



Development District of Central Texas

Board of Directors

Central Texas Council of Governments 2180

North Main Street, Belton, Texas 76513

Thursday, July 6, 2023—9:30 AM

Board Members Present:

Jamie LaDuke: Hamilton EDC

Dean Roome: Bartlett Municipal Development District

Jim Gibson: Rockdale Municipal Development District

Jason Johnson: JJ Realty Group

Ginger Watkins: Cameron Industrial Foundation

Dexter Morris: City of Mullin

Charley Ayres: Workforce Solutions of Central Texas

Stacey Ybarra: Lampasas Economic Development Corporation

Others Present:

Anna Barge: CTCOG

Dominic Elizondo: CTCOG

Hope Geiger: KTMPO

Connie Quinto: CTCOG

Anita Janke: KTMPO

MINUTES

1. **Call to Order.** The meeting was called to order by Ginger Watkins, Chair of the Board, at 9:30 AM. A quorum was present.

2. **Public Comments.** No public comments were made.

3. **Staff Updates.**

Dominic Elizondo gave an update about CTCOG activities, including the application for an IEDC Economic Development Fellow, Newly Elected Officials Class successes, Leadership Central Texas class with 13 class members. Additionally, staff are working on the administration and application for EDA and TxCDBG Community Development Fund grants. The Central Texas Public Transportation Summit event was a success. Mr. Elizondo also provided economic updates for Q2 2023, noting that the unemployment rate went up almost a percentage point.

4. **Discussion and Action Item:** Regarding Approval of Meeting Minutes from the April 6th, 2023 Meeting.

Dean Roome made a motion to approve the minutes, and it was seconded by Dexter Morris; the motion passed unanimously.

5. Discussion and Action Item: Regarding Texas A&M Central Texas Research Park Presentation

Russ Porter of Texas A&M University-Central Texas, VP for Research, Economic Development and Innovation of presented about the upcoming Research Park. They average over a million dollars a year in external funding for research. The Research Park is focusing on technology research specifically with chips, AI, and machine learning. They are also in the process of renovating a building in downtown Killeen for a military transition program. They are applying for an EDA Tech Hubs grant for \$4-60 million for the park to increase prime age employment.

6. Discussion Item: Regarding 2022-2026 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Implementation

Dominic Elizondo discussed the CEDS objective “strengthening the conditions of growth for new and existing businesses”.

Mr. Elizondo presented the first strategy which was to start a broadband advisory council. Dominic gave some broadband updates which are also in Anna’s broadband update below.

The next strategy Mr. Elizondo presented was “develop a regional water/sewer plan prioritizing investments needed for industry growth. We opened for discussion on what the board’s priorities area. Ginger Watkins gave her opinion stating this is more of a local issue and technical assistance might be how the DDCT can help, especially with making local governments aware of resources and funding options. There was additional discussion by board members about how local governments know where their needs are for their water and sewer systems. The real issue is needing quality funding. There was sentiment that small towns do not want to do a regional plan. Local governments will reach out with assistance they need.

The third strategy Mr. Elizondo presented was “identify and prepare additional sites for industrial and distribution facilities; conduct site assessment and preliminary site design to aid in prioritization and site marketing”. Mr. Elizondo highlighted that this should be an EDC role. Some members mentioned they already have sites identified and some need funding for site selection. Members highlighted that some areas do not want growth.

The fourth strategy Mr. Elizondo presented was “build on momentum of the Research Park to further cultivate high tech industry clusters; study the potential to develop a broader “innovation zone” with the Park as its hub.” Mr. Elizondo mentioned the Tech Hubs Grant Program for a future project.

The fifth strategy Mr. Elizondo presented was “create a regional outreach effort to promote entrepreneurial opportunities to Fort Cavazos personnel transitioning into the civilian workforce, with a focus on defense contractor opportunities”. Mr. Elizondo updated board members with the plan of doing a resource fair for veteran entrepreneurs. Some board members felt like this sounded redundant.

The sixth strategy Mr. Elizondo presented was “collaborate with Tesla to connect local businesses to related supply chain opportunities.” Mr. Elizondo discussed how this objective is not a high priority and he would try to get a speaker from Tesla.

The seventh strategy Mr. Elizondo presented was “Encourage greater utilization of Procurement Technical Assistance Centers to help local businesses capture greater federal procurement opportunities and Fort Cavazos economic impact; host education/awareness events in collaboration with PTACs”. Mr. Elizondo and Ms. Barge updated on trying to reach out to our PTAC about doing a class in our region.

The eighth strategy Mr. Elizondo presented was “promote digital literacy in small businesses, leveraging existing training models. Mr. Elizondo mentioned he is trying to build a toolkit for this strategy.

7. Discussion Item: Regarding Updates on Regional Broadband Initiatives

Anna Barge updated on the state’s new broadband programs including the Regional Working Group. Uryan Nelson is now the leader of the Central Texas Regional Working Group which comprises CTCOG, HOTCOG, BVCOG areas. She gave updates on the State Digital Opportunity Plan including the public meeting and surveys. Mrs. Barge also gave updates on the BEAD program receiving the Texas allocation.

8. Discussion Item: Regarding Federal and State Legislative Updates Pertaining to Economic Development

Anna Barge discussed bills about water, certificates of obligation, broadband, agenda posting among others.

9. Discussion Item: Regarding Updates on Grant Opportunities

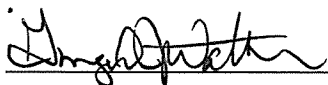
Dominic Elizondo provided an update on State and Federal grant opportunities and their eligible projects and match, including the TxCDBG Community Development Fund and Downtown Revitalization Program, the EDA Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance Programs, Recompete Pilot Program, MPDG Program, and the Tech Hubs Program.

10. Board of Directors' Comments.

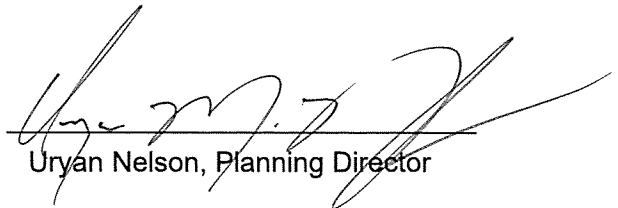
Jamie LaDuke brought up that the HOP will no longer be providing transportation services to the City of Hamilton since the city voted to not provide financial support. There was discussion of public transportation issues in our region, funding and feasibility, and micro transit.

11. Discuss agenda items for next meeting on Thursday, October 5th, 2023, at 9:30 AM.

12. Adjourned at 11:04 AM



Ginger Watkins, DDCT Chair



Uryan Nelson, Planning Director

