

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING

May 16, 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
 Carol Langley – Treasurer
 Ryan Londeen – Secretary
 Byron Sanford – Board Member
 Dan Walker – Board Member
 Jeff Angelo – Board Member

Absent: Wade Nelson – Board Member

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

OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. **Consideration and possible action regarding the Minutes of the Regular meeting of March 21, 2022.**

Langley pointed out that item number 2 was missing who “seconded” the motion. Londeen said he would correct that.

Motion to approve meeting minutes for the April Regular Meeting was made by Carol Langley, pending the change to item number 2, seconded by Jeff Angelo. All in favor. (6-0)

APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL REPORT

2. Consideration and possible action regarding the MEDC Financial Report March 2022

Presented by Carol Langley.

Huss noted that the antiques festival tents were quite a bit less than usual.

Huss commented that the Swank check for \$1950.00 is for all the movies for 2022. They are chosen ahead of time and paid for all at the same time. If the event is rained out, the city has a year to reshoot the movie.

Motion to approve the Financial Report through March 2022 was made by Jeff Angelo and seconded by Ryan Londeen. All in favor. (6-0)

CONSIDERATION AND POSSIBLE ACTION:

3. Discussion and consideration of expenditure for postcards and packaging.

Presented by Richard Tramm

Angelo asked if the ones shown in the layouts are mockups. Huss answered that it has all the ones intended on being used.

Langley asked about specific details for the packets. If a business purchases packet #1, it will have specific postcards in it, and they will be sold individually. Huss affirmed.

Dan Walker made a motion to approve the expenditure for postcards and packaging. Jeff Angelo seconded. All in favor. (6-0)

4. Consideration and possible action for the MEDC to participate with the City and TXDOT in the costs of certain TXDOT highway median construction work located in the City of Montgomery.

Presented by Richard Tramm

The spokesperson for Gunda Corporation has reached out to TxDOT but has not heard back yet. Walker asked if they are open to putting in pavers in the medians. The spokesperson answered potentially they are. Walker asked if stamped concrete would be cheaper. Spokesperson said cost wise pavers will be the same.

Huss asked how quickly the MEDC needs to move. Is the MEDC ready to move forward if TxDOT asked what is wanted tomorrow?

Angelo asked if some of the design concepts for the downtown plan could be implemented. Huss answered that she would love to, but it's too late for that.

Londeen asked what the plan is for now. Is it just concrete in the median? Pavers would look better than concrete. Huss said that TxDOT is probably willing to do pavers. Londeen questioned who was going to maintain the medians when they are finished.

Sanford pointed out that the uniformity of the downtown plan is what makes it so attractive. Tying in the medians to that would be a big bonus. Huss exclaimed that the city needs to take this as a wake-up call that between 2854 and 149 is not left out of the plan.

Walker asked who deals with TxDOT directly. Tramm answered that it's the city staff and City Engineers. Huss brought up the idea of hiring more consultants to take care of that instead of relying on city staff who don't have the time. Londeen suggested WGA. Tramm said that TxDOT will eventually move through to the west of the city, but the city is now ready to engage with these changes.

Tramm asked if there was a timeline on when the costs will be known. The spokesperson for Gunda answered that it should be known soon.

Angelo asked Langley if the MEDC should put a limit on the cost of the changes. Huss asked Angelo what the number should be. If the MEDC wants the pavers, they are going to have to pay what they want for it. Huss suggested capping it at \$50,000. Londeen is fine with leaving it open until the costs are known. It was agreed to hold a special meeting when the cost estimate is available.

Huss asked if everyone is ok with changing the Downtown Development Improvements to be a category rather than a specific Downtown Improvements category. That will be added to the MEDC agenda in June.

Carol Langley moved to table this item and was seconded by Byron Sanford. All in favor. (6-0)

5. Consideration of recommendation to MEDC Board of Directors on RFQ 2022-1 Engineering Services for McCown Street Improvements.

Presented by Richard Tramm

Langley asked if this was just for the sidewalks from Caroline Street. Tramm clarified that it's for McCown from Caroline up to College Street where the community center is. Sidewalks are part of the plan, but this is to develop plans for McCown Street to better suit foot and car traffic. This is the next step to develop, in detail, what needs to happen. This does not include actual construction. This is just creating a plan.

