

**MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING**

**March 15, 2021**

**MONTGOMERY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**

**CALL TO ORDER**

President Rebecca Huss called the Zoom Teleconference meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

Present: Rebecca Huss – President  
Carol Langley – Treasurer  
Ryan Londeen – Secretary  
Dan Walker – Board Member  
Tom Cronin – Board Member  
Jeff Angelo – Board Member (left the meeting at 7:01 PM)

Absent: Arnette Easley – Vice-President

Also Present: Richard Tramm – City Administrator  
Susan Hensley – City Secretary  
T. J. Wilkerson – Councilman  
Kirk Jones – Montgomery Historic Society  
Troy Tep – Troy Donuts

**PUBLIC HEARING**

1. **Convene into Public Hearing for the purpose of receiving public comments related to: (1) Economic Development Grant from Troy Tep LLC for a sign at 22453 FM 1097, and (2) Economic Development Grant from Montgomery Historic Society Regarding Old Montgomery Cemetery Improvements**

Troy Tep, Owner of Troy's Donuts in Montgomery, asked to speak on item (1). Mr. Tep has a Troy's Donut shop on SH-105 that was opened in 2000, and he is going to open a new location on FM 1097 this year. He has been in Montgomery since 2000 and lives in the City limits with his

wife and two children. He recently submitted a MEDC grant application for the marker sign. The new shopping center will bring 5 additional businesses into the City limit including a second location for Troy's donuts.

No further public comments.

Public Hearing Adjourned at 6:06 PM

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

#### **2. Approval of Minutes of Special and Annual Meeting held on January 19, 2021**

President Huss asked for comments on the minutes for the January 19<sup>th</sup> MEDC meeting as presented. Motion to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes was made by Jeff Angelo and seconded by Carol Langley. All in favor. (6-0)

### APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL REPORT

#### **3. Approval of January and February 2021 Finance Reports**

Finance report was presented by Carol Langley.

Interest rate at the end of January was 0.04%. Interest rate at the end of Feb was 0.03% for Tex Pool accounts. Today's interest was 0.02%. Sales tax was \$112,519.75 and has been transferred. 3<sup>rd</sup> payment for the MISD land was transferred on March 1<sup>st</sup>.

A check was written on Feb 26<sup>th</sup> for the radios for the events which was approved by MEDC on August 17, 2020. That invoice came through and has been paid.

Actual-to-budget performance for January sales tax was \$61,541.64. YTD budget total was \$220,000 at the time.

MEDC made its 1<sup>st</sup> payment of \$11,627.74 to the downtown development project.

Net income for Oct 20<sup>th</sup> – Jan 21<sup>st</sup> was \$210,212.91.

Actual-to-budget performance sales tax for February was \$112,519.75. YTD budget was \$290,000.

MEDC made its 2<sup>nd</sup> payment of \$5,646.50 to the downtown development project.

Payment for two events in December.

February Texpool reimbursement.

General ledger: Light up Montgomery, Christmas Parade, Goat naming contest amounts for categorized for this month.

President Huss noted that there was a discussion on the radios that the chief had requested for security purposes for the events. MEDC had approved that item but only under the 2019 and 2020 budget. They needed to get the invoice delivered before 2021 because MEDC would not pay for it in the 2020 and 2021 budget cycle. MEDC sent a note back for asking for allocation to the 2019 budget or they wait to be paid for the invoice under the 2020-2021 budget.

Motion by Jeff Angelo, seconded by Dan Walker, to approve the February 2021 Financial Report as presented. All in favor. (6-0)

#### **CONSIDERATION AND POSSIBLE ACTION**

#### **4. Consideration of Economic Development Grant Application from Ryan Londeen for a Historical Marker for the Chilton House and Consider Calling a Public Hearing, if necessary**

President Huss asked if this was no longer a time sensitive item due to something that happened with a passing filing deadline. Londeen explained that that was correct. The Montgomery Historic Commission was not able to review and process before their March meeting. Londeen will not be able to submit the marker application until next year but wanted to leave it on the agenda for consideration for next year.

