



## **LIBERTY HILL**

**FREEDOM TO GROW**

### **LHEDC BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING MINUTES**

**MONDAY – JANUARY 31, 2019 – 5:00 PM**

**Council Chambers - 2801 Ranch Road 1869**

#### **CALL TO ORDER**

Liberty Hill Economic Development Corporation Board of Directors' meeting was called to order at 5:01 PM by Bill Chapman - President. Invocation was given by John Johnston followed by reciting the Pledge of Allegiance and Texas Pledge. **Members Present:** Bill Chapman; John Johnston; Chad Pirtle; Jamie Etzkorn; Eric Bailey; and Jack Harkrider. Quorum was met. **Staff Present:** Lance Dean; Greg Boatright; Sally McFeron; and Nancy Sawyer.

#### **REGULAR AGENDA**

**Discuss and Take Action on approving minutes of the Liberty Hill Economic Development Corporation Board special meeting held December 10, 2018 at 5:00 PM. OUTCOME:** On motion by Jack Harkrider and second by John Johnston, the Liberty Hill Economic Development Corporation Board approved the minutes of December 10, 2018. **Motion passed on vote of 6 AYES, 0 NAYS, and 0 ABSTENTIONS.**

**Discuss and Consider LHEDC sponsorship in support of the Annual Williamson County Cowboy Rodeo in an amount not to exceed \$5,000. OUTCOME:** John Clark – Liberty Hill Fair and Rodeo representative presented to the Board stating he believes the rodeo fits in with Liberty Hill's culture. From an economic development standpoint, he expects 400+ contestants, many of whom will be filling their trucks with gas in Liberty Hill. As there is a limited number of food trucks, local restaurants will be supported. Mayor Hall will be presenting scholarships in the categories of military, vocational, and college. Currently, those contestants not sleeping in their trucks find lodging in Leander; the Rodeo committee pays around \$2200 for the judges, announcers, and clowns for hotel lodging. When Liberty Hill adds a hotel to the community, the rodeo will generate funds for that hotel.

The \$5,000 requested sponsorship might cover some of the following:

- Overall expenses which are up 10%
- Advertising budget
- Scholarships

Jack Harkrider - Board member asked if this was the first time for a carnival. Mr. Clark stated this is actually the third year for the carnival, and they will be adding to that aspect this year. Also, there will be no alcohol sold, making this a family friendly carnival and rodeo. Eric Bailey – Board member asked Lance Dean if the application is complete; Mr. Dean responded that it is.

Mr. Clark stated the Liberty Hill EDC will be displayed on flyers and other marketing pieces. Upon question from the Board, Mr. Clark stated the rodeo is not a non-profit event. The Letter of Intent explains what EDC would be providing and what the City and the EDC would gain from sponsorship. Bill Chapman – President, EDC Board stated his concern of possible liability with a sponsorship.

If approved, the request to EDC for \$5,000 sponsorship, along with a separate request for \$10,000 sponsorship from the City will go to Council February 11<sup>th</sup>. The City has not participated for the last two years.

On question from John Johnston, John Clark went over an explanation of the proceeds from last year's rodeo.

John Johnston stated he is not a proponent of EDC supporting festivals that have been operating for more than a couple of years. He feels that they are not in the main purview of the EDC. He is not opposed to helping a startup but feels the rodeo needs to stand on its own, much like the sculpture festival should. His viewpoint is that the request should go to the City, not the EDC. He thinks EDC funds could be better used, for example, putting in water lines and street signs that help the community as a whole. John Clark responded he can appreciate that, but the rodeo generates hard dollars for Liberty Hill and is a way to attract future business to the City.

Bill Chapman encouraged others to speak. Mayor Hall stated he thinks the rodeo is one of the "coolest things the City has". He said the rodeo is one of five (5) events in which cowboys and cowgirls participate in order to attend a national rodeo event. John Johnston stated he is not opposed to the City supporting the rodeo but does think it should be supported by City Council rather than the EDC.

Jamie Etzkorn – Board member asked who is on the committee for the rodeo. John Clark stated the members include Corey Ross, Heidi Watt, AJ and Joni Collins, and Rick Hager. Jamie asked if the committee is mostly comprised of the Cowboy Church members and Mr. Clark responded affirmatively. Ms. Etzkorn asked if the profit from last year was held or disbursed; Mr. Clark stated it was held for this year.

Bill Chapman asked when the deadline for entries is; Mr. Clark stated it is a few weeks prior to the event. Last year there were 440 contestants with five (5) from Liberty Hill. The rodeo is marketed on various rodeo web sites. Liberty Hill's rodeo is the third largest on the circuit.

