Meridian Chamber of Commerce

**Economic Development Committee**

**Thursday, December 3, 2020 | Noon**

**Conference Call**

**Minutes**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| X | Clint Shiflet, Co-Chair | X | Mick Armstrong, Co-Chair | X | Lori Hoalst Jones |
| X | Tori Cleary | A | Ashley Squyres |  | Scott McDonald |
| X | Toni Sutton | X | Daniel Watts | A | Jeff McClees |
| A | Hank Ebert | A | Bob Fitzgibbons | X | James Fullinwider |
| A | Heath Van Patten | X | Gayle Knepper | A | Bernadette Reisbeck |
| X | Nick Grove | X | Sean Evans | X | Michelle Leverett |

1. Introductions: Clint
2. Update on the Meridian Municipal Small Business Grant/Meridian City and Meridian Development Corporation Updates - Tori

* The amount of the Small Business Grant funds available to individual businesses was raised from $10,000 to $15,000. Businesses were invited to submit further receipts and apply for additional grant funding if they had already received $10,000 or less through a previous application.
* A Press Release went out on Wednesday at 10:00 am, and already 37 applications have been received.
* To date, $268,000 in grant money has been distributed to 31 businesses, and there is $120,000 waiting to be distributed pending approval from the state. Applications for another $120,000 in grant money have been submitted to the state, and there is typically a one- to two-week wait for the state to make a decision. The applications are reviewed by a committee and then presented to City Council for initial approval.
* Meridian City has designated $1 million of CARES Act Funds (which was 1/3 of what was allotted to Meridian City) for these Small Business Grants. The application process closes on December 30th.
* Both buildings in the Old Town Lofts project are moving ahead, especially the southeast building which is set to be completed by the end of first quarter of 2021 or early second quarter.
* FEMA has agreed to act favorably regarding the 9 Mile Flood Plain property.
* Idaho Housing approved Galena’s Civic Block project which will include 60 senior housing units and 40 family workforce units.
* The Union 93 project is projected to add 330 residential units, along with 15,000 square feet of office/retail space and approximately 20,000 square feet of community center space.
* The Keller Associates building construction is also moving forward quickly. When finished, this project will bring 70 jobs to downtown Meridian and will add additional retail space.
* A proposal will be presented to City Council on December 15th requesting an extension to June 2021 for fee waivers for businesses.

1. Discussion on Economic Excellence Forum

* With the stage of COVID restrictions on gatherings moved to 10 or less, this forum would have to be held virtually. As the holidays are fast approaching and Chamber staff is limited, attempting to move forward with a forum before the end of the year does not seem plausible.
* The committee discussed postponing our next Economic Excellence Forum to spring 2021. Since March 2021 would have been the next forum date, the Chamber will begin plans to bring a panel on transportation experts together for this forum.
* At next month’s committee meeting, we will include time in the agenda to hear from the transportation sub-committee on how to educate and build support from the community (utilizing social media platforms such as NextDoor) on the transportation issues Meridian and the Treasure Valley are facing.

1. Update on Meridian Chamber Events – Sean

* The Meridian Chamber virtual Gala went well. Kristin Armstrong’s keynote speech was timely and uplifting. Through our online auction, sales exceeded our goal of $10,000!
* Shop Meridian campaign is still moving forward, kicked off by the auction with our local merchants’ goods and services up for bid, and the Tuesday/Thursday Business Buzz interview programs highlighting local businesses.
* Yard signs, banners have been placed throughout Meridian and digital signs and messaging for the Keep Meridian Healthy and Open for Business campaign are still running. Meridian City offices and the Chamber have received some negative phone calls and social media posts from folks tired of mask mandates/mask wearing, but the Chamber has also heard from restaurant owners that many patrons are not being compliant with the mask-wearing mandates. In an upcoming meeting this Friday, it is anticipated that the Central Health District will put some consequences in place for non-compliance with the mask-wearing mandates.
* The invitation to join the virtual Community Choir has been posted and included in the Chamber newsletter and social media platforms. KBOI/Channel 2 News will begin airing this virtual choir on December 15th. Include the voices of your business/family by following this link: https://meridianchamber.org/communitychoir/
* The Chamber is working on the 2021 budget in preparation for the annual Board Planning Meeting December 17th.
* Preparations are underway for the Leadership Meridian program to begin on January 14, 2021 and run through June. There are 15 applicants for the program which has been re-vamped to include more of a leadership development curriculum and focus.

Next Meeting Date – January 7, 2021

The meeting adjourned at 12:44 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Leverett