President Huss suggested creating a grant program for incentivizing subject markers in the City including state and county markers. More markers could bring tourism to the City. Jeff Angelo agreed. His place has a historical marker but there are others that should be rewarded for getting the other structures recognized.

Londeen mentioned that there are other structures including the Matilda house which was owned by a daughter of one of the signers of the Texas Declaration of Independence and one of the early County Sheriff's. He also mentioned the old house by the wing shop. He noted that there are structures around the City that are not being recognized that have historic significance. It's hard for private residents to set aside money to pay for markers so there is not a strong incentive to apply for historic markers. He suggested the MEDC could incentivize. There are plenty of people of who can help do the research and there is also the County historic marker for less significant structures.

President Huss suggested to amend the budget for this year to include a sign grant program or include it in the budget for the next year. Tramm will investigate adding the budget for the remainder of funds for this year or adding it next year.

President Huss asked what the County's cycle was. Londeen said it takes less time than the State marker and he estimated a year. He said he can reach out to Mr. Forester.

Londeen said it will also bring in subject marker hunters. He said that he thinks there is under told history in Montgomery.

President Huss indicated that she is behind having the MEDC paying for every Texas historic markers that comes into the City. It is content for social media, tourism, etc.

Angelo liked the idea of an adult scavenger hunt as an attraction to bring people into the City and support the businesses. History is an attraction, and the City needs more attractions.

President Huss mentioned that Margaritaville was looking for exclusive activities like tours for their guest. It could be based on Montgomery, Texas, or whatever that resonates with the area that their guests would want to do. History is what makes the City special.

President Huss suggested tabling this item with the direction to ensure it is an item for the 2021 – 2022 budget with the intention to sponsor State historic markers and consider County historic markers.

President Huss asked if the marker price will be going up? Londeen said the marker program just signed a new contract with the foundry so the prices should be stable.

President Huss asked about budgeting 3 – 4 markers? Londeen said 3 is good. There may be some more marker applications on the front end. Tramm suggested that the grant program announcement may encourage / incentivize more marker applications.

Item was tabled. Londeen agreed.

**5. Consideration of Economic Development Grant from Troy Tep LLC for a sign at FM 1097 and consider calling a Public Hearing, if necessary.**

President Huss said she did not see a sign application for this sign permit and said you cannot put in a sign without permit application. Tramm said the City did not yet receive the permit yet. Mr. Tep is probably wanting pre-approval.

President Huss indicated she is not comfortable with having a discussion on something that has not been permitted. She said she would like to have the discussion after the permit for the sign has been submitted.

Cronin suggested that it is not fair to him to push it back and table it. The MEDC needs to give him direction.

President Huss indicated that it is hard to commit to something that does not have a permit. There needs to be clarity knowing what is being applied for and what is going to be built before offering financial support.

Londeen suggested tabling until we get a permit but at least having the discussion on the item now.

Walker asked if the MEDC has paid for new signs in the past. President Huss said Pizza Shack many years ago. Tramm said he has been with the City for 2-years and only knows about the sign for Pizza Shack.

Londeen suggested that a new sign is a typical business expenditure and asked if the original intent was to subsidize new businesses. Tramm was not entirely sure on this and did speak with the Attorney on this. MEDC must believe that the sign will lead to expanded business development but that the term “expanded business development” has room for interpretation.

President Huss doubted whether a new business location fits under that definition. Pizza Shack was different in that it expanded to a new location because they were limited with expansion at their previous location.

Walker asked if the MEDC is giving grants to new business or possibly doing loans to these businesses.

Londeen and Walker asked if every new business is going to come to the MEDC for new signs. Londeen suggested it may have been intended for existing businesses only.

Cronin wants Mr. Tep to come present his case to the board on why the MEDC should assist with the sign.