Chad Pirtle – Board member asked if there were two separate rodeo committees; specifically, is there a Harvest rodeo committee. John Clark responded that to his knowledge there is only one committee.

**Discuss and Consider LHEDC sponsorship in support of the Annual Williamson County Cowboy Rodeo in an amount not to exceed \$5,000. OUTCOME: On motion by John Johnston and second by Jack Harkrider, the EDC Board moved to table this item until it has been brought to Council on February 11<sup>th</sup>. Motion passed on vote of 6 AYES, 0 NAYS, and 0 ABSTENTIONS.**

Bill Chapman – President stated he would like to hear back after Council makes a decision along with any direction that Council provides the EDC.

**Discuss and Consider Liberty Hill Façade Grant Program. OUTCOME:** Lance Dean – Executive Director presented stating revisions were made to the Façade Grant Program to encompass a greater area, including the remainder of City Limits and extending through the ETJ. As per the original program, the grant includes 50% of project costs up to \$5,000 and includes existing businesses and non-residential businesses. No other major changes were made. The sign grant program already covers the greater Liberty Hill area. There was discussion regarding the exact boundaries that would be covered. Mr. Dean stated the program is on a case by case basis to be voted on by the EDC. Chad Pirtle – Board member expressed his concern with the program being consistent and clearly defined. He feels without this, the program could be problematic. Mr. Dean stated the EDC could attach specific boundaries to the application, but the EDC would have discretion either way. Bill Chapman – President asked if they could add the verbiage “on generally recognized commercial corridors” to the program application.

Lance Dean stated the application is a living document but each change would have to be approved by legal counsel and the EDC Board.

Bill Chapman asked if anyone wanted to make a motion that would reflect the verbiage of the current sign grant program, stating the acceptable corridors, in the revised façade grant program application. On motion by Eric Bailey and second by Chad Pirtle, the EDC Board moved to table this item until the Executive Director brings back the grant application with revised language. **Motion passed on vote of 6 AYES, 0 NAYS, and 0 ABSTENTIONS.**

**Overview of Capital Improvement Projects related to the water infrastructure of Liberty Hill. OUTCOME:** Curtis Steger – Steger & Bizzell provided a map handout to the Board showing water system improvements. He stated that Mr. Dean had asked him to speak to EDC about capital improvement projects in the context of the recent rate study program. Currently, Liberty Hill receives some of its water supply from a line that goes to Leander. The City is under contract with Leander to provide water conveyance to Liberty Hill.

The Butler Farms project will have a water line down Highway 29.

The original waster distribution system was a rural water system. The older pipe sizes and material are problematic for fire flow. These were constructed with USDA funding and loans. The City is growing and will require the water supply system to be compatible with fire protection lines and overall municipal water conveyance. The International Fire Code has detailed information on the fire safety code and fire flow requirements. The EDC and the City are working together to grow the City commercially and, at the same time, working to comply with the fire code.

The Butler Farms water lines will help with this. The developer is putting in the line and the City is facilitating the size upgrade from a 12” to a 16” line. This is a good opportunity for the City to increase capacity. A 16” line has a little more than twice the capacity of a 12” line. The City will provide pressure reducing valves (PRVs). This will help the City provide better water service and

adds fire flow capability. The City has identified other areas for improvements which include expected areas of growth on the east side and central corridor.

The downtown water lines are 6" asbestos concrete pipe. Mr. Steger said that water quality is not impaired by this since asbestos is an airborne-only carcinogen. He does not see pulling that pipe but the City will be adding a new line in-ground for improved fire flow. This is a first priority.

Future plans include \$300-400,000 in new lines for each of 2019, 2020, and 2021. The next big improvement is the construction of the pipeline that coincides with the transportation plan along Stubblefield Drive. This will be a 12" line conveying water out to other parts of town. Beyond that, the next phase of water line implementation will run about \$1.5 million.

The Butler Farms water line will cost the City around \$150,000 to \$200,000.

Mr. Steger explained how the PRV equalizes the pressure from Leander's 1,250 pressure plane to Liberty Hill's pressure plane of 1,150. There was also an explanation of the addition of chloramines to surface water to make it potable. There was additional discussion of Stormwater systems and when that might be considered. Mr. Steger stated other than new developments with curbs and gutters providing their own Stormwater systems, the City is not at that stage. The Board discussed current boundaries of Liberty Hill's service area.

