

**NORTH OGDEN CITY
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES**

October 19, 2021

The North Ogden City Economic Development Committee convened in a regular meeting on October 19, 2021 at 6:32 p.m. The meeting was also held virtually on Zoom. Notice of time, place, and agenda of the meeting was posted on the bulletin board at the municipal office and posted to the Utah State Website on October 15, 2021. Notice of the annual meeting schedule was published in the Standard-Examiner on December 13, 2020.

Committee:

Jay D. Dalpiaz	Committee Chairman	excused
Blake Cevering	City Council Member	excused
Ryan Barker	City Council Member	excused
Brandon Fessler	Committee Member	
David Gordon	Committee Member	
Jenice Jones	Committee Member	via Zoom
Bryan Crowell	Committee Member	

Staff:

S. Neal Berube	Mayor
Jon Call	City Manager/Attorney

Visitors:

Stefanie Casey
Brenda Ashdown (via Zoom)

Committee Member Brandon Fessler called the meeting to order and Committee Member Bryan Crowell offered the invocation and led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. **DISCUSSION AND/OR ACTION TO CONSIDER SEPTEMBER 21, 2021
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

There wasn't a quorum present, so no action was taken on the minutes. The draft would remain posted until the next meeting when there would hopefully be a quorum present to approve it.

ACTIVE AGENDA

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Stefanie Casey appeared seeking feedback on the community beautification program and whether those on the Economic Development Committee knew whether it was achieving its primary goal to bring new businesses to North Ogden. She acknowledged that beautification was very pretty, and everyone seemed to like it, but she wondered specifically if it was bringing in new businesses.

Committee members attempted to respond, but admitted that there was no good tracking strategy to know how many businesses had come to North Ogden as a direct result of the program. Stefanie Casey felt that a strategy could be developed. She wanted to know how effective the expenditure of the money had been in reaching their goal.

A businessperson present addressed the old program, which required business owners to buy planters, benches, garbage cans, etc. in partnership with the City so that they could achieve uniformity. He had had several comments from his customers that they really liked those things. To him, they had been of benefit. He also mentioned that he had heard positive comments about the flowers that were down the street from his business. He felt it would be a checkmark against businesses if those things weren't there.

The subject came up as to whether beautification was the highest and best use of available money. Comments seemed to favor some analysis should take place on that particular point, though it was very hard to measure. Acknowledging that funding coming from the North Ogden Redevelopment Agency (RDA) was going to run out in 2023, the time was now to fine tune its expenditures. Approximately \$30,000 annually had been devoted to the beautification project, which money came from the General Fund.

Stefanie Casey stated that because the RDA money would run out, she wondered if they should be talking about more beautification. Though the concept was a good one, was it the best one? Were there other ideas? Someone stated that if they were going to use beautification toward a specific goal they should leverage it, promote it, and find specific vehicles for doing so. There was some discussion as the committee tried to decide what those vehicles could be. There was also mention of setting priorities for the money—again, they were not sure exactly whether beautification should be the top priority.

Stefanie Casey inquired about the old program in which businesses could buy specific items, made by a specific company, to achieve uniformity throughout the City.

Unfortunately, the company that had been involved moved. The businessperson that had commented earlier mentioned that when he bought a garbage can, he was told it was the very last one.

Uniform benches created a very cohesive look which was really beneficial in branding a city which was geographically spread out. They created unification. There seemed to be consensus that the highest and best use of the money was to drive businesses, and they should try to determine ways to coordinate that into their plan.

A citizen, Brenda Ashdown, spoke. (The audio was faulty and her comments were unintelligible.) She seemed to be inquiring about upkeep on a City building and the use of RDA money for that purpose.

The response to her comment was that the City wanted to develop a Capital Improvements Fund. Numbers were discussed. A question arose how to measure the number of people that came into that facility. Another mentioned that they would rather see RDA money spent on driving business rather than on maintaining facilities, with a development of a Capital Improvements Fund to take care of maintenance costs for facilities.

If the RDA money was not available, money must come from the General Fund, composed of property and sales tax revenues. All property tax was assigned to public safety. Money that came from sales tax went elsewhere, but if it was not enough they would have to raise property taxes. As for the facility Brenda Ashdown mentioned, someone commented that they had recently produced some ideas to double book events to make more money. They understood they had to work their way toward breaking even.

Committee Member Jones gave her opinion on how beautification benefits North Ogden. She mentioned that things done in the past for this purpose could be done again. The City had gone to marketing seminars on how to court businesses. A video had been created teaching how to use various sales pitches. All of that could be done again. She mentioned that beautification pulls a city together. It makes it look like a city that cares. Aestheticism couldn't necessarily be measured in terms of its direct ability to attract businesses, but any business would prefer to be in a city that cares enough to be beautiful.