Motion by Tom Cronin to table the Economic Development Grant from Troy Tep LLC for a sign at FM 1097, seconded by Carol Langley. All in favor. (6-0).

**6. Consideration of Economic Development Grant for Montgomery Historic Society Regarding Old Montgomery Cemetery Improvements.**

Angelo asked how the remaining funds will be allocated for the project. President Huss indicated funds are presented in the package.

Angelo asked what is the time of completion, 6 to 8 months or quick turnaround? Jones with the Montgomery Historic Society said it is a fairly quick turnaround once the funding is approved. It will not take very long to complete the project.

Angelo asked if there is precedence for the MEDC to grant more than \$5,000? Jones stated that the project is more of a community project than a business development project and this may be the wrong MEDC category. President Huss indicated that the MEDC is notorious for \$9,900 grants to get under City's \$10,000 limit before going to Council.

Angelo liked the new look. He said the current state of the cemetery with the chain link fence definitely needs improvements. If the MEDC is going to embrace a more concentric policy to creating a focus on history then it's probably a good idea to clean up the cemetery.

Londeen asked if the Society reached out to the Montgomery County Historic Commission for a grant. Jones said the Montgomery County Historic Commission has a limited budget and will only grants funds after the expenditures are made.

Londeen noted the brick corner posts and asked if they will be added later. Jones said that at this moment it will be just the iron fence. The schematic is a vision from Joe Cheetham. This could potentially be done through other future funding.

Londeen asked if this area is in the scope of the downtown development project. Tramm said it was not.

President Huss asked if the historic society could be paying \$0 if the County Commission reimburses the society. Jones said yes, potentially.

Cronin asked who funded the New Cemetery fence. Jones said it was from MEDC. Cronin asked what the amount was for that project. Jones said the labor was \$2,500. It was a much smaller project.

Cronin said since it is a historic cemetery next to a historic church and in a historic part of town, the MEDC should take that into consideration. The MEDC also funded the bell at the church. He indicated it is money well spent.

Londeen said the cemetery looks haunted in its current condition. He indicated it could be a future commercial center for the city so it's an important project. He also wants to make sure it is done correctly, and he likes the corner posts. Regardless, the new fence will be a big improvement over the current chain link fence.

Angelo asked if the Society could take the reimbursement from the Commission and add it back into future expansions of the project. Jones said it would be good to parley the funds into a next phase. Angelo said the businesses may lend some support. This is a centerpiece of the history of the City. Jones noted that the cemetery has a historic marker and is a treasure to the City.

President Huss asked if the Methodist church was approached since this was their cemetery. Jones said they gave up ownership to the society and he did not approach them.

Londeen noted that several historic figures are buried there.

President Huss said it is not fair to say that the MEDC agreed to upkeep the cemetery and that this project does not encumber the MEDC with further responsibility. Jones indicated that that is neither requested nor implied.

Londeen said there are no numbers to prove economic benefit but since there is precedence with the church bell tower, it may be okay. President Huss said she voted against the bell tower. Tramm said it comes down to the judgement of the MEDC on what the benefit is. President Huss said there is a clear tourism benefit since it is a part of the City's history.

Londeen asked what the final amount was. Tramm said \$9,500 by Titan Fence Company. President Huss said the MEDC would not pay until satisfactory completion of the project. Tramm said that was his understanding based on past MEDC grants.

Motion by Ryan Londeen to approve the grant for \$9,500, seconded by Tom Cronin. All in favor. (6-0).

Tramm indicated that there is a total budget amount of \$20,000 for this budget item.

Jeff Angelo left the meeting.

#### **7. Consideration of Signage Grant Policy**

Presented by Richard Tramm. He stated that other MEDCs have specific policies related to signs. After discussing this issue with the City Attorney, he advised against being too liberal with sign grants. He is adding language, "expanded business development". This will be difficult when applied to a sign that would otherwise be considered an ordinary business expense. He drafted a sign policy based on a similar policy from another EDC.