Walker asked if this is part of the \$50,000 that was approved before for McCown. Tramm answered that this is in addition to the more specific items from before. The city is currently in the process of doing wastewater line studies and survey work for drainage. All of that is

getting pushed together and is going to have to come together in one plan, but there are unique parts to all of it.

Langley explained that she has seen money spent on McCown Street before and she wants to make sure that this is going to fix McCown Street better than it has been in the past. Huss answered that this will fix the street correctly. Tramm said that this is not a band aid fix. This will get it done right. Huss said that in the past the city did not have the luxury to spend the money it took to fix McCown. Now, because of increased tax dollars, the city has the money.

Sanford expressed concern about repairing the street but leaving the parking lot in front of Montgomery Steakhouse ugly. Tramm said when it gets to that point the city will discuss that with the business owners.

Jeff Angelo made a motion to negotiate an agreement with Gunda Corporation. Byron Sanford seconded. Ryan Londeen abstained due to conflict of interest. All in favor (5-0)

6. Discussion and consideration of authorizing City staff to issue a Request for Qualifications for the creation of wayfinding signage on behalf of the MEDC.

Presented by Richard Tramm

Londeen asked if this could this be wrapped up into the SOQ under agenda item 5. Huss answered that she would prefer it not to.

Londeen asked who the city will be seeking to submit SOQ's; not a landscape architect? Landscaping and planning usually go hand in hand. Huss answered that the city has looked into some specific names.

Langley asked if this signage would be all over the town. Are these street signs or more directional? Huss answered that the intent is to direct people to parking and other sites around town. The library, Fernland, etc.

Londeen clarified that this is just a plan for the signage. Huss answered that they will suggest location signage and future signage.

Angelo asked if this is premature, with all the development the city is expecting. Sanford agreed with Angelo. Tramm clarified that by creating a plan this will prepare future developments with signage once the projects are complete. Londeen agreed that putting a plan in place for the signs is good and it won't be terribly expensive.

Ryan Londeen made a motion to authorize city staff to issue an RFQ for the creation of wayfinding signage on behalf of the MEDC. Seconded by Jeff Angelo. All in favor. (6-0)

7. Consideration and possible action to authorize MEDC Board Members to begin presenting the Tax Income Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ) concept to City Council, MISD, and Montgomery County and approve up to \$20,000 in expenditures for professional services to create a TIRZ.

Presented by Richard Tramm

Angelo pointed out that he loves TIRZ because of how successful it has been for McKinney.

Langley asked how one knows if this is on their property; is it on an individual property? Angelo answered that it goes back to the master plan. It helps businesses fund through tax relief. Huss clarified that it's picked by parcels. Developed and undeveloped. Everything stays the same. Tramm said that TIRZ or no TIRZ, property taxes do not change. It creates a pool. Walker said that as more and more businesses do it, it contributes more to the pool.

Langley asked if the only way it makes money is if the appraisal district raises the appraisal. Does the appraisal district keep up with that? How do you know if you have money in a pot? Tramm answered that the tax entity keeps up with it.

Langley wanted clarification that this will not increase property values if implemented. Tramm answered that it will not.

Londeen asked what the rebate is. What is the difference between the TIRZ and the MEDC? Is this just city taxes? Does it include the ISD? Huss answered that each taxing entity can choose to participate or not. Londeen asked if the city has spoken to the ISD. Tramm answered that the city doesn't want to act prematurely. It needs to be brought to City Council first.

Londeen asked if before the MEDC spends money on this, can it get some feelers out to City Council first. Tramm answered the city staff plans to put together a presentation to present to city council before spending the money. Huss said that if the MEDC is not willing to spend than it's not worth moving forward. Londeen wanted to make sure this money isn't spent and then killed in Council. Tramm said that this money can't be spent without Council's approval.

Londeen asked if this can give regulatory authority over what can and can't go in the TIRZ? Huss answered that it incentivizes but does not regulate. If it builds a more attractive area, it's going to draw more tourists in.

Langley asked if there are any other cities in Montgomery County that have a TIRZ. Tramm answered that he doesn't know of any others that do. There are some in the Houston area. They tend to be in developing areas.

Langley asked if there is a lead time on receiving the money. Tramm affirmed that this is a long-term project.

