

Minutes
Regular Meeting
Bellville Economic Development Corporation

Date of Meeting: June 1, 2017
Time of Meeting: 5:00 P.M.
Location: Council Meeting Room, Bellville City Hall
30 South Holland St., Bellville, TX 77418

1. Call to Order, Invocation and Pledge
2. Roll Call and Certification of Quorum **Present: Bob Buckner, Pat Burns, Paul Jones, Danny Jacob, Clark McKinley, Bruce Harrison, John Moore. Quorum certified.**
3. Consideration and Action to Approve the Agenda as Posted **Mr. Moore motion to approve, Mr. Jacob second. Motion approved unanimously.**
4. Public Comment (3-Minute Remarks of Speakers who have completed Sign-in Sheet) AND Receipt of Grant Applications **Reesa Ueckert spoke on three issues. Her first was to ask the EDC's help in cleaning up "eyesores" around Bellville. She said she didn't think the Downtown Redevelopment plan should move forward until existing problems were fixed. She asked if the EDC could find ways to help find buyers for the abandoned Bellville Village on Front Street, and help in marketing three buildings on the Square that have been for sale. She then asked the EDC's help in repairing the Turnverein building at the Fairgrounds. Finally, she said there are several businesses around the City that need new signage. She said that the Chamber has approached the businesses about taking advantage of the EDC's Storefront Grant program, but the business owners felt the application was too complicated, the information needed was too intrusive, and the process took too long. She asked if something could be done to simplify the process. She said the impression in the local business community was that the Bellville EDC was not interested in helping local businesses.**
Linda Niehuus spoke, she said, mainly in support of the Quiet Zone proposal. She said from her experience as a realtor, the noise from the train horn discourages businesses and potential homeowners from buying near the tracks, She said she knew there were other issues involved with the failure of Bellville Village, but that a Quiet Zone could encourage a buyer to come in and fix the buildings. She also said her impression was that the Bellville EDC was not pro-active enough in helping existing businesses. She said she attended an event in Sealy, at which County Judge Tim Lapham praised the Sealy EDC for being pro-active, and contrasted that with Bellville's EDC.
5. Questions and Comments from Board Members (discussion is limited to statements of policy or statements of factual matters, or the request that a matter be placed on the next meeting's agenda). **None**
6. Consideration and Action to Approve Minutes of Previous Meeting held. **Mr. Jones asked that his comments on the Turnverein committees efforts should say they were making progress toward organizing, not progress toward raising funds. He asked the minutes to be amended. Mr. Moore made motion to approve minutes with the amendment, Mr. Buckner second. Motion approved unanimously.**
7. Consideration and Action to Approve Treasurer's Report, Payment of Outstanding Bills,

and Investments. **Mr. Moore presented report. Total current assets are \$651, 215.30. Sales tax income for the months was \$24, 841.94. Bills presented for payment: \$157.70, \$47.94 & \$55.93 to City of Bellville for utilities, \$700 to All Out Outdoors for May monthly maintenance, \$125 for dues to the Texas Economic Development Council, \$18.50 to Brown & Hofmeister for Legal services, and \$250 to LeAnn Luedeker for monthly contract for a total of \$1,355.07. Mr. Jones asked on fixed costs if the EDC shouldn't have a depreciation schedule on the statue and Pavilion. Mr. Moore said he would ask Ms. Luedeker about that. Mr. Jones also said that the board might want to look at setting up a Sinking fund during the budget planning so that repairs to the Pavilion and Statue can be planned for. Mr McKinley made a motion to approve the report and pay bills as presented, Mr. Jacob second. Motion approved unanimously.**

8. **Consideration and Action as needed on Downtown Redevelopment Plan. Mr. Jones said he has talked with representatives from Wells Fargo, and that he and Mr. Harrison had met with Bob DeForest to look at potential repairs around the bank building. He said the area they were looking at went north along Holland street on the east side from the corner, then wrapped around the south side of Palm street to take in the portion of Palm that was not included in the Bell Street project. He said the portion that blocked the sidewalk on Palm was an embankment, and not a retaining wall, and could be removed. He said the next step would be to get a survey of the area, to determine the actual property lines. Mr. Buckner asked about Wells Fargo participation. Mr. Jones said they were looking at resurfacing their parking lot, but that the project was moving slowly through their corporate bureaucracy. Mr. Burns asked if it was an option to just remove the embankment on Palm, and not do the improvements on Holland. Mr. Jones said that was an option. After discussion about what work the City might be able to do to save costs, Mr. Jones said the City did have the equipment for demolition, and could cut the concrete and remove the embankment. He said he still needs to assess what Wells Fargo intends to do, and then will ask for authorization for a survey to be commissioned. No action at this point.**

