



## MINUTES

### THE HONDO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION, (HEDC) CITY OF HONDO TYPE B ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

HEDC REGULAR BOARD MEETING  
700 Vandenberg  
Airport Board Room  
Hondo, Texas 78861

November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2024 at 7:00 A.M.

#### BOARD MEMBERS' BUSINESS

#### 1. Roll Call for Quorum & Call to Order.

Chair J. Gruber, Vice- Chair Ronnie Miller, Treasurer Brett Riff, Secretary Ashley Lowe, Rachel Ramirez & Rose Mary Mares

Absent: Roger Hernandez

“President J. Gruber called the meeting to order at 7:01 a.m.”

#### 2. Public Forum

No comments were made by a visitor

#### 3. Consent Agenda

3.1) Approval of Minutes from the October 2024 meeting.

3.2) Approval of Minutes from the November 2024 Special Board meeting.

**Action item:** Motion to approve the Consent Agenda

Brett Riff made a motion to approve consent agenda. Rachel Ramirez promptly seconded. Motion carried 6-0.

#### 4. Items of Discussion:

4.1) Review of YTD Revenue & Expenses.

Executive Director – Sean Patty presented a very brief look at the first month of revenue & expenses. A more complete look will be available from City Finance Dept at the next Board Meeting.

## 4.2) Presentation of Das Greenhaus Business Incubator Program (Justin McKenzie)

Executive Director Justin McKenzie provided a comprehensive overview of the programming, resources, and opportunities available through Das Greenhaus to support entrepreneurship and business development in small towns like Hondo. He emphasized the importance of community involvement, mentorship, and education in fostering local innovation and economic growth.

Key highlights included:

### 1. **Educational Programming:**

- Das Greenhaus partners with schools to implement Incubator programs across elementary, middle, and high school levels. These include engaging initiatives like Lemonade Days for younger students, aimed at introducing entrepreneurship at an early age.
- McKenzie encouraged Hondo ISD to expand its adoption of these programs and stressed the importance of community support and business leader engagement to ensure their success.
- He also highlighted the potential of Career and Technical Education (CTE) programming to celebrate trades and provide pathways for local youth to succeed in skilled professions.

### 2. **Entrepreneurial Support:**

- Das Greenhaus offers a wide array of services to small businesses, including personalized mentoring, business planning assistance, and access to community mentors.
- They provide training on topics such as digital media, social media management, and marketing strategies, including step-by-step guidance for establishing an online presence.
- McKenzie underscored the importance of ensuring entrepreneurs are well-prepared before pursuing funding through the SBA or other channels.

### 3. **Media and Storytelling:**

- Recognizing the power of visibility, McKenzie shared his work in amplifying local business stories through platforms like the *Building Texas* show. These efforts aim to highlight entrepreneurs and Main Street retailers, often leading to new opportunities and investments.
- He stressed the importance of having local media present at community meetings to accurately reflect ongoing initiatives and successes.

### 4. **Community and Collaboration:**

- The presentation emphasized the need for accessible resources and collaboration between local stakeholders, including chambers of commerce, EDCs, and educators, to drive meaningful change.
- McKenzie noted examples of successful community initiatives in nearby towns, such as Comfort and Bandera, and encouraged Hondo to leverage its unique strengths and supportive community culture for growth.

### 5. **Challenges and Opportunities:**

- He acknowledged challenges in small towns, such as finding available mentors and resources, but highlighted the potential to tailor solutions for Hondo's specific needs.

- The broader Hill Country region, including Medina County, is well-positioned for managed growth, with opportunities to create innovative, customized solutions for businesses and residents alike.
- 6. Personal Connection and Vision:**
- McKenzie expressed his personal connection to the area and his optimism for Hondo's potential, citing the community's spirit and willingness to invest in its people and future.

McKenzie concluded by reinforcing the need for tailored approaches to support innovation and prosperity in Hondo and offered his continued partnership to help the city and region achieve their goals.

#### 4.3) Presentation of City of Hondo Park Concept Plan. (City Manager – John Naron)

Hondo City Manager John Naron provided a detailed update on the development of the city park near Castro Avenue, focusing on new and upgraded baseball fields and surrounding amenities. The presentation emphasized the city's commitment to efficient resource use and engaging the community in the park's ongoing transformation.

##### **Key Points**

##### **Current Development:**

The parks department significantly reduced costs by performing work in-house and sourcing materials locally. For example, a fence project estimated at \$70,000 was completed for \$13,000. The new regulation-size baseball field is suitable for older players. Two fields are being equipped with LED lighting at \$61,000 and \$63,000 per field, excluding labor, designed for ease of installation and maintenance.

##### **Proposed Amenities:**

A walking trail around the soccer field will connect to other park areas, creating a 1.2-1.5 mile loop ideal for events like 5K runs. Facility upgrades include renovating an existing building into a concession stand, two bathrooms, and a large deck with picnic tables; the building will be handicap-accessible. Future potential additions include a batting cage, pickle ball court, volleyball area, and a playground near the parking lot. Plans also involve paving the parking lot and unifying building colors to simplify maintenance and resist graffiti.

##### **Community Involvement:**

The city is exploring sponsorships or investments for park components, offering recognition opportunities through signage or branding.

##### **Timeline and Goals:**

The immediate goal is to complete the lighting and prepare the fields for use by March, with other upgrades to follow as funding and resources become available.

**Future Vision:**

Concepts include closing nearby streets to create pedestrian-friendly spaces, adding decorative features like brickwork and arches, and naming the field based on council decisions. Naron encouraged community feedback for further enhancements, emphasizing a thoughtful, phased approach to development. While no funding is currently requested, reimbursement opportunities may be explored post-project completion. This plan reflects a commitment to creating a sustainable, inclusive, and vibrant community space.

**4.4) Update on Open Rewards Program. (EDC Director – Sean Patty)**

Executive Director Sean Patty provided an update on the Blu-Dot Open Rewards program, highlighting its success and economic impact on the community.

**Key Metrics:**

- **Program Funds:** \$7,500 was deposited into the program, with \$4,387 currently remaining.
- **Economic Impact:** Total associated purchases through the program have reached nearly \$60,000.
- **User Engagement:** The program has attracted 259 active users.
- **Monthly Growth:** Economic activity through Blu-Dot showed steady increases, with October purchases totaling \$24,000 and November surpassing \$32,000.

**Program Success:**

The program has been remarkably effective compared to similar initiatives in other communities. Key metrics and performance indicators are shared regularly via dashboards and reports, providing transparency and encouraging continued participation.

**Storytelling and Promotion:**

Board Director Brett Riff suggested leveraging the program's success by embedding reports or screenshots of KPIs on the Hondo EDC website. This would allow stakeholders, the public, and media outlets to access real-time or periodic updates, showcasing the program's impact. Regular social media updates, such as weekly highlights of local retailers participating in the program, have also been effective in promoting engagement.

**5. Executive Director Report**

No comments were made

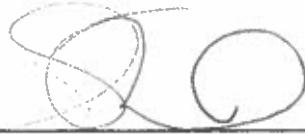
**6. Directors Comments.**

No comments were made

**7. Adjourn.**

A motion was made by Rose Mary Mares to adjourn the meeting, Brett Riff promptly seconded and the meeting was adjourned at 8:12 a.m

**Attest:**



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**Ashley Lowe**

**Board Secretary**

On 12/19/24, 2024