President Huss said she has more preference for more written guidance to help the MEDC, grant applicants, and constituents to understand the grant application and to ensure MEDC is following guidelines.

Tramm said it is a lot easier for the City staff to say something concrete and to have something to follow if the policy is written down.

President Huss said she likes the 14 days lead notice to help staff get the paperwork in order and have time to consider the application. Tramm said city staff sometimes feels like it has to do these last minute. Having a specific timeline will help add lead time for City staff to do everything properly before items come before the MEDC board.

President Huss noted that she likes the specifics on what needs to be submitted in the application. Tramm indicate that the MEDC has an obligation to follow through properly with the commitment and this will help with that.

President Huss said the expectations are now clear and there will be fewer hurt feelings since both sides have clearer understanding of what the policies are. If the policy needs to change, then the policy needs to change.

Londeen said he needs to read through it more thoroughly but is in favor of more clear guidelines.

Walker agreed that more clear guidelines are good and should be put on the agenda next meeting to give everyone more time to read through it more thoroughly.

Langley agrees and would like more time to review. She would like to have the item brought back to the board.

Cronin agrees and would like time to digest and come up with suggestions. He thinks it's definitely in the right direction.

Item 7 tabled for next meeting by common consent.

**8. Consideration of Funding Specific Budget Items Under Existing Categories in Current MEDC Budget**

President Huss said the water party is the only repeat event and it was a popular event. Tramm said around 350 people attended. The event included three different inflatable items at the community center as well as other dedicated items for smaller and larger children including wading pools, toys, etc.

Tramm said the Fernland dedication will be a one-time event for the 10-year anniversary of the park and planning is still ongoing.

Londeen asked who the brainchild for all of the events is. Tramm said the water party is by City staff, Fernland is led by one of the docents, Tramm is the one organizing the goats on parade, and the quilt walk is primarily led by Tramm, Amy Brown, and President Huss.

Cronin said he has no issue with the water party. Fernand is a onetime thing. The pet parade is low budget and kids may enjoy it. The Quilt Walk has one of the larger expenditures but what does Montgomery have to do with a quilt walk? He said it sounds too specific for a small subset of people and may not necessarily be a good expenditure. He is not sure what all is involved or

who will attend. For the goats on parade, he would rather see a massive car show rather than an event like this.

Tramm said that not far down the road, at the Catholic church, there is a large quilt following. It is a target population, but the group is really loyal. The goats on parade is more of a concept right now and will have concrete decorated goats throughout the city.

President Huss said St. Mary's is in Plantersville and either their 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> year had 10,000 people with \$30,000 for their event. Volunteer event fatigue caused it to end. Huntsville had a successful event as well. She said you'd be surprised how young and varied the audience is, and how far people drive and spend. She suggested the budget is not all that much considering how big the event could be.

Cronin asked how the event will benefit the citizens and taxpayers of Montgomery. President Huss said it brings people into the City and will put a new perspective on the City. It will also be a free art display.

Cronin asked if this will be in downtown and Fernland? President Huss confirmed.

Londeen asked if the event will be similar to the St Mary's event. President Huss said it will be similar to St Mary's but their event may have been logistically smaller.

Londeen asked if St. Mary's would help support this event? President Huss said St Mary's offered to share their contact list as well as the vendors they used.

Walker asked what the MEDC paid for the Christmas party. Rebecca Huss said the MEDC paid \$2,000 for that event but little advertising was needed since it is an established event.

Londeen asked why the police department is on some and not others. President Huss said it was for vendor overnight security and should probably be on all of them. Tramm said the only event that didn't have police department was on the Fernland event which is still being planned.

Londeen said he doesn't know anything about quilt walks but that he would be curious to see the turn out. Tramm said you'd be surprised the number of people who are involved in the quilt community.

Cronin suggested tabling this event in order to get feedback from taxpayers and see who would be interested in attending. If it is successful, make it an annual event. President Huss said the MEDC needs to get moving on this event in order to have enough time to plan.

