

Meeting Minutes Bellville Economic Development Corporation

The regular meeting of the Bellville Economic Development Corporation was called to order by David Ottmer at 5:00 P.M., Tuesday, February 11, 2003, in the Council meeting room at City Hall, Bellville, Texas.

Present were Wayne Browning, Jerome Peters, Warren Scott, David Ottmer, Kenneth Stein, Nancy Allen and Bob Simpson. All members were present.

Wayne Browning made a motion the Agenda be approved. The motion was seconded by Bob Simpson and carried unanimously.

Wayne Browning made a motion the Minutes of the January 14, 2003 meeting be approved. Nancy Allen requested the Minutes be corrected to reflect the following changes:

Agenda Item #12 – ...The historic preservation of Bellville will be the primary topic. The Bellville Heritage Gathering will be addressed as it plays a key role in partnering with the community to bring positive attention to Bellville.

State Rep. Lois Kolkhorst, Austin County Judge Carolyn Bilski, Mayor Philip Harrison, Helen Alexander and Bill Allen have been named the Advisory Board for the Visionaries in Preservation.

Chamber of Commerce President Kim Barrett, Bellville Heritage Gathering Chair Tom Bennett, Vice Chair John Elick, Vice Chair of Visionaries Tania Elick, Treasurer of Boys & Girls Club Tom Feux, Bellville Chamber Director John Marchak, and Visionaries Chair Nancy Allen met with Frank Morgan of LCRA and Carol Courville of SBEC to discuss the feasibility of local grants for non-profit organizations.

Agenda Item #16 – Jerome Peters reported on a suggestion made at a Chamber of Commerce Board meeting to give Governor Rick Perry a spur to invite him to Bellville.

Wayne Browning revised his motion to include the corrections; Jerome Peters seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Bob Simpson distributed a Treasurer's Report for the period January 1, 2003 to January 31, 2003. A beginning balance of \$235,192.24 and an ending balance of \$246,898.58 were reported. The sales tax check from the City for January has not been received to date. A more informative description of expense items will be included in future reports. Kenneth Stein made a motion the Treasurer's Report be accepted as reported. Nancy Allen seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously.

Rev. Warren Scott left the meeting at 5:07 p.m. to respond to an emergency situation with one of his congregants.

**Agenda Items #7 and #8
Recess**

Executive Session to Consider Potential Litigation and Possible Land Purchase

The regular meeting of the BEDC was called into recess by David Ottmer at 5:08 p.m. following a motion by Kenneth Stein and a second by Nancy Allen. Warren Scott returned and joined the Executive Session at 5:27 p.m.

**Agenda Item #9
Regular Session Reconvenes and Action Taken**

Members of the BEDC returned from Executive Session at 5:34 p.m. Any action to be taken as a result of the Executive Session was tabled for a later time in the agenda.

**Agenda Item #10
Discussion and Possible Action to Determine Definition of "Revised Application" as Compared to "New Application"**

This discussion was necessitated by the receipt of a letter from Kim Barrett, President of the Bellville Chamber of Commerce, and Tom Bennett, President of the Bellville Heritage Gathering. The subject of the letter was "Revised Grant Request from \$65,000 to 35,000". The name of the May 3rd event has been changed to "Bellville Heritage Gathering...A Texas Day in the Country" and has incorporated as a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. \$25,000 is sought for this event. The letter further stated the Chamber had not designated a site to locate a new Visitor-Tourism Center and requested \$10,000 for the purchase of office equipment and furnishings.

Since the BEDC makes all applications received available for public scrutiny for 60 days prior to any action being taken, it was felt by David Ottmer and Charley Smith that it was a disservice to the public not to allow for this same amount of review time on the revised request from the Chamber and the Bellville Heritage Gathering. This subject will be brought forward for discussion with Frank Morgan of LCRA at the meeting tentatively scheduled for March 11, 2003. The original grant request received from the Chamber of Commerce on November 12, 2002 will be considered at tonight's meeting and action will be taken on this application.

**Agenda Item #11
Review Proposed Revision to the Policy for Dispensing BEDC Funds to Approved Grants**

Following discussion, Jerome Peters made a motion that requests for expenditure of grant funds and proof of expenses be reviewed and scrutinized by all members of the BEDC before checks are dispensed by the Treasurer. This motion was seconded by Kenneth Stein and carried unanimously.

**Agenda Item #12
Public Comment**

No sign-in sheets from persons wishing to make public comment were received by the secretary.

Agenda Item #13
Discussion and Action on the Application of Boys & Girls Club of Bellville, Inc. for \$20,000 for Program Expenses

Nancy Allen moved for approval of the full amount requested by the Boys & Girls Club. Wayne Browning seconded the motion. Jerome Peters asked for clarification of the definition of program expenses and discussion ensued. President Ottmer called for the vote; the results were five (5) votes in favor and one (1) vote against. David Ottmer abstained from voting on the application because of a possible conflict of interest.

Agenda Item #14
Discussion and Action on the Application of Assurance Insurance Agency, Inc, dba Bizinz.com for \$35,000 for the Relocation of the Business to Bellville

Jerome Peters moved a grant of \$10,843.00 be made to cover the moving costs of Assurance Insurance Agency provided receipts are presented. Kenneth Stein seconded the motion. He reported he had made an on-site visit to the facility. The President called for the vote and the results were four (4) votes in favor and two (2) votes against. David Ottmer abstained from the voting because of a possible conflict of interest.

Agenda Item #15
Discussion and Action on the Application of Bellville Swimming Pool for \$27,427.62 for Revitalization

David Ottmer called for a motion regarding this grant application and received no response. For lack of a motion, further consideration cannot be given at this time.

