

MINUTES  
**Veneta Economic Development Committee**  
**Wednesday, September 30, 2015 – 2:00 p.m.**  
Veneta Administrative Center, 88184 8th Street, Veneta, Oregon

Present: Jason Alansky, Linda Boothe, Thomas Cotter, Dave D'Avanzo, Len Goodwin, Gina Haley-Morrell, Charles Ruff, Herb Vloedman (via phone)

Others: Ric Ingham, Claudia Denton

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## 1. Call to Order

First meeting. Ric Ingham started the meeting at 2:00 p.m. and passed around a sign in sheet as there was no chair.

## 2. Administrative

### a. Introductions:

Ric Ingham introduced Claudia Denton as the City's RARE participant. Her title is Economic Development Specialist and she'll be assisting as staff to the Economic Development Committee (the Committee). Denton introduced herself and explained her educational background and her RARE AmeriCorps position. Members introduced themselves: Thomas Cotter, Veneta City Councilor and owner of Fern Ridge Realty. Len Goodwin, retired, Vice Chair of Veneta Planning Commission, formerly Director of Development and Public Works for the City of Springfield, and a career lawyer. Linda Boothe, business owner in Veneta and a Ford Family Foundation Cohort graduate. Gina Haley-Morrell, business owner and member of the Fern Ridge Chamber of Commerce board (past President of the board), Mid-Lane Cares board, and a Ford Family Foundation Cohort graduate. Jason Alansky with Banner Bank, member of the Chamber of Commerce board, Kiwanis of Fern Ridge board, and the TSP board. Herb Vloedman, owner of Fern Ridge Self Storage. Charles Ruff, former and transitioning General Manager of Oregon Country Fair, Culinary Director and partner of Oregon Truffle Festival, and member of a few local nonprofit boards. Dave D'Avanzo, Lane Electric Coop Member Services, Marketing, and PR staff, and a member of the Fern Ridge Chamber of Commerce board.

Ingham explained the sign in sheet, binder, materials, and gave a brief history of the Committee.

### b. Election of Chair and Vice Chair:

Ingham opened up the election process and nominations for Chair and Vice Chair.

**Motion: Thomas Cotter nominated Len Goodwin for Chair of the Economic Development Committee. Dave D'Avanzo seconded the motion which passed with a vote of 8-0.**

**Motion: Charles Ruff nominated Herb Vloedman for Vice Chair of the Economic Development Committee. Thomas Cotter seconded the motion which passed with a vote of 8-0.**

c. Review of Bylaws:

Denton reviewed the proposed changes to the Bylaws. Changes included Article II: Purpose and Function, Article III: Membership, Sections I and II, and Article V: Meetings, Section IV.

Chair Goodwin asked if the Veneta City Council (the Council) had given indication about how frequently they would like the Committee to report back to the Council. Ingham helped answer by explaining some background information on the Bylaws and Committee. Ingham mentioned that Thomas Cotter is a City Councilor and suggested that he become the Committee's liaison to the Council to report back; Mr. Cotter agreed.

In response to a concern from Linda Boothe, Dave D'Avanzo proposed a change to Bylaws, Article II: Purpose and Function point 1 wording of "Veneta and Fern Ridge Area" to "Veneta and Greater Fern Ridge Area".

**Motion: Dave D'Avanzo motioned to change the proposed Bylaws Article II: Purpose and Function point 1 to read as "Plan the responsible expansion and growth of business and industry in the Veneta and Greater Fern Ridge Area." Linda Boothe seconded the motion which passed with a vote of 8-0.**

**Motion: Thomas Cotter motioned to adopt the proposed Bylaws with the approved amendments to Article II. Linda Boothe seconded the motion which passed with a vote of 8-0.**

d. Set meeting schedule:

There was a consensus to postpone setting the meeting schedule to the end of the meeting.

