

PRAIRIE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

COLORADO'S CENTRAL PLAINS



Box 202 • Stratton CO 80836 • (719) 348-5562 • FAX (719) 348-5887 • www.prairiedevelopment.com

PRAIRIE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION BOARD MEETING MINUTES March 28, 2012

Call to Order

Chairman Siekman called the Prairie Development Corporation board meeting to order at 7:06 p.m. at the First National Bank of Hugo in Limon, CO. Members in attendance were: Jerry Allen, Rol Hudler, Ed Rarick, Myron Sams, and Mark Snyder. Other attendees included Maryjo Downey, PDC Administrator; Candace Payne, Special Projects Director. Craig Curl, Robert Safranek, and Dorothy Stone were absent.

Minutes

Minutes of the meeting held November 30, 2011, were presented for approval. After review, a motion for approval was made by Rol Hudler and seconded by Myron Sams. The motion carried unanimously.

Financial Report

The Board reviewed a list of bills for November totaling \$113,106.17; December totaling \$23,680.75; January totaling \$7,721.61; and February \$34,427.08. Financial reports for November, December, January and February were also reviewed. Jo Downey shared the current cash balances in both the restricted and unrestricted funds as of February 29, 2012. Myron Sams made a motion to accept the reports as presented and to ratify the bills paid. Jerry Allen seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Business Loan Recommendations

There were no business loan requests to approve.

Housing Recommendations

There were two loans presented for affirmation during the earlier Loan Committee meeting and a third loan for \$10,000 was presented in that earlier meeting and approved. None of the loans needed to come to the full Board as each was under \$25,000.

2011 Enterprise Zone Credits

Jo Downey discussed the Enterprise Zone Certifications report for 2011 that had been included in the board packets. A copy of this report is included with the official file copy of these minutes. In legislative news, two bills that would have limited the amount of credits are now "dead". A third bill that would have severely impacted the eligibility of much of the rural enterprise zone's geographical area was totally amended to mandate the establishment of a task force to study the EZ existing EZ criteria and make recommendations for any needed changes. That bill is expected to pass later in the session.

Status of 2012 EZ Pre-Certification/Electronic Filings

The electronic pre-certification process is overall going well but there are still some small issues that need to be resolved from time to time. Jo stated that the Enterprise Zone educational "rack cards" have been most beneficial is

bringing both tax accountants and tax payers up to speed. The “box ads” that ran for five weeks in selected regional weekly publications were also important in the education process. Both the rack cards and the ads were purchased by ECCOG using funds from the Enterprise Zone Marketing Grant.

Economic Development Brochure(s) Revisions

The four updated ED inserts (one for each county) have been completed and will be used regionally as well as by each county. 5000 of each were printed (using the Enterprise Zone Marketing Grant funds) with 2000 of each of the four brochures given to the respective county. Another 1000 of each are available for individual county use when the current inventory runs low. The remaining 2000 of each will be used by PDC and COG as inserts in the principal “Doing Business” regional economic development brochure. It has been several years since the inserts had been updated and it was important that more recent data be used. The inserts also include language about the Enterprise Zone and the link to www.advancecolorado.com/ez.

Home Sweet Prairies

Jo Downey stated the Home Sweet Prairies website, www.HomeSweetPrairies, is being updated monthly. Danielle Dascalos has arranged for additional publicity on the site including coverage by front-range television. Jo reminded the board that a realty firm must have a physical office in at least one of the four PDC counties to be eligible to participate in the program and any highlighted homes that a firm submits must be located somewhere in the Region. The general purposes of the site are to convey that the four counties have “affordable” housing available and promote the feasibility of home-based businesses as an economic development opportunity.

Our Journey 2012 Campaign

This year the focus will be on “mini-tours” that take travelers from the Denver and Colorado Springs areas on one-day trips to the OJ museums and OBT locations. Development continues on three “themed” tour types with the working names of Photo, History, and Pickers. The tour names could be different on the final brochures. Jo mentioned that this year the two Cheyenne Wells museums will be open by appointment only. Group tour marketing efforts for 2012 will focus on groups such as Red Hats, Senior Citizens, travel clubs, etc. that are usually taking small mini-busses rather than full sized coaches to sites within relatively close proximity to their home base. For example, Danielle will be contacting groups in Lamar as to the possibility of visiting the museums in Cheyenne County. A co-op “advertorial” promoting Colorado’s Central Plains and the Our Journey Program will be in the May-June issue of *Audubon* magazine. Also participating in the advertorial are the Colorado Tourism Office, Southeast Colorado, South Central Colorado, and the State Forrest Service. The PDC/ECCOG region’s portion of the ad campaign is paid for by the Regional Tourism Marketing Grant (and match). A 1000 copy over run of the six page spread will be given to ECCOG for local use. Rol Hudler suggested that ECCOG and PDC also use various regional online newspaper sites to promote Our Journey and Off the Beaten Trail.

Limon House Status

The Limon homes are still for sale with very little interest. Jo has asked the state housing office for permission to waive the income restrictions to get the homes sold. The sales proceeds would go back into the restricted account and PDC could consider adding some of its unrestricted funds to the restricted account since the properties would be sold for less than the actual out-of-pocket costs. At this time, there is no answer from the state office, but the request has been acknowledged and is being considered. There is one interested party in the 741 F Ave. property. This will continue to be pursued by staff. Mark asked if the Board’s willingness to carry some of the purchase price back could be taken into consideration. Candi said that it was. It was also decided to have staff write a newspaper article explaining the Low to Moderate Income levels to improve the interest level in our homes.

Prairie “Real Estate” Update

There have been no changes in the tenants. Discussion of a rent increase was followed by comments that PDC is competitive with the remodeled apartment complex behind the PDC office. It was the consensus of those present that the monthly rent on each of the two apartments should therefore remain at their current level.

CDBG Loan Funds Contract Amendment for Additional Funds

ECCOG Executive Director, Jo Downey, shared that the existing CDBG Loan Fund grant contract has been extended to January 31, 2013. Lincoln County was awarded an additional \$300,000 in capital funds and \$50,000 in supporting administrative funds on behalf of the four county PDC service area. Lincoln County then subcontracts the funds to ECCOG for administration and to PDC for loans.

2012/2013 CDBG Application Process/Time Frame

Downey said that she would finalize a new CDBG Loan Fund grant application in the fall by meeting with each of the four counties and holding a public hearing in each county to address both the closeout of the existing contract and the intent to apply for a new contract. Lincoln County has agreed to once again be the grantee.

SBDC Counseling Update

Candace Payne shared SBDC has been offering various webinars each month in a variety of topics. In June, the Business in Action Forum will be held in Greeley. There may be another similar forum in Sterling in the fall. Candace has five clients currently working on business plans to aid in loan applications. Two businesses would be new to her service area.

Loan Activity Status

PDC currently has five interested parties for business loans. No formal applications have been submitted to date.

Next Meeting Date/Location

The PDC Loan Committee will meet on Wednesday, July 25th at 5:00 p.m. in the board room at First National Bank of Hugo in Limon. Dinner location will be determined later. The regular board meeting will begin at 7 p.m. back at the bank. Any lending decision discussion needed in the interim will be conducted via conference call.

Chairman Siekman declared the meeting adjourned at 7:51 p.m.