



A Grander Vision for the Heartland

Grow Grand Island Committee Meeting

Please complete and email to Nicki Stoltenberg (nickis@grand-island.com) within one week of the meeting.

June 16, 2015, 10 a.m.	5.5 – Local Incentive Fund Committee
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Attending:
Joseph McDermott, Nebraska State Fair
Shaun Schleif, Nebraska State Fair
Diane Wiley, Fonner Park/Heartland Events Center
Tony Schultz, Conestoga Mall
Gene McCloud, Super 8/Best Western
Ken Gnad
Elise Edgar, Chamber of Commerce
Shelley Rystrom, Rystrom Quarter Horses
Cindy Johnson, Chamber of Commerce
Marlan Ferguson, City of Grand Island
Mitch Nickerson, City Councilmember
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TOPIC	DISCUSSION	ACTION / WHO	WHEN
Approval of Minutes.	Minutes from the May 4 meeting were approved unanimously following a motion by _____ and second by _____.		
Introduction of New Members.	Joseph noted that there were new members to the group and introductions were completed. Elise stated she had contacted several food establishments but had limited success in generating interest to attend this meeting. Cindy stated it was likely that a small group would have to visit these business		

	owners face to face at their establishments.		
Establish Criteria for Selection of Food and Beverage Occupation Tax Recipients.	<p>Joseph opened the meeting by noted that currently both the Heartland Public Shooting Park and the Grand Island Livestock Complex Authority had been mentioned as potential tax recipients but that were likely other entities or projects that would be considered for receipt of this revenue. He invited discussion from the group on anticipated requests.</p> <p>Marlan stated that City Administration and the Mayor had identified the following potential needs/uses:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lottery match (\$400,000) 2. Veterans Ball Field Completion 3. Recreational Opportunities (new or existing) 4. Long Term Sustainability of Heartland Events Center 5. Husker Harvest Days Site Improvements 6. Sustainability of Downtown 7. Grow Grand Island Initiatives <p>Mitch stated that the first order of business should be focusing on renewal by the voters of the food and beverage occupation tax as without the tax, the City would lose \$1.5 million/year in revenues and funding for the above would be more difficult to obtain.</p> <p>Cindy spoke in support of establishing criteria in order to ensure that the goals for the funds would be met. Discussion was held on various criteria, including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Regional, state or national show/event 2. Economic Impact of event 3. Calendar (conflict with other events which puts a stress on hotels, restaurants, infrastructure and pushes people out of Grand Island to other communities) 4. "Signature" events with the potential to lead to regional, state or national events and/or events that support key state and local partners. 5. Is it possible to provide a smaller incentive for smaller organizations that might not have a significant economic impact but could be loss leaders? 		
Discussion on Food and Beverage	Discussion was held on the potential to include alcohol sales		

<p>Occupation Tax.</p>	<p>along with food and beverage sales. Marlan noted that Omaha and Lincoln included alcohol sales. This generated a conversation on the importance of engaging impacted businesses (bars) if a change of this nature was made. Diane noted that it might be more palatable to the voters to “continue” the existing tax if no changes were made. It was also noted that if the tax base was broadened to include alcohol, perhaps the rate (1.5%) could be dropped to 1%. The group will determine how many bars would be impacted.</p> <p>Ken stated that linking investment by the business community to the occupation tax would be very powerful.</p>		
<p>Messaging for the City Council and Voting Public.</p>	<p>Marlan stated that the City anticipated placing the issue of continuation of the food and beverage occupation tax on the May 2016 ballot.</p> <p>Gene spoke in support of having a professional poll completed prior to development of the ballot language so the group had a sense of the voters’ reaction to various key points. Discussion was held on the cost for conducting a poll and whether funds could be raised to do so.</p> <p>The group offered the following thoughts for messaging:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What’s in it for me (voter)? 2. How will this impact my property taxes (\$ vs mil levy) Mitch noted that the City had not increased their mil levy for 4 years (.3251) because of increasing sales taxes, occupation taxes, and valuation. 3. A significant portion of the food and beverage tax revenues come from out of towners (can we determine this portion?). This is a strong selling point as ‘the best tax is the one I don’t pay’ is well understood. 4. Sharing the load – (out of town vs Islanders) <p>It was suggested that education was needed on the benefits associated with the State Fair, Husker Harvest and livestock shows (food and beverage revenues, hotel occupation taxes,</p>	<p>City and Chamber to review ballot language from other communities.</p>	<p>July 15</p>

	new businesses, jobs, etc.).		
Key Words and Phrases that Resonate with Voters.	The group identified the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recreation 2. Entertainment 3. Sports 4. Agriculture 5. "Continue" growth and progress 6. Growth and progress 7. Existing tax 		
Next Steps.	Marlan, Cindy, Shaun and city staff will meet to discuss potential ballot language. The ballot language will be presented to the group prior to finalization.	Small group to discuss/develop potential ballot language.	July 15

Next meeting, web site info., other notes, etc.: Next meeting date to be determined . (June 16, 10 a.m.)

Volunteer Hours: 13.5