

Business & Economic Development Planning Team  
Meeting – June 11, 2019  
7:30 p.m.

In attendance: Barb Decker, Ruth Heywood, Dan Hanson, Rob Walker, Phil Wemhoff

1. The group reviewed the May 21<sup>st</sup> minutes.
2. The “Getting the Word Out” document was briefly discussed. Several attendees noted that they will follow up with the contacts given.
3. Housing Discussion – bringing more families to live in town is the key factor in its economic success.
  - a. The ideal situation would be to find a way to find land and develop a new housing development. **Rob is contacting FHA out of Topeka to see if there are opportunities.**
  - b. It is also important to identify resources to rehabilitate current housing, ideally for family purchase. Key thought: *We need an investment group whose mission is to purchase homes (stopping them from being turned into rentals), rehabilitate them, and sell them to families. They would need to be committed to community development over financial gain.*
  - c. **Dan is meeting with Tom Bliss of SENDD to discuss Housing Trust Fund grants.**
  - d. The city has contracted with JEO to conduct a comprehensive housing study.
4. Grants for existing businesses – We discussed ways to identify and apply for grants for existing businesses.
  - a. It was suggested that we invite Crystal Dunekacke of SENDD to meet with us to discuss possibilities.
  - b. It was also suggested that Kim Beger of the Auburn Development Council could share what Auburn has done.
  - c. The College and the Foundation are reaching out to foundations interested in community development: Kiewit Foundation
  - d. It was noted that no grant is completely free. There is usually a match required.
5. Other discussion
  - a. We need someone to take the lead in our work. Could we find funding to pay someone like ADC pays Bill Hunter? Would ADC let Bill do some work for us?
  - b. We revisited the need for a sidewalk from the College to downtown. Could we find funding for the proposed JEO study of streets and sidewalks?
6. Added Agenda Item – Peru levee repair
  - a. There is some indication that repairing the Peru Levee is not a priority or may not be repaired at all.
  - b. It is important to make sure Peru’s voice is heard.
  - c. **A meeting to include key stakeholders will be called by Dan.**
  - d. **A case statement will be prepared and a communication process planned.**
  - e. **We should get on the Nemaha County Commissioner meeting agenda.**

Next Meeting – July 9 at 7:30 p.m.

1. Review June 11 meeting notes
2. Housing discussion continued with reports back from Rob and Dan
3. Grants for businesses – **schedule Crystal Dunekacke and Kim Beger**
4. Peru Levee update