Someone mentioned that he had been involved in developing grocery stores and Ace Hardware stores in various cities. He stated that what Committee Member Jones had mentioned about aestheticism was a tie breaker. He had never been involved in a discussion as to where to locate a business in which the beauty of a city was a direct determinant. The beauty of a city promotes a type of feel, and people wanted to be

engaged in that type of culture, though typically it was other things like tax breaks that directly affected a decision.

The question was asked where North Ogden's manufacturing district was, to which City Manager/Attorney Call answered that it was a very small one, to the west of Mrs. Cavanaugh's. The City didn't really have a manufacturing district, but if they had someone interested in moving there, they could figure something out. Admittedly, they had a shortage of space.

A discussion began regarding North Ogden's destination versus pass-through status. It was located between two mountains and traffic didn't flow through it, rather it went to it. Other cities had pass-through transportation routes, making them better suited for more industrial businesses. North Ogden's General Plan had never anticipated that industrial interests would want to come there.

Stefanie Casey recalled that some discussion had taken place previously about a commercial development on 2700 North, where there was an existing detention basin. Zion's Bank had come to show the benefits of having development there, and what it could look like. The problem was that they would have to have the detention basin until they could create a new one.

Currently, the City had only 6.6 acres available for commercial development. Sometimes developers came in asking to put residential developments into that space. But 6.6 was very little space, and even though a Target (for example) would be a welcome business, they took up 20-30 acres of space because of their large parking needs. Another business that would do well was Trader Joes, but they were also very particular in where they chose to locate. Businesses like those two big ones were likely never to come to North Ogden, but the need for businesses that would bring in big sales tax revenue still existed.

Misinformation existed regarding what draws a business to a community. The amount of roofs was not the only consideration—traffic flow was also critical. North Ogden had challenges in traffic flow, but that didn't need to stop them. The plaza by Kurt's Drive-In was an example given. As a prime piece of commercial property, some RDA money was used there to retrofit facades and they had drawn some high paying tenants as a result.

The concept of return on investment was mentioned. Interest in North Ogden seems to be increasing. They needed to know what was coming in order to predict sales tax revenues. For example, business suites where accountants, dentists, and engineers like to do business do not bring in much sales tax revenue, but they were popular in North Ogden. This was likely because they do not need to be on the freeway to be successful.

The Layton Amphitheatre was mentioned as a successful venture, not because it generated a lot of sales tax revenue by itself, but because when people came there for entertainment, they ate dinner and bought drinks, which generates sales tax revenue. This

discussion led to the statement of North Ogden's central problem: How to attract people to and get them to spend money in North Ogden.

City Manager/Attorney Call stated that there were no more public comments.

3. **INTRODUCTION OF NEW COMMITTEE MEMBER**

New Committee Member Bryan Crowell was introduced as a seasoned business executive. He was raised in North Ogden and his parents and brothers still lived there. He graduated from high school in North Ogden, and had higher education consisting of a bachelor's degree in physics and an MBA. He worked for Intermountain Health Care for some time and they were still using a lot of his ideas. He was currently a senior officer with Peterson's. He authored a book titled *Own the Gap*. He has a lot of expertise in generating and growing business.

4. **DISCUSSION ON THE "WHY" BEHIND EDC'S MISSION**

The group shifted their discussion to the "why" of having an economic development committee. They attempted to identify North Ogden's economic identity. For example, they noted that Harrisville's identity was manufacturing, and that Park City focused on boutiques and skiing. It seemed that they could not just attract any kind of business, but should try to attract those whose identity the community was naturally inclined toward. What did the citizens identify their community with?

North Ogden seemed to be looked at as an upper class city that was rural in nature. It had a homey, welcoming, family feel. The group felt it was inclusive. It was a beautiful area surrounded by mountains, and not overly commercial. Additionally, it was a recreational hot spot with many people coming to enjoy hiking and mountain biking. The trailheads were very popular.

A comment was made that the trailheads were nothing to be proud of, and didn't represent the City well. They consisted solely of porta-potties and gravel. A lot could be done to improve them.

It was important to ascertain the identity so they could go after the appropriate businesses that fit that identity. For example, perhaps they could attract a backcountry retailer.

Ogden also had an identity in composites, such as the Salomon Center. Another business that came up in the discussion was the North Ogden Cannery. Someone also mentioned how important it was that they protect their hillsides as an economic draw to the area for hiking and mountain biking.

With repeated mention of the trails, the discussion shifted to what it would look like if they chose trailheads to focus on. Costs associated with trailheads could be in the \$500,000 range. They could set a goal to raise that money specifically for trailheads as a way to establish more fully the outdoor identity of North Ogden. They could market their fabulous trailheads, and businesses that cater to the outdoors crowd would take notice and come to North Ogden.

Businesses had a hard time retaining employees. Businesses that recruited based on great outdoor opportunities were likely to get employees who wanted that in their lives and would be more likely to stay. Skiing was a big draw in addition to hiking and mountain biking. Outdoor opportunities were family-friendly, and North Ogden was a family-friendly town. It was safe and clean. People would rather not commute, and North Ogden had what they would need to live right there and not commute.