9. **Consideration and Action as needed on Railroad "Quiet Zone" Noise Reduction project. Mr. Moore presented a proposal for the next step in the project. Quiet Zone Technologies proposed a two phase approach. Phase 1 would include the gathering of preliminary information through the submission of the City's application to the FRA to create the Quiet Zone. It would include calculating the Quiet Zone Risk Indexes, identifying the desired treatments for each intersection, estimating the proposed effectiveness rates for proposed Alternative Safety Measures (ASM), determining the required risk threshold, updating grade crossing inventory forms, and drafting a Notice of Intent and Public Authority Application, and send them to the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA). The fee for that would be a lump sum of \$9,500. If the FRA approved the applications and treatments, then QZT would proceed to Phase 2, which would include updating the Grade Crossing Inventory Forms and drafting the Notice of Establishment. Phase 2 would be completed for a lump sum fee of \$3,780.**
Mr. Moore said he had discussions with the City and with a property owner on Glenn street about the project. He said on Glenn street, the proposed supplemental safety method of putting in a six inch tall concrete median would block the homeowners driveway, so after a discussion with Mr. Albritton from Quiet Zone Technologies, an ASM could be used. But doing so would require the proposal to be presented to the FRA for pre-approval. Mr. Moore said that when looking at any proposal, the FRA had a formula for determining if the proposed improvements would improve safety, and had to look at the entire zone as a whole.

He said an advantage to pre-submitting the plan to the FRA would be that there would be no question that the project would improve safety at the crossings, and that we would have a final cost estimate when the time comes to make a final decision on the project. Mr. Moore said the proposal called for putting in the improvements at Glenn Street, Main Street, Third Street and Hacienda. He said they had also looked at Highway 1456 and Granville street, but both would require Wayside horns, which would add a cost of \$50,000 for the horns per intersection, plus about \$10,000 for installation for an additional total of around \$120,000. He said doing the Glenn to Hacienda section would cost approximately \$168, 567, including a 15% contingency for overruns. He showed a sound contour map that depicted how much the train noise would be reduced throughout the area of the improvements. He said he felt it may be easier to just do that section at this point, and then look at 1456 & North Granville at a later date.

Mr. Harrison asked about the noise from the train as it approached the 1456 & Granville intersections, saying if those weren't included then residents on the north side of the city would not notice any improvement. Mr. Jones said he felt it was important to emphasize this was really a "quieter zone" project, because with the Wayside horns, there would still be noise, and thought people would be surprised by the amount of noise when this was billed as a "quiet zone". Mr. Jacobs said that he and his wife had gone to Sealy to hear the Wayside horn in action, and was pleasantly surprised how muffled the sound was. He said it was clearly audible at the intersection, but that as he drove off with his car windows down the noise dropped off after a couple of blocks to make normal conversations possible. Mr. Jacobs said he was concerned that just limiting the project to the Glenn through Hacienda section wasn't enough and that the board should look at including 1456 and North Granville. Mr. Moore said that Mr. Albritton had told him that he would need to get together the task force comprised of TXDOT, the County, the City and BNSF railroad to review the Granville and 1456 intersections. Mr. Albritton had quoted a cost of \$2,575 to review 1456, but Mr. Moore said he felt comfortable that Albritton would include Granville in that price. Mr. Albritton referred to that as Phase 3. Mr. Burns offered a motion to propose approving payments for Phase 1 at \$9500, and also Phase 3 for \$2575. Mr. McKinley objected that may not be the final cost for phase 3 and that he wouldn't vote without knowing the final cost. Mr. Burns then amended his motion to approve payment for Phase 1 and Phase 3, not to exceed \$13,000. Mr. Moore second. Motion was approved 4-2. Mr. Moore, Mr. Jacob, Mr. Burns, and Mr. Buckner voting yes. Mr. Harrison and Mr. McKinley voting no.

10. Consideration and Action as needed on action items from Special May EDC workshop. Mr. Jones recapped the results of the May workshop with Betty Russo from the Governor's Economic Development office. He said he felt it was a good meeting and that it went to the heart of what we could do to attract and keep businesses here. He said we would need to set up another workshop with Sealy and the County to find ways to work together. He felt one of the first things we needed was to look at ways to improve the EDC website. Mr. Moore suggested looking at the website from the EDC in Cameron as an example. He also discussed getting a standardized tax abatement package prepared, and in his role as Alderman would talk with the City about starting that. There was discussion about the remarks in the meeting about having one trained person as the contact, and the fact that the EDC did not even have its own phone number to contact in case a business was interested in moving here.

Mr. Burns referred back to Ms. Ueckert's remarks at the beginning of the meeting, about making the Storefront Grant program more user friendly and offered to look at ways to simplifying the program. Mr. Jacob volunteered to help Mr. Burns with

that project. Mr. Jones asked if anyone wanted to volunteer to work on the website. Having no volunteers, he said that he would have private discussions with board members.

11. Executive Session under Govt. Code Sec. 551.071, 551.072 and 551.087 to discuss legal matters with attorney, real property negotiations, and/or economic development negotiations.
None
12. Action on matters considered in Executive Session. **None needed**
14. Adjournment. **6:21**