

MINUTES OF ANNUAL AND REGULAR MEETING

January 16, 2023

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
Carol Langley - Treasurer
Dan Walker – Board Member

Absent: Wade Nelson - Board Member
Byron Sanford - Board Member

Also Present: Dave McCorquodale, Interim City Administrator

OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT

Rebecca Huss said Wreaths Across America at Memorial Cemetery took place on December 17, 2022 and was the first one to be held at that cemetery. Rebecca Huss said while surveying the cemetery it was discovered there were 63 veteran gravesites instead of the 42 originally quoted. Rebecca Huss said she wanted to thank MEDC for their support as it was a very worthwhile and touching endeavor.

ANNUAL MEETING

1. Overview of 2022 Goals.

Rebecca Huss said she feels they did very well on item numbers one and three, continue progress on Downtown Master Plan and be available to participate in utility and road extension projects that might help to build business or tourism opportunities in 2022. Rebecca Huss said item number four was modest and they made modest improvements to item number two, explore new options to benefit Economic Development. Rebecca Huss said item number two needs to be a continuing goal for future years.

Rebecca Huss said they did not make any progress on the Business Owners Roundtable. Rebecca Huss

said they may have gotten too big with their goals and need to narrow it down in order to be more successful in achieving them.

2. 2023 Planning Goals.

Mr. McCorquodale said as they begin to implement certain pieces into the Downtown Master Plan, they can do things to increase the public parking. Mr. McCorquodale said one of the properties they had a lease with for downtown parking has been sold. Mr. McCorquodale said they still have a lease for half of the lot which totals around a dozen spaces. Mr. McCorquodale said they need to look for ways to increase the amount of parking in and around downtown.

Rebecca Huss said she feels that needs to be a separate goal. Rebecca Huss said McCown Street project should be one goal and improving parking setup should be another goal.

Jeff Angelo asked what the typical lease term for parking is. Mr. McCorquodale said they welcome a 25-year lease in terms of the duration. Mr. McCorquodale said the Jacobs lot they use at the north end of downtown they paved as compensation for leasing the lot. Mr. McCorquodale said another tool they used on the Adams lot on the City side was to pay the ad valorem tax.

Ryan Londeen said he thinks the downtown improvements should be their number one goal with McCown Street taking a lot of effort and time and the same with the parking issue which are two substantial but good goals.

Rebecca Huss said it has been discussed before to ensure all the boards are working for the same goals and making sure their money goes as far as possible because it is all going toward the same projects. Rebecca Huss said it is important to have a few planned workshops and make sure everyone knows the direction they are headed toward together.

Jeff Angelo said what most businesses seem to be nervous about is how can we come together and start to define the demographics of what is about to happen in the City and how can they get ahead of the wave before it comes and be prepared. Jeff Angelo said the business owners want to know what is going on and economic development starts with developing a plan on how to construct the current businesses and new businesses coming in and how to monetize, capitalize and support the new infrastructure and the new residents that will be coming in and around the City. Jeff Angelo said he feels this is what they should be working towards and thinks they are bigger than just planning events.

Dan Walker said he thinks that is where the Business Roundtable would come in and that way the information is from one source and not just from the rumor mill.

Rebecca Huss said part of the difficulty is they do not have a professional staff and also some of that is more Chamber focused. Rebecca Huss said MEDC is looking at providing the nuts and bolts of bringing people into town, but the Chamber is doing the networking and guidance.

Ryan Londeen asked if they need to partner with the Chamber the same way they are with Planning & Zoning and making sure they are on the same page regarding goals.

Carol Langley said she knows the new City Administrator is Chamber oriented and he has already mentioned he is not going to just attend the meetings but will be visiting with Shannon Reid on a regular basis. Carol Langley said the City Administrator would be checking into the Historic Montgomery Business Association as well.

Jeff Angelo said they need to aim at what they are actually pursuing. Jeff Angelo said from an EDC standpoint and as a business owner he wants to know what is coming. Jeff Angelo said he does not know how they will be affected by this growth and neither does anyone else, but they need to be planning for it.

Jeff Angelo asked how the parade mobility project worked in terms of the changes made to it. Rebecca Huss said she thinks there are still changes to be made but it seems like everything went much easier this year. Jeff Angelo asked if the buses helped. Rebecca Huss said they could have used two buses instead of three buses which was the feedback she received, but thinks it was a good success for the first year they tried it.

Jeff Angelo said the Winter Wonderland event at Fellowship of Montgomery had a huge turnout with almost 5,000 guests. Jeff Angelo said he thinks they should be more willing to partner with these events and help because it brings people into the City of Montgomery.

3. Consideration and possible action on the Annual Financial Report.

Rebecca Huss reviewed the Annual Financial Report and asked if anyone had any questions.

