comprehensive document based off these comments.

Huss said that what she heard is that there is agreement on the signage grant being focused on the superior opposed to the basic signage. Hopefully, the EDC can create a brand that makes other cities want to be like Montgomery.

No action.

6. Discussion and consider wayfinding signage standard for use in City of Montgomery.

Presented by Richard Tramm.

Tramm passed the conversation to Dave McCorquodale.

Angelo exclaimed that directional signage is so important.

Londeen explained that the EDC needs a brand. It needs to be done right. It needs to take pride in the parks and other places the city is pointing to.

Huss mentioned that the Texas flag is the most endearing theme.

Angelo asked if there are companies that specifically do this for cities. Maybe the EDC should hop on that and try to get some examples. Huss answered yes.

Nelson suggested staying away from the basic TXDOT signage. Small things go a long way.

Huss answered that the EDC can't put anything else in the right-of-way. To upgrade the poles for utilities would only cost \$5000 since the city is the size that it is. The upgrades that make a visual impact may not cost as much as you'd think.

Angelo thought that the EDC should develop a master plan so that future boards have clear guidelines.

Londeen said that it's not just wayfinding, it's also marketing. You're advertising the attractions.

No action.

7. Update on progress of Clepper Sidewalk project.

Presented by Chris Roznovsky

Huss asked if they are thinking of extending the project on the South side or the North side. Roznovsky answered on the North side.

Huss asked if it would make sense to extend it to Fernland now. Roznovsky answered that it's better to wait until the final design comes in. If they extend it and it falls through there could be a sidewalk to nowhere.

Londeen asked to confirm that this is in anticipation of the expansion of Clepper St. Roznovsky confirmed.

Huss asked if this was a city project that the MEDC would be contributing to. Roznovsky said that's correct. The city will bid the project then he will come back to the MEDC.

Walker asked if there was going to be a wider sidewalk. Huss answered that on the North side the idea is there would be a bike path/golf cart path, but right now it is just a sidewalk.

No action needed.

8. Discuss and consider authorizing City staff to prepare and publish a Request for Qualifications on McCown Street design on behalf of the MEDC.

Presented by Richard Tramm

Londeen asked who was doing the survey. Tramm answered the city engineer.

Londeen asked if the city is doing the drainage master plan as well and mentioned that it will need to be done before McCown can be done. Tramm said that Londeen is jumping ahead of where the city is in the plan.

Londeen asked if we were talking about a plan or construction drawings for McCown. Tramm answered that there is a plan.

Roznovsky clarified what is being presented.

Londeen presented concerns with the appearance of no master drainage plan in the works. The surface is tied in underground. Roznovsky answered that since starting they are starting the RFQ process, getting the qualifications, review them, etc. they're about 4-5 months down the road.

Londeen explained that he just wants to be sure that an idea or plan for a master drainage plan was happening. It could be incorporated into the design plan. It's not about the size. Work will most likely have to be done and that could eat into the cost of the project.

Tramm said that what is being presented on this night is not an RFQ.

Motion to authorize City staff to prepare and publish a Request for Qualifications on McCown Street design on behalf of the MEDC was made by Ryan Londeen and seconded by Wade Nelson. All in favor. (5-0)

9. Consideration and possible action on FY 2021-2022 Budget Amendment #1.

Presented by Richard Tramm

Motion to approve FY 2021-2022 Budget Amendment #1 was made by Dan Walker and seconded by Jeff Angelo. All in favor. (5-0)

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REPORTS

10. City Administrators Development Report March 2022

Presented by Richard Tramm

11. Engineers Report

Presented by Richard Tramm

EXECUTIVE SESSION

12. Adjourn into Closed Executive Session as authorized by the Texas Open Meetings Act, Chapter 551 of the Government Code, in accordance with the authority contained in the following: Section 551.072 (deliberation regarding real property).

Item tabled.

13. Consideration and possible action on real property matters discussed in Executive Session.

Item tabled.

BOARD INQUIRY

Angelo asked if the goat mascot would be able to go into action for the parade on May 28th.

Tramm is talking to a Montgomery High School teacher to get mascot volunteers ready to go.

ACTION ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

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

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Rebecca Huss and seconded by Jeff Angelo to adjourn the meeting at 7:34 p.m. All in favor.
(5-0)

Submitted by: _____ Date Approved:

Richard Tramm, City Administrator

Rebecca Huss, MEDC President