

Business & Economic Development Planning Team
Meeting Notes – November 5, 2019
7:30-9:00 p.m.

In Attendance: Dan Hanson, Ruth Heywood, Jason Jones, Zach Reeves, Rob Walker, Phil Wemhoff

1. **Housing Discussion:** An update was given on the progress to implement the Nebraska Department of Economic Development housing grant. The grant of \$500,000 will fund the purchase and renovation of at least 4 homes in Peru over the next two years. The homes will be sold as single family units with the proceeds available to the City. SENDD will administer the grant for the City. The City will form a housing authority group to advise SENDD.

Follow up discussion points and questions:

- a. Availability of single family housing is the number one priority for revitalizing Peru's economy.
 - b. In addition to renovation of homes, could we find ways to have new homes put up on vacant lots? Would Southeast Community College be interested in building a home in Peru as part of their Building Construction Technology program? **Contact needs to be made.**
 - c. Without a long-term water supply solution, it is difficult to sell homes in town.
 - d. We discussed nuisance abatement issues in the city. SENDD has an abatement program. Included with these meeting notes is an email from Ashley Larson of SENDD with an overview of the nuisance abatement program and costs.
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2. **Water Report:** A brief update was given on the current planning efforts for a long-term water supply for the City. Still being investigated are 1) drilling new well and either rebuilding the current water plant or a new plant, or 2) connecting to Auburn. FEMA is now meeting weekly with the City and has given direction on the next steps to take to determine what they may fund. The solution for a long-term water supply will only be affordable with FEMA support or other grant funds.
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3. **Federal Economic Development Administration (EDA) Funding:** In a meeting with the regional Economic Development Representative, the following conclusions were made:
 - a. Only one source of federal funds can be used for a project.
 - b. FEMA and NEMA should be our first choice for funding a new water solution for the City. However, if it is determined they will not fund the project, EDA may have resources.
 - c. EDA could fund other flood-related projects and would support an application for funds to repave streets damaged by the trucking to build the berm around the water plant. The request could include curb, gutter and sidewalks.

4. **Wastewater Report:** At this time, there is not a proposed solution to the wastewater issues for the City. While they are functioning now and not underwater, they are at risk if the water rises or the berm along the drainage ditch erodes.
5. **Levee Repair:** A brief update was given on progress towards having the levee repaired. At this point it is believed that a solution will need to occur at the legislative level.
6. **Long-term Recovery Group:** A brief report was given on the formation of a Long-term Recovery Group focused on infrastructure for the City. This group is still being organized. The purpose is to coordinate and communicate the work being done by multiple parties to maintain an ongoing directed focus on the recovery needs of the community.

It was noted that in addition to water treatment, wastewater, levees, and city roads, we need to pursue ways to get the Bluff Road repaired and perhaps raised. It is critical for the economic well-being of the City.

7. **Next Meeting** – December 10 at 7:30 p.m. (second Tuesday of the month)

Email about nuisance abatement from Ashley Larson of SENDD

Becca,

It was great to meet you and Dr. Hanson last week! Thank you for taking the time to help us better understand the needs in Peru. I'm glad to hear that there may be an interest in the nuisance program. We have a cost calculator that factors in several costs including mileage, meeting times, postage, abatement, etc. Based upon the number of parcels in Peru city limits, I have calculated several different costs, listed below.

Full town (all parcels): \$32,000

1/2 town: \$18,500

1/4 town: \$11,800

25 Parcels: \$6,800

Currently we are in talks with Osceola to create a contract that would include the assessment of the city's 25 worst nuisance properties. If their Council approves, this will be the first contract of its kind. SENDD is willing to do something similar for Peru, if interested (we know the costs for the whole town, and even half, are quite expensive). We could also talk about doing the 50 worst properties in Peru, etc. If we were to fulfill such a contract, we would not be targeting specific properties in particular (to be fair). I would drive the entire town, document all nuisance properties, and then rank the top 25 worst ones back at the office. Only these individuals would receive letters, and we would proceed with the process with only those properties. If you choose this route, we could sign a multi-year contract, where each year we could come back and assess only the top 25 worst properties. This might be a cheaper option to clean up the whole town. What do you think? Feel free to give me a call if you have any questions!

As for zoning, SENDD does not currently offer any programs to enforce that. If we do nuisance inspections, I could potentially write up any property with unlicensed and unregistered vehicles on the property, or those that appear to be junked/discarded.

Please let me know if I can help you with anything else!

Take care,
Ashley