Jeff Angelo said from his understanding the Mudbug Festival may not need to be on the list. Rebecca Huss said it states on Charlie Diggs website the festival is happening. Rebecca Huss said in speaking with the people from Ransom's they were surprised to hear the festival was happening there. Rebecca Huss said she is not sure what the story is as she has not had any contact with them. Jeff Angelo asked if anyone has reached out to Charlie Diggs and if that was still the parks department's area. Rebecca Huss said this is a private event so Charlie Diggs Entertainment will need to do all the work themselves. Rebecca Huss said their job if Charlie wants to do the event and ask for MEDC support would be determined by them to say yes or no based on their assessment at the time, but in terms of them assigning a person to make sure the event happens is not part of the parks department's mandate.

Dan Walker asked if anything has changed from last year that would prevent that from happening such as not renewing the lease. Rebecca Huss said she does not think any of the landowners' situations have changed or property use, or zoning has changed. Carol Langley said she was told there is a piece of property that changed hands so it would not be available for parking.

Motion to accept the Annual Financial Report was made by Dan Walker and seconded by Jeff Angelo. All in favor. (5-0)

4. Election of Officers for 2023.

Rebecca Huss asked if all of the current holders are willing to continue in their post. All current holders stated they were willing to continue in their post.

Rebecca Huss nominated Jeff Angelo for Vice President, Carol Langley for Treasurer, and Ryan Londeen for Secretary. Jeff Angelo nominated Rebecca for President.

All voted in favor (5-0) for Rebecca Huss for President, Jeff Angelo for Vice President, Carol Langley for Treasurer, and Ryan Londeen for Secretary

5. Approval of signors for MEDC banking accounts.

Mr. McCorquodale said the only action in the motion will be to add City Administrator Gary Palmer as all the current signors would remain the same.

Motion to accept Gary Palmer, Rebecca Huss, Jeffrey Angelo, Carol Langley, and Ryan Londeen to be the only MEDC banking account designated signors, was made by Rebecca Huss and seconded by Ryan Londeen. All in favor. (5-0)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

6. Consideration and possible action on the October 17, 2022 Regular Meeting Minutes.

Motion to approve the minutes of October 17, 2022, was made by Jeff Angelo and seconded by Carol Langley. All in favor. (5-0)

CONSIDERATION AND POSSIBLE ACTION:

7. Consideration and possible action on an Economic Development Grant Application for Old Montgomery Steakhouse.

Mr. McCorquodale said Mr. Wayne Kung, owner of the Old Montgomery Steakhouse wants to relocate the existing dumpster that is located on the east side of his restaurant and move it to the northeast corner of the property and build a privacy fence style enclosure to screen it from view.

Mr. McCorquodale said certainly enclosing dumpsters is one of the main things that helps to improve the aesthetics of the public spaces and MEDC needs to decide if they are wanting to participate financially in this.

Mr. McCorquodale said Mr. Kung is adding three parking spaces and once the plumbing work is complete, he wants to add three parking spaces in the rear for the employees who now are parking on McCown Street in the public parking spaces.

Rebecca Huss said it seems like the new dumpster enclosure might be in the way of future configuring of traffic flow. Mr. McCorquodale agreed and said they have not had those discussions.

Ryan Londeen asked does this consider the improvements with regard to McCown Street and is it in any way reaching outside the right-of-way of the City to help revitalize areas like this and can it be incorporated into the design.

Mr. McCorquodale said if the MEDC wanted to effect change in downtown on the private property side it would be through some type of grant similar to the economic development grants. Mr. McCorquodale said MEDC may want to consider in the next budget year to allocate more money toward it.

Dan Walker asked if they had discussed partnering with Mr. Kung in having an easement come through that area. Mr. McCorquodale said they need to speak with Mr. Kung regarding that.

Carol Langley said she thinks all dumpsters should be in an enclosed area and thought that was stated within the ordinance. Carol Langley said if she agreed to do this for Mr. Kung and another business comes to them with a similar request, she would like to agree to do theirs too, but she does not think another business would.

Rebecca Huss said she thinks if they spend one third on wood fences for every dumpster in downtown even if they are moved three or five years in the future it is probably worth the visual enhancement.

Carol Langley said if she thought it was going to be within the next year or two, she understands the situation but they have not even approached Mr. Kung about this.

Jeff Angelo asked if it is a City ordinance that all dumpsters in the Historic District be enclosed. Mr. McCorquodale said it was at one time. Jeff Angelo said if you want it to look aesthetically appealing then dumpsters need to be enclosed. Jeff Angelo said if they want to have a uniform look across the area then City Council may need to look at that in terms of ordaining that to be the way going forward and offer assistance grants through MEDC to help facilitate with that.

Jeff Angelo agreed with Carol Langley in that if you do this for one business owner then either they will all come asking or none of them will come ask and then when it is ordained and there is not any financing mechanism in place they will be up in arms. Jeff Angelo said they need to decide if this looks like a long-term solution or just a short-term fix for one business owner.

Carol Langley said a lot of businesses in the downtown section either have a regular city dumpster or a larger dumpster. Carol Langley said if she had to guess there may be two or three others beside Mr. Kung. Carol Langley said she does not know if the others would come to ask.

