



2017 Community Contributions

The annual strategic Planning Meeting was held at the Pender Community Fire Hall meeting room on February 21, 2017. There were 15 community members in attendance, with the meeting being facilitated by Mandy Hansen from NMPP. The majority of the time we discussed housing concerns and issues with housing in the community. Mandy has updated the notes from this meeting and data was distributed to the Board and all members present.

****UPDATE****The Lower Elkhorn NRD grant for toddler equipment for the City Park was submitted prior to the deadline in early March. The equipment they are hoping to have placed will cost over \$40,000. The grant could assist with a \$10,000 maximum award. This grant was awarded for \$10,000.

The Thurston County Law Enforcement Center landscaping grant is under way. Building construction is moving along as planned with opening date scheduled for August 2017. The Green Team met on March 13th to review the drawings and plans for the landscaping area. Planting plans are moving forward. This grant will include many hours of local sweat equity. We should be ready to start moving dirt and composting in mid-late August. Volunteers should contact Diann Ballard if interested in assisting.

****UPDATE****The PCD, Inc. Board and the Village Council Board both voted to move forward with the revised application for Down Town Revitalization. The application had to be completely updated from the prior year submission. We revised the commerce area, reviewed all empty buildings, compiled updated data on Palace Lofts, Thurston County Law Enforcement Center, Logan Valley Cottages, Towne Centre Apartments, Cross Roads Lodge, Rosey's Mexican Restaurant, the old Daum Building, etc. This grant was submitted the end of March. The planning grant of \$30,000 was awarded.

****UPDATE****A new grant will be submitted to the Gardner Foundation for assistance with the Pender Community Center. This grant is requesting \$100,000 to be used in any number of areas that may spark the interest of the Foundation. This grant will be submitted in early April. This grant was submitted and denied.

The Thurston County Tourism Committee has been busy. We have over \$6,000 in funds to be distributed. I have forwarded grant applications; recruited replacement members; work with the County Board to appoint this replacement; promoted the grants; and worked with Committee members. We are hopeful to get more applications coming in to utilize these funds.

Research assistance was provided to the Thurston County Board to determine what is available for grant assistance for equipment for the new Law Enforcement Center. Throughout the month of July, Diann worked extensively on compiling the Business Retention and Expansion survey data and scheduling appointments. Deb Egelston and Kelly Gewecke from DED and Mandi Hansen from NMPP were all in town on July 31 and August 1 to assist with the 22 scheduled visits. All data that was collected will be compiled by DED and a report will be sent to me when available. I will share this data with the Board and area businesses.

The first "Shop Local" Event occurred on September 7th. We had nine local businesses participate. Three businesses hosted home based businesses and all businesses were open from 5:00pm – 8:00pm. I visited most of the businesses during the event and they all had a steady stream of customers. I spoke with each of the businesses afterwards, and all but the Thriftique will be participating in the October event on the 5th. We will do this again in November the evening of the pancake supper hosted by the Chamber.

The Summer Rec group is researching the idea to get a new ball field. They contacted me regarding writing grants. I did some research for them on the Nebraska Game & Parks grant. This is a nice grant but a large project, it required Environmental studies, architectural drawings, and a developer – none of which they had in place and the grant was due the first week in October. They may still work on this for a future grant – they are on an annual award cycle. The second grant was from the College World Series. I completed and submitted this grant for them for fencing in the dugout areas and a new back stop at Heyne Field. The grant request was for \$10,000 and awards will be announced in January.

Diann continues to work with Mandi Hansen from NMPP. Their most recent program has been LED lighting for businesses. However, some power companies sometimes will do a programmable thermostat program, to assist with energy consumption during peak hours and also to reduce consumer's energy bill. I checked into this with the Mandi and this is not a program that they have done in the past. She will check to see if this can be something that is done in the future.