Jeff Angelo makes a motion to authorize MEDC Board Members to begin presenting the Tax Income Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ) concept to City Council, MISD, and Montgomery County and approve up to \$20,000 in expenditures for professional services to create a TIRZ. Sanford seconded.

Huss looked up that there are TIRZ in Montgomery County. Oak Ridge and Willis both have two. The City of Houston also has one. Could the city request access to Oak Ridge and Willis to the person who runs their TIRZ. She asked Tramm if he could set that up.

All in favor. (6-0)

8. Consideration and possible action related to the feasibility of participating in road development agreement with local developer.

Presented by Richard Tramm

Langley asked if the MEDC would be paying for it. Tramm answered that MEDC would front the money for it and then would get repaid under the development agreement.

Langley asked where the money would come from. Huss answered it would come from the bank balance.

Walker talked about the safety issue of pulling out from CFA onto 105.

Londeen said that this makes sense if the MEDC gets paid back for it.

Tramm said that this agenda item is not to approve the money, just to start the discussion.

Carol Langley made a motion to start the discussion of feasibility of participating in a road development agreement with local developer. Seconded by Jeff Angelo. All in favor. (6-0)

9. Discussion and consideration to authorize the City Administrator to approve a proposal for an updated demographic profile for a cost not to exceed \$1,000.

Presented by Richard Tramm.

Carol Langley made a motion to authorize the City Administrator to approve a proposal for an updated demographic profile for a cost not to exceed \$1,000. Byron Sanford seconded. All in favor. (6-0)

10. Discussion and consideration of MEDC's financial participation in the purchase and installation of three private parking signs in the downtown area.

Presented by Richard Tramm

Jeff Angelo said that the same sign can be purchased for \$20 on Amazon, he purchased 7 for his business parking lot. People park in the parking lot regardless of the signs. Until we have designated parking for events parking is a problem for all local businesses and he does not think it's the MEDC's responsibility to provide signage.

Huss mentioned that she doesn't think public works should be working on private property. Also having a permanent sign that looks like it's from the city is not very friendly. Maybe temporary signs would be a good compromise. If we do this for a few businesses, others around town are going to want the same thing and then it becomes a "don't park here" city.

Angelo suggested putting a big QR code on the temporary signs where it would direct people to parking around the city as a solution. Tramm said the city will take these suggestions back to the business owners.

Walker moved that the consideration of MEDC's financial participation in the purchase and installation of three private parking signs in the downtown area be tabled. Carol Langley seconded. All in favor. (6-0)

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REPORTS

11. City Administrator's Development Report

Presented by Richard Tramm

12. Engineer's Report 1

Presented by Richard Tramm

13. Special Project Manager's Report

Presented by Amy Brown

Angelo asked if the next Charlie Diggs event will be downtown or staying at Ransom's. Brown answered that there will be discussion to bring it downtown. Angelo suggested keeping it at Ransom's. Huss said that keeping it at Ransom's is not feasible long-term. Eventually the empty lot next to Ransom's will be developed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The MEDC Board of Directors reserves the right to discuss any of the items listed specifically under this heading or for any items listed above in executive closed session as permitted by law including if they meet the qualifications in Sections 551.071 (consultation with attorney), 551.072 (deliberation regarding real property), 551.073 (deliberation regarding gifts), 551.074 (personnel matters), 551.076 (deliberation regarding security devices), and 551.087 (deliberation regarding economic development negotiations) of Chapter 551 of the Government Code of the State of Texas.

POSSIBLE ACTION FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION:

- 14. Consideration of items discussed in executive session
Huss said there is nothing new to report for Executive Session.

BOARD INQUIRY


Huss said that it was pointed out to her by Amy Brown that there is to be a distinction between City Council and the MEDC. They should not be represented by the same person. Now that Byron Sanford is the mayor and he is representing the city as the mayor, it should be noted that the MEDC is a separate entity. He should not represent the MEDC in negotiating agreements. With that said, he can still stay on the MEDC.


ACTION ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

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

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Jeff Angelo and seconded by Ryan Londeen to adjourn the meeting at 8:12 p.m. All in favor. (6-0)

Submitted by:  _____ Date Approved: 6-20-2022
Dave McCorquodale, City Administrator

 _____
Rebecca Huss, MEDC President