Bill Chapman – President stated that the bright people of EDC along with City Planning could put their shoulders to long-range planning, directing money into corridor infrastructure rather than just responding to developers' needs. Mr. Chapman stated he, and the EDC, would like to work further with Steger and Bizzell on the City's infrastructure and future growth. Sally McFeron – Director of Planning stated fire flow is very important to the City's growth and future development. Mr. Steger stated a fireflow system doesn't happen overnight, and it isn't free. Mr. Chapman stated without fire flow contingencies, the city faces an impediment to attracting big box stores.

**Update on ICSC Red River States Conference.** OUTCOME: Rick Hall – Mayor stated the International Conference of Shopping Centers (ICSC) conference was very interesting. As Lance Dean manned the Williamson County Economic Development Partnership (EDP) booth, the Mayor and Bill Chapman – President visited with participants including retail companies. Mayor Hall stated from his standpoint in talking with others, was they were amazed by Liberty Hill partnership with Retail Coach, demographics, and current and projected growth. He went, not expecting any solid contacts, but with the desire to understand more about the City and EDC getting Liberty Hill's name out. However, they all received some really great contacts. Mayor Hall said it was a great experience.

Lance Dean – Executive Director, EDC stated he is glad the Mayor and Bill Chapman were able to attend, both for gaining additional contacts as well as seeing how other cities market themselves at their booths. He noted that Burnet incorporated two booths, complete with a masseuse, video games, smoothies, and branded items. Mr. Dean stated one of EDC's goals, phase 2 of marketing, is to have our own collateral. EDC might want to consider its own branded Liberty Hill Booth at the next conference. Bill Chapman stated the ISCS conference in Las Vegas is the biggest commercial and real estate event in the world. This will take place in May. He had always heard you can't really stop the

attendees to speak with them but found that, with detailed information about Liberty Hill, they were able to do just that. He said it was nice to see the negotiating tables, with receptionists at NewQuest Properties' booth. He had met with Jay Sears of NewQuest Properties ten (10) years ago to discuss Liberty Hill and was hoping to speak with him. As that booth was closing, Mr. Chapman reintroduced himself to Mr. Sears. They were able to speak about Liberty Hill for around 30 minutes. They are going to talk again soon. Mr. Chapman stated they needed to be loaded with information while meeting with these retail prospects. They were able to nail down some really important contacts with retail brokers. His takeaway is that the EDC needs to have really good marketing material with a polished finish, branding it from a retail point of view. He stated it would be worthless to go to Las Vegas without great branded material. He said "we are the last unpainted canvas" north of Austin. At the Austin Business Journal Growth Summit recently, an economist said Liberty Hill will be the largest city in the north-of-Austin area, larger than Round Rock or Pflugerville. Mr. Chapman stated it is EDC's task to educate City Council and others on maintaining quality control of that growth. He stressed the importance of having a "story to tell" to retail prospects with information about targeted properties with the proper utilities. EDC needs to be the visionary force for the City of Liberty Hill. A lot of people are talking to us, hotels and retail. He stated City Council may think the police department doesn't need another officer, but with 30,000 people within the greater Liberty Hill area, it is needed. He asked Sally McFeron – City Planner how many lots are in the pipeline. Ms. McFeron stated there are around 16,000 at this time. He again stated EDC needs to work on its marketing material and start using this material in a most constructive way. Mayor Hall urged the board to get a booth at the larger conferences that Mr. Dean attends. Mr. Chapman stated one big box retailer could double the City's revenue. Mayor Hall also said it would take only one grocery store / large retail unit to be a huge benefit to the City and that the City needs to be grown "in retail, not rooftops". Bill Chapman stated that he has brought in companies that have planted here, having driven them around the City to view properties while keeping their confidentiality. Someone else may think they brought them here, but he was the one who quietly showed them around.

#### **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATE**

Lance Dean – Executive Director stated that he is required to provide a Report of Activity to City Council. He included that report in the Board's packet. He will be reporting to Council on February 11<sup>th</sup>. Of note from the report, there has been a 16.6% increase in property values year over year and a 9.89% increase in sales tax revenue year over year. He stated things are going great and the City is above the State average on property tax revenue.

Bill Chapman asked Mr. Dean what he thought about an EDC Strategic Planning meeting. Mr. Dean stated goals were established at the previous planning meeting a few months ago; however, it would be great to meet again to establish new goals and direction for the EDC.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS**

- The next regular meeting will be Thursday – February 28, 2019 - 5:00 PM.

**ADJOURNMENT**

On motion by John Johnston and second by Eric Bailey, the meeting was adjourned at 6:46 PM.

**OUTCOME: Motion passed on vote of 6 AYES; 0 NAYS; 0 ABSTENTIONS.**

/s/ Barbara Zwernemann

**BARBARA ZWERNEMANN**

**City Secretary**

**City of Liberty Hill**