### 3. Purpose

a. Implementation of the *Veneta Economic Development Strategy Five-Year Action Plan, 2015-2019*:

Ingham briefed the Committee on the *Veneta Economic Development Strategy Five-Year Action Plan, 2015-2019* (Action Plan) and the Veneta Economic Development Strategic Planning Committee's and the University of Oregon Community Planning Workshop's involvement in creating the Action Plan and related documents. The Action Plan contains 25 action items.

b. Ranking of Work Prioritization Exercise:

Denton briefed the Committee on the Work Prioritization Exercise and explained how the Committee members ranked each item of the Action Plan. The Work Prioritization Exercise asked that each Committee member rank each action item from the Action Plan with a ranking of high, medium, or low. Linda Boothe was not able to complete the exercise prior to the meeting, and commented some of her rankings as Denton presented the results. There was general consensus in the results.

Ingham addressed the low ranking results for the action items regarding a quarterly newsletter and shovel-ready sites.

Chair Goodwin commented that it was possible that some items were ranked lower due

to the Committee not necessarily being directly involved in the implementation of those items, particularly the newsletter.

Linda Boothe said the Committee should support local news organizations such as the Fern Ridge Review by keeping a regular newspaper column for that action item.

Ingham said the Fern Ridge Review does not reach the same audience that the newsletter is intended for.

Thomas Cotter said that the Fern Ridge Review does not have the capacity to contact and reach the developer audience and that Len Goodwin had a point that it may not be a function of the Committee.

Dave D'Avanzo said that multiple messages using multiple vehicles is important, and that the Fern Ridge Review could be good for keeping locals informed. He also said that social media, newsletters, and newspapers address the users that most commonly use them, as long as the message has been crafted and approved.

Len Goodwin said that D'Avanzo brought up two good questions, 1) "what is the message and how is it crafted?" and 2) "what is the appropriate vehicle to distribute it?".

Ingham explained that not all of the action items are intended for the Committee to implement, but rather mostly for staff to implement with guidance from the Committee.

Chair Goodwin said several of the items that ranked low are actions that fall into the area of outreach and communications: 1.2.2, 2.1.1, 2.2.1, and 2.2.2. He asked if the Committee would like to see staff focus attention on those action items even though they were ranked low.

In response to a question from Linda Boothe, Chair Goodwin said that Committee members can suggest to either remove the lower ranked action items or to keep all the action items.

Ingham said that the Committee can choose to revisit the action items and ranking system every six months. There was consensus that this was a good idea.

Chair Goodwin said that several members of the Committee are also active within the Fern Ridge Chamber of Commerce and that the Chamber could be a resource, particularly for the action item regarding developing a database of businesses.

Gina Haley-Morrell said that the Chamber only keeps records of current member businesses, which is a small percentage of the business area. She said although the Chamber would likely be interested in having a business database and more members, it is volunteer-run and short-staffed, and would likely want to assist but may be unable to do so.

Ingham said that the City of Veneta keeps records of business licenses within City limits and could try to couple that with the Chambers' registration and the Oregon Corporation Division to capture other businesses within the Fern Ridge Area.

Ingham asked if the Committee felt that there are issues missing from the Action Plan,

and that the Committee can make additions or updates. Ingham asked the Committee if there are other items that should be added. Chair Goodwin suggested that it may be necessary to wait for a future meeting.

c. Draft Work Plan Format:

Denton briefly explained the proposed Work Plan format for the Committee. Actions will have subtasks, a lead person, supporting members, partners and resources, timeline, and budget.

d. Discussion about Committee Purpose and Mission:

There was discussion on the economic future of Veneta and the needs that Veneta businesses have in order to grow or stay in business, so that in turn these businesses can provide jobs and services for the community. There was general consensus that the purpose of the Committee is assist current and future businesses to get an overall employment-base increase in order to keep tax revenue in the area. In addition, the City needs to articulate a message to potential new businesses and developers.

Chair Goodwin discussed a possibility of having a listening session to provide business owners time to talk to the Committee about what their needs are and the issues they face. He said the Committee has an advantage in that it is a volunteer-based, resident-based Committee rather than a City staff or elected official group looking to talk to business owners.

Thomas Cotter expressed concerns about time constraints and obstacles to this approach.