What do mountain bikers want to do before and after a hike? Perhaps they wanted a nice breakfast and a nice lunch. Attract those kinds of eating establishments and the economic benefit would increase.

Someone mentioned that good parks could attract people, too. Barker Park was mentioned as a piece of property North Ogden had owned for 20 years, but the cost of development would be staggering. The City could not swallow that pill all at once. Generally, North Ogden's parks were not really attractive, and that might be something they should look at. As an example, South Ogden has put in a very nice big park, and people were choosing South Ogden as a result.

Other parks that were mentioned were Orton Park and Wadman Park, along with parks that were associated with detention basins.

Someone asked about the potential for the amphitheater. The outlook for its ability to generate money for the City was bleak, though they did have some rental agreements in place. It would need lighting and a sound system to really draw money-making events, but it had a very low operating budget. A big problem was parking space. City Manager/Attorney Call reported only 125 parking spaces, in addition to what was on the street and in neighboring lots such as the LDS Church and a vacant field. Though lights and sound were needed, if money was spent on them, it would not be the highest and best use of the money. Amphitheaters, as a rule, were just not high revenue generators. Upgrade costs could exceed \$2 million, and where would the City get that money in light of other issues such as parks and trailheads that also needed money? Nevertheless, an art guild was interested in working with the City to produce ideas for that venue, and the idea-generating process would continue to move forward.

Committee Member Jones revisited improvement of trailheads, asking if those in North Ogden were coordinated with Weber Pathways. They were. She wondered if grant writing for the amphitheater could have trailheads attached to them somehow.

Acknowledging the possibility, City Manager/Attorney Call felt that it would be very important to check all the right boxes on any grant application.

Someone mentioned that a meeting was coming up on the following Monday to generate some new ideas. Cherry Days was an example of the type of activity that could be increased. Improvement money was always the challenge, but coordination was important so more people knew what was being tried.

The EDC delved into so many different things because they were a recommending committee for the City Council. They needed businesses which generated sales tax revenue in order to balance the tax base, which in North Ogden was mostly made up of property tax money. How about hiring a marketing firm? At one time the City had done that, and it didn't work as hoped.

In summary, there were multiple avenues that could be pursued for the desired outcome as follows:

- Branding strategies
- Supporting existing businesses
- Bringing in new businesses that could generate sales tax revenue

They discussed how to get people to spend more money in North Ogden. They determined they needed to have a unified goal.

Committee Member Jones expressed a desire to focus on supporting businesses that were already in place, and she suggested it wouldn't take too much money to do so. Someone suggested that whenever a new business came to town the EDC and the Mayor should go there to welcome them and show support. What would that support look like? People drive to fancier restaurants in nearby towns. How could they change that? Someone mentioned a type of restaurant day in the park, where local restaurants could bring in some kind of mini-menu to buy from, thus exposing the public to the good food available right in North Ogden.

Stefanie Casey mentioned past bands the City paid to come to the amphitheater. A business had helped sponsor one of them and had given away free hotdogs. She felt free food negated the purpose, and that a better plan would have been to promote the dinner and ice cream restaurants that were in the City so people would have stopped and spent money somewhere in town.

Someone posed the question, "What do you think is the most unique business in North Ogden?" Several businesses were mentioned such as The Creamery, The Quilting Store, and Kurt's Drive In. The common theme seemed to be nostalgia. People drive to North Ogden for those specific businesses.

The discussion kept returning to the amphitheater. They would continue to utilize it as best as they could, learning from mistakes such as free food and expensive bands. Advertising was discussed. They felt they had good advertising as businesses along the traffic routes were willing and had posted billboards. As the amphitheater was a bit out of the way, in the future they could encourage food trucks to be present on the nights of performances.

The night's discussions had prompted several ideas for homework on the subject.

5. **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no additional public comments.

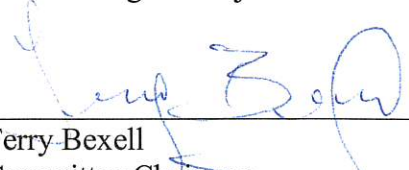
6. **COMMITTEE/MAYOR/STAFF COMMENTS**

City Staff had written an economic development plan about ten years ago. It was suggested that should be accessed and analyzed for any ideas that were still good ones and to assess any progress that had been made. City Manager/Attorney Jon Call stated he would e-mail that document and a zoning map to everyone on the Committee.

During this meeting, someone accessed that document and read that it stated North Ogden had "good roads," something he felt was no longer the case. Also mentioned was a City brand, which had never happened. More could also be made of the fact that Ogden had a regional airport. The document could provide a good foundation to build on.

7. **ADJOURNMENT**

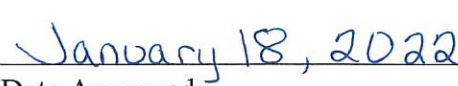
The meeting was adjourned at 7:49 p.m.



Terry Bexell
Committee Chairman



Joyce Pierson
Deputy City Recorder



Date Approved