Mr. McCorquodale said one of the things mentioned to look at in the Downtown Project was some type of a shared trash solution. Jeff Angelo said that was a very good idea because a shared access might make more sense and, in that case, you could go with something more concrete and would look a little more aesthetically appealing. Dan Walker said it would also obligate the City to be involved and financially need to be prepared to help.

Dan Walker said Mr. Kung is asking for \$20,000, but this enclosure he is considering is priced at \$4,000. Dan Walker said most of the money would be for the permits and natural gas movement. Jeff Angelo said that is a business expense and he paid for all of his own. Rebecca Huss said the request for the one third portion of the fence is \$925.

Jeff Angelo asked what Rebecca Huss thought. Rebecca Huss said dumpsters are unsightly. Rebecca Huss said she does not prefer the picket fencing and thinks they can produce a more elegant solution but does not know if there is a keeper solution right now other than what is being laid before them. Rebecca Huss said she does not think they should say no because they do not have anything better to offer. Rebecca Huss said if some other city has something great then maybe they should present that as part of the ordinance and part of the shared ideas and be willing to sponsor those going forward. Rebecca Huss said she looks at this as a yes and then try and find something more productive and more beautiful going forward.

Ryan Londeen said he thinks the goal of the Downtown Improvement Plan is to beautify downtown to attract business and enclosing a dumpster would fit within that vision and goal for downtown. Ryan Londeen said it seems like a temporary fix and there could be a potential, more permanent solution to this but they just do not have that in front of them right now. Ryan Londeen said there are a few things regarding this he is not a fan of, and he does not want to put any money even if it is not a lot of money into something that has not been thoroughly thought out.

Rebecca Huss asked if more planning needs to be done and then revisit this request. Ryan Londeen said he thinks coming out of this maybe they can have the coordination with City Council regarding having an ordinance.

Rebecca Huss said they would tell Mr. Kung they want to support enclosing the dumpster, but they have concerns on the location because of the conflict with the big picture idea although they would be willing to support it. Rebecca Huss said the big picture idea is potentially a long way off and the dumpster plan is short term. Rebecca Huss said there are also concerns about the practicality of the heaviness of the trash hauler and how it was going to maneuver in the area and potentially tear up the sub-base and parking lot that is there and that it would potentially cause more damage than already existed. Rebecca Huss said they would not want to invest money in something that would not last even long enough to get them to their longer-term plan.

Rebecca Huss said they are not voting on this now because they want Mr. Kung to come back with a better plan and to be able to say yes to his request.

8. Consideration and possible action on a grant request for the Lone Star Street Dance.

Jeff Angelo said the Lone Star Street Dance is a really good feeling, small town event for the City.

Ryan Londeen asked why this would come out of the grant fund and not events. Rebecca Huss said because it is not a specific line item event they budgeted for during the budget process.

Ryan Londeen said he does not want to spend grant money on an event when event money is set aside for events. Rebecca Huss said this came up after the budget process was closed. Rebecca Huss said they have \$40,000 budgeted and does not know if they have had any unallocated events already. Rebecca Huss said there is between \$30,000 and \$40,000 event money available that does not have an event name attached to it.

Motion to approve the request up to \$2,500 each for two Lone Star Street Dance events to be pulled from the events category 46303 was made by Ryan Londeen and seconded by Jeff Angelo. All in favor.
(5-0)

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REPORTS

9. January 2023 Development Report.

10. City Engineer's Report.

Mr. McCorquodale presented both the Development and City Engineer's Report.

BOARD INQUIRY

Jeff Angelo read an email from Chick-Fil-A requesting development information within the City. Jeff Angelo said it would be good to give the business owners as much information as they can about the development of the City to help them prepare, plan, and budget for future expansion and growth.

Jeff Angelo suggested teaming up with City Council and the Montgomery Chamber of Commerce to create a consolidated plan they could distribute to business owners to help them plan for the future.

Dan Walker asked if the City still owns the Lone Star Loop. Rebecca Huss said the City has never owned the Lone Star Loop and it belongs to the County. Dan Walker asked if they could petition the County to make improvements. Rebecca Huss said yes. Ryan Londeen asked if the Lone Star Loop is in the County Thoroughfare Plan. Mr. McCorquodale said it is.

Jeff Angelo said he would like to put this on the next agenda to have something which would be more interactive than the development report that is presented and maybe put the information on the website so business owners would always have access to obtain the demographics needed to help them plan for future growth and be prepared for it. Jeff Angelo said there needs to be intentional collaboration with MEDC, Montgomery Chamber of Commerce, and City Council.

Ryan Londeen said instead of focusing on the development report for MEDC they can create a development report that is tailored to the average business owner.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Carol Langley and seconded by Dan Walker to adjourn the meeting at 7:53 p.m. All in favor. (5-0).

Submitted by: _____
Diana Cooley, Deputy City Secretary

Date Approved: _____

Rebecca Huss, MEDC President