Ingham said that Veneta has a unique business situation, some of which may contain home-operation businesses looking to expand the number of employees or expand into storefronts, and that these businesses have unique needs and great potential. He provided an example of a business that got started by selling meat rubs at the Veneta Farmer's Market that is now expanding and looking for an industrial kitchen.

Linda Boothe said the upcoming Thanksgiving Bazaar may have several similar business operations to look into.

Ingham said the purpose discussion can continue into the next meeting.

#### **4. Program/project updates**

a. Information on Business Retention & Expansion (BRE) program:

Ingham explained his background in economic development and how it ties in with his role as City Administrator. Ingham said that Veneta feels it is a Ford Family Community and that the Ford Family Foundation (the Foundation) has been engaged in community discussions about economic development. The Foundation is looking to launch economic development programs in 2016. Through these discussions, Veneta had been selected to participate in a pilot program with Rural Development Initiatives, Inc. (RDI) focused on business retention and expansion.

Ingham said RDI has been working with rural communities for 25-30 years to create community prosperity. The Foundation is funding the pilot program, but will require staff

time to train and work closely with RDI staff. He said there are no commitments yet but it is a great opportunity.

In response to a question by Dave D'Avanzo, Ingham said a potential difficulty would be the commitment to get a nucleus of individuals or leadership team to champion this effort. He said another aspect to this is the continuation of this effort or strategy over time, not just a one time, one year effort.

Chair Goodwin said the program would fit in with several goals in the Action Plan.

Ingham said Michael Held of RDI has met with staff earlier in the year and the application is ready to be submitted if the Committee agrees. RDI would work with staff and the Committee to put the program together over the next 3-4 months and in January or February of next year would have materials and a plan of what businesses to talk to and how to help them expand or stay in business.

Charles Ruff said to take into consideration that it is a pilot program that has not been proven yet, and that it is based on volunteer time and resources. Chair Goodwin responded that one of the Action Plan objectives is to create such a program, but through a partnership with RDI the Committee and staff would have access to resources and expertise with fewer risks.

Ingham said that RDI has had success with similar programs, and this particular business retention model is from the Midwest. They've had great success working with diverse businesses and audiences.

The Committee was in consensus about moving forward with this program.

b. Lane County Hatfield Fellows:

Ingham briefed the Committee on Lane County's two new Hatfield Fellows. The Fellows are working with several communities in rural Lane County, including Veneta, on various economic development efforts.

c. Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS):

Ingham briefed the Committee on the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for the Cascades West Economic Development District, The CEDS update has been driven by the University of Oregon Community Service Center, Lane Council of Governments, and the Oregon Cascades West Economic Development District. It is a four-county district of Lane, Lincoln, Benton, and Linn Counties. Charles Ruff asked if Denton could create a short overview document for the ranked Action Items to group them similar to the overview provided in the CEDS document. Denton said she would provide these materials at the next meeting.

d. WealthWorks:

Ingham briefed the Committee on RDI's WealthWorks initiative and webinar series, which involves value chain development and approaches that are specific to rural environments. Ric explained that the City had previously applied for a WealthWorks grant related to Mid-Lane Cares and rural medicine. He said the webinar series is something the City is looking to register for if the Committee has interest; Lane County would be jointly viewing the webinars and paying for a portion of the cost. As no one was opposed, Chair Goodwin said to register for the webinar series.

## **5. Other**

Ingham updated the Committee on the 120 acre Northeast Employment Center, and that owners have contacted a real estate agency to market the properties. He said Lane County, EWEB, and other partners have been showing the Hynix building in Eugene to three different potential buyers. The property is in auction and the potential buyers are likely to make it into a chip manufacturing plant as it was previously. He said the St. Vincent De Paul Society may move forward with plans to open a retail store and Veteran's housing on West Broadway in Veneta pending decisions on tax incentives. He said Veneta has an Urban Renewal district and in future meetings will discuss the City's Urban Renewal efforts. He briefly mentioned other City efforts and projects around Veneta.

Set Meeting Schedule:

The Committee decided to meet again October 21, 2015 at 2 p.m.

Ric mentioned that the Committee is still taking applications for one more Committee position.

## **6. Adjourn**

Meeting adjourned at 3:45 p.m.