Motion by Tom Cronin to approve the funding for the Neighborhood Water Party, the Fernland Dedication 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, and the Montgomery Pet Parade, seconded by Ryan Londeen. All in favor. (5-0).

Motion by President Huss to approve the funding for the Quilt Walk in the amount \$5,155. No second. The motion died.

Motion by Ryan Londeen to table funding for the Quilt Walk and the Goats on Parade budget items for the next meeting, seconded by Dan Walker. All in favor. (5-0).



**9. Update on the Montgomery Music & Mudbugs Festival**

Richard Tramm provided an update on the festival. The event will occur on private property at the Ransom's restaurant. Police and traffic control will be the high-cost items for this event. City staff coordination continuing. The event will occur before the next MEDC meeting.

**10. Consider request by Tom Ward of Montgomery Soccer Club to move irrigation equipment approved in MEDC Grant on December 5, 2017, to an alternate location.**

Tramm needs clarification from the MEDC on what it meant by maintaining ownership. The MEDC meeting minutes were limited from that meeting.

Langley asked if the MEDC knew where the new location is. Tramm said a new location has not been specified. President Huss said she thinks its in the Woodlands. Tramm said he has not seen them locally.

Cronin moved to table this item until the City determines where they are playing.

President Huss said it's out of the city limits, so it doesn't matter. Cronin agreed. She said it is clear that the equipment should stay here. The real question is what does the MEDC do with the equipment?

Tramm said that if staff hands it off without clear direction from the MEDC, it doesn't matter because the equipment is then lost.

President Huss asked if the City is using it. Tramm said no and that Public Works does not have a use for it.

President Huss asked if the MEDC can sell in surplus. Tramm said it could first be sold back to the soccer club.

Langley asked how the board knows they are not moving them to another place in the City. President Huss said because there are no other soccer fields in the City and they are not being used. Cronin asked about the soccer fields next to Fellowship of Montgomery. President Huss indicated that they are outside the City limits.

Walker asked if the equipment could be used on other city parks. Tramm said the Public Works department does not have a use for it. It would be going out their way to use equipment they dont need.

Cronin said to sell it. President Huss said to sell it or give it away. Tramm can relay that to the club if he gets direction from the MEDC.

Tramm said, according to the meeting minutes, \$3,000 was applied to the equipment and \$6,900 to tap and piping. The tap and piping could potentially be used in future use.

Londeen said the MEDC should sell it or see if anyone has use for it. Cronin asked if the school has any use for it. Tramm said he can reach out to them if directed by the board.

Walker says he does not want to throw away \$3,000 but the pipe is likely not worth that much. The price is more than likely with labor.

Langley wants to ask the club if they are interested in purchasing the equipment.

President Huss said she would prefer to sell the equipment as well.

Tramm will come back to the board with final disposition on it. Tramm would like to make sure the decision to sell the equipment is ultimately made by the board.

**11. Review of MEDC Social Media Program**

Presented by Richard Tramm

Londeen asked if there was any insight into Angelo reaching out to the social marketing companies / ad agencies. Tramm said yes but that they do not maintain the social media accounts and posts. They only create the ads that go into social media, but the City might need their services in the future. There might be companies that do what the MEDC is looking for but it's just a matter of locating them.

Londeen commended President Huss's efforts. He is not sure how we would get someone to manage the posts if they don't have the local knowledge of the history of the City. Tramm said it could be filled by City staff but the City does not have the ability to do that right now short of hiring a person to do that, either on staff or contracting someone to do that.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REPORTS**

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

Presented by Richard Tramm

**13. 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

ACTION ITEM	ASSIGNEE	DI

**ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by Tom Cronin, seconded by Carol Langley to adjourn the meeting at 7:58 p.m. All in favor. (5-0)

Submitted by:  Date Approved: 04/19/2021

Richard Tramm, City Administrator



Rebecca Huss, MEDC President