Agenda Item #16
Discussion and Action on the Application of Bellville Public Library for \$75,000 for the Renovation of the Entrance and Existing Building and Paving an Expanded Parking Lot

Warren Scott moved funding of the total amount requested, but recommended some expenses be defrayed by receipt of assistance from the City of Bellville whenever possible. Kenneth Stein seconded the motion. David Ottmer reported the City Council had discussed this issue and was in agreement that some assistance would be provided by the City and City employees. The importance of careful maintenance of employee timesheets and records of materials costs was stressed. President Ottmer called for the vote and the results were unanimous in favor of the grant.

Agenda Item #17
Discussion and Action on the Application from the Bellville Chamber of Commerce for \$65,000 for the Formation of an Annual Event "County Livin' – A Day in the Country" and Creation of a Tourism/Visitor Center

Wayne Browning opened discussion with a comment regarding funding only \$12,500 because that was the amount in the BEDC budget for advertising. Bob Simpson who is also a Director of the Chamber of Commerce, spoke to the issue of full funding as did Tom Bennett,

President of the Bellville Heritage Gathering. Chamber President, Kim Barrett, stated only \$13,100 is in the Chamber's treasury at this time.

Though Kenneth Stein expressed his doubts that 20,000-30,000 people would be drawn to area, he questioned how such a large number of visitors would be handled. It was determined no city or county insurance would cover such an event; spectators would attend the parade at their own risk. Jerral Johnson, Police Chief, was questioned about security and stated he believed he could get about 91 officers from surrounding cities to assist with such an event.

Kenneth Stein moved a grant of \$30,000 be awarded to the Chamber of Commerce if it is determined such an expense for tourism is allowed in Section 4B of the Development Corporation Act of 1979. Additionally, his motion included the necessary amendment of the BEDC budget to cover such an expenditure as appropriate. The motion was further amended to specify all funds would be given to the Chamber of Commerce for disbursement: \$12,500 to be disbursed for advertising and \$17,500 to be disbursed for Bellville Heritage Gathering expenses. Wayne Browning seconded the motion as amended. The motion was carried by a resulting vote of four (4) in favor and one (1) against. Bob Simpson, currently a Director of the Chamber of Commerce, abstained from voting.

Agenda Item #18

Review of Policy Letter Concerning Unexcused Absences by EDC Board Members

Jerome Peters suggested this item be tabled for discussion at a later meeting.

Agenda Item #19

Report from Nancy Allen on Status of Petition Drive for High Speed Interconnect Service

Nancy Allen suggested this item also be tabled for discussion at a later date; only 65 of the required 150 petition signatures have been obtained by Sally Nergaard. The petitions have not been widely distributed, but the drive should be complete by March 15.

Agenda Item #20

Report from Nancy Allen on the Status of the Texas Historical Commission's Visionaries in Preservation Program

Nancy Allen reported 25 people plus the three speakers from the Texas Historical Commission attended the first meeting on January 24 at 1:00 p.m. in the First National Bank Community Meeting Room. State Representative Lois Kolkhorst, Austin County Judge Carolyn Bilski and Mayor Pro-Tem Jim Bishop attended as well as EDC Board members Jerome Peters and Nancy Allen. Also in attendance was Seneca McAdams, Regional Director of the Independence Trail.

On January 30, Nancy Allen, Taunia Elick and Linda Feux attended an all day tourism meeting sponsored by the Texas Independence Trail at Bellville's Turnverein. Judge Bilski gave the welcoming address. Our group networked with Cuero community leaders involved in the Visionaries program and obtained several pointers from focus groups to community partnerships and relationship building to grant availability. The Cuero group offered future assistance as needed.

THC-VIP is more apt to select counties over small communities the size of Bellville. However, as the Austin County seat, Bellville has the opportunity to lead the way in building the partnerships and relationships with other Austin County communities.

The second meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 18 at 1:00 p.m. in the FNB Community Room. The topic of discussion will be "Community".

Jerome Peters has supplied us with a booklet called "Harvesting Hometown Jobs...the new small town guide to economic development" produced by the National Center for Small Communities (NCSC). The booklet contains information on other communities that have successfully used the visioning process at a grassroots level.

Agenda Item # 21

Discussion and Possible Action Regarding the Need to Amend the Current BEDC Grant Application Form

This agenda item was tabled for consideration at a later date and may be discussed with Frank Morgan of LCRA.

Agenda Item #22

Report from Nancy Allen on Plans for Legislative Day in Austin on Thursday, February 27, 2003

Nancy reported a 55-passenger bus will depart from Bellville at 6:30 a.m. and return at approximately 6:30 p.m. 15 seats are currently available. Total cost to the BEDC for this bus will be \$1,321.00. The group will lunch together in the Capital Grill. An agenda will be provided the day of the trip as it has changed frequently. Tentatively, our group will meet with representatives from the Texas Dept. of Economic Development, Texas Historical Commission – Visionaries in Preservation, Texas Parks & Wildlife and the Texas Dept. of Transportation. A hearing with the latter group is scheduled for March 11 in LaGrange.

Agenda Item #23

Consideration of any Action Necessary and Related to the Organization and Operation of a Corporation formed under Chapter 4B of the Economic Development Act of 1979, as Amended

Jerome Peters distributed minutes of the January 20 meeting and notes pertaining to the Citizens' Input Committee.

Regarding the discussion in Executive Session of a possible land acquisition, Jerome Peters will determine what exact land will be offered for sale and get figures on the cost of an appraisal. This information must be presented to the City Council prior to any action by the BEDC.

There being no further business to come before the BEDC, the meeting was adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Suzanne C. Edwards
Recording Secretary