



East Palestine Community Improvement Corporation (EPCIC)

October 22, 2024 10:00 A.M.

Minutes

1. **Call to Order:** Chris Page, Linda May, Tom Brittain and Melissa Smith. Jessica Rocco was absent.

Others Present: Law Director David Powers, Mike Jacoby, Brenda Povenski, Jeff LeBeau, Jon Molnar, and Ben Ratner & son.

2. **Minutes:** The minutes of the 9/27/24 meeting were approved on a motion by Mr. Page seconded by Mr. Brittain. Passed unanimously.

3. **Financial Report:** The September financial report showed assets of \$20,342.00 with total profits being \$342.00. Income includes \$275.00 in donations, advertising sales of \$2,360.00. Expenses include \$10.00 in fees from Huntington and the original payment for insurance of \$2,283.00.

4. **New Business:**

- a. **Update Economic Development Plan-** Mike Jacoby of Bricker Grayden stated members were given a draft of an updated economic development plan, adding that the plan will be changing continuously due to resources & feasibility.

- b. **WRL Update-** Jeff LeBeau of WRL stated approximately 100,000 people have visited the CIC website (mostly Ohio & Pennsylvania), the rewards program is over 1000 members. They are also working on promoting the businesses. They are working on an informational brochure for businesses looking to come to EP. Discussion followed as to the vacant building ordinance with Mr. Brittain adding we need it as does every community because it also protects already existing businesses. He noted they are working on a fundraising campaign and forming a small committee to begin the work, they are looking for corporate sponsors and selling ornaments. We will be working with school selling ornaments for \$25 each, profits will be split 50/50 with

them. There will also be a raffle but that is still a work in progress. There was discussion about how to find sponsorships and it was noted that they are in possession of a list from the fundraiser sponsored by the McGee's last year.

c. Downtown Revitalization

1. Depot Updates -Ms. May noted while we have an architect, she feels there needs to be an engineer's report and that while the open house was fine, she feels a Saturday may not be the best option for potential business people to see the space. She feels we should reach out to specific businesses and invite them during a work day. Mr. Brittain said he was disappointed none of the suggestion forms were received back, adding he doesn't like the idea of doing a "study" on a space before knowing what someone wants. He feels we need to figure out what someone wants and then find out what it will take to get it done. He added the money that was gifted to finish the inside isn't going to go very far; it's good landscape building for downtown and should be used for holidays or events for the community. It can't be anything bigger/better than it is now other than it looks good. It's a very small space that needs a ton of work. Ms. Smith feels there is possibility there and it would be mostly in one end of the space, it does need investigation into what it would take to do that. The residents have stated they would like to see a brewery, coffee shop or deli in the space and the architects are working on some concepts. She feels it is doable but it will take a special kind of business that would have a need for warehouse space and come up with other functions that work would work with the space and the community. There are a couple businesses that are possibly interested in the space and if a way can be found to get a head start in the usable space it could happen. Mr. Page added the right entrepreneur with a vision is what the need is and we would be short sighted if we don't figure out a way to make it happen.

2. SS4A Engineer Qualification Review – Mr. Jacoby stated they are going through the statement of qualifications for the engineers to pick the most qualified company.

d. Oct. 30 Columbiana County Port Authority Open House- The Port Authority which is the development authority for Columbiana County will hold an open house on the 30th which will host Lake to River (a Jobs Ohio partner).

e. Oct. 30/31 Small Nations Tour - This is a group out of Bellefontaine Ohio that actively bought/renovated and recruited businesses for those spaces in their community and have had much success. They will be hosting a group of business/property owners from EP on the 30th, they will then be coming here at a later date to make recommendations.

5. **Motion to enter executive session to discuss the relocation, location, expansion, improvement or preservation of a business opportunity -ORC 1724.11 B 1.** Mr. Page made the above motion inviting in Mike Jacoby, Misti Martin, Atty. Dave Powers, Jon Molnar and Jeff LeBeau with no business to follow after. The motion was seconded by Mr. Brittain, passed unanimously.
6. **Return to public session-any board discussion/action-** Mr. Page made a motion to return to regular session seconded by Ms. Smith. Passed unanimously.
7. **Next Meeting** – The next meeting will be a combined Nov/Dec meeting on Tuesday December 10 at 10:00 am.
8. **Adjourn:** Mr. Page made a motion to adjourn the meeting seconded by Mr. Brittain. All in favor, meeting adjourned.

Dr. Jessica Rocco-Secretary