



THE HONDO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION, (HEDC)
Meeting Minutes

Type of Meeting: Regular Meeting
Date and Time: Thursday, January 16th, 2025 7:00 a.m.
Location: South Texas Regional Airport Board Room
700 Vandenberg Road, Hondo, TX 78861

1. Determination of Quorum

1.1 Call to Order

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

“President J. Gruber called the meeting to order at 7:03 a.m.”

2. **Public Forum:** *Upon recognition by the Chair, persons desiring to address the Board may speak on any topic not to exceed three (3) minutes in length. Board Members are prohibited from deliberation on any item presented but may recommend placement on a future agenda for discussion.*

No comments were made by a visitor.

3. **Consent Agenda:** *All consent items are considered to be routine and will be enacted by one motion. If requested by a Board Member, any item may be taken off the Consent Agenda by the Chair for individual consideration.*

4.1 Approval of December 19th, 2024 regular meeting minutes.

“Ronnie Miller made a motion to approve consent agenda. Rose Mary Mares promptly seconded.”

4. Consider Items: Consider and take any action necessary

4.1 Business Incubator Program – Justin McKenzie (Das Greenhaus)

Business Incubator Program Presentation

Justin McKenzie delivered a detailed presentation on the **Business Incubator Program** and introduced the **Connect Platform**, a virtual tool designed to connect Hondo to statewide entrepreneurial and workforce development ecosystems. Below are the key points discussed:

1. **Overview of the Connect Platform:**

- A virtual platform linking Hondo to statewide networks, including The Cannon in Houston, the North Texas Collective (Addison, Plano, Frisco), and San Antonio’s ecosystem.
- Designed to support local entrepreneurs, workforce development, and municipal growth initiatives.



2. **Platform Features and Benefits:**
 - **Closed Community Groups:** Modeled after Facebook groups but in a professional environment.
 - **Curriculum and Mentorship:** Tailored programs for entrepreneurial students, workforce development, and adult education.
 - **Learning Management System (LMS):** Offers online training and certification programs for students, parents, and professionals.
 - **Event Hosting and Community Engagement:** Provides tools to promote local news, events, and activities to the broader community and stakeholders.
3. **Economic and Community Impacts:**
 - Facilitates **talent attraction** by providing a platform for employers to advertise and engage.
 - Enhances **tax revenue growth** by fostering entrepreneurial ecosystems and encouraging workforce retention.
 - Strengthens **social and cultural connections** through professional networks, community events, and digital storytelling.
4. **Integration with Hondo's Assets:**
 - The platform's aerospace-focused initiatives align with Hondo's airport and potential economic growth in the aerospace sector.
 - Partnerships with organizations like Geekdom in San Antonio and the Texas Space Commission will further solidify Hondo's role in global innovation networks.
5. **Grant Opportunities:**
 - Collaboration with the Texas Space Commission for grant funding to support space-related economic development.
 - Access to data-driven insights to strengthen future grant applications and partnerships.
6. **Implementation Strategy:**
 - Initial deployment includes branding the platform for the City of Hondo and integrating it into ISD programs, community groups, and local businesses.
 - Focus on measurable outcomes, including program participation, workforce impact, and community engagement metrics.

Funding Proposal:

- Implementation Fee: Covers customization, community outreach, and year-long deployment support.
- Justin emphasized the importance of a letter of recommendation from HEDC to bolster grant applications and demonstrate Hondo's commitment to the program.

Board Discussion:

- **Support for the Initiative:** Board members expressed enthusiasm for the platform's potential to enhance Hondo's economic development and community outreach.

Action Item: Brett Riff made a motion to approve expenditures for the Business Incubator Program (Connect Platform) in the amount of \$5,000 for the Implementation Fee. Rose Mary Mares promptly seconded the motion. Motion carried 7-0.

4.2 Academic Jump Start Program

Item was tabled for future discussion. No action taken.



5. Discussion Items: Discuss with no formal action to be taken

5.1 Downtown Storefront & Development Strategy – Rik Adamski – President of Ash+Lime

Rik Adamski presented innovative approaches to downtown revitalization, drawing from a wealth of successful projects across Texas and beyond. He began with Monty Anderson’s transformative work, including Tyler Station in Dallas, a 110,000-square-foot industrial building repurposed into a thriving mixed-use development. This space now hosts co-working offices, retail shops, breweries, art studios, and light industrial businesses, providing a vibrant, multi-functional hub for the community.

Adamski emphasized the importance of breaking large spaces into smaller, affordable units to attract a diverse range of tenants, reduce entry barriers, and foster community engagement. He showcased the Grow DeSoto Market Place, a former strip mall reimagined as a business incubator featuring small, unique retail spaces, as well as renderings of the Montgomery Ward building in Corsicana, TX, revitalized into a creative and functional community asset.

A key focus was on empowering local developers through coaching and education. Adamski highlighted Neighborhood Evolution’s "12 Steps for Small Developers," a program designed to guide participants through the incremental development process. This initiative covers legal, financial, and operational steps, equipping local talent with the tools needed to tackle revitalization projects and encouraging long-term, sustainable community-driven growth.

Adamski stressed the significance of local investment, creative problem-solving, and a commitment to incremental change. His presentation was framed as an introduction to a potential revitalization framework for Hondo’s downtown area, using these principles to maximize the impact of available resources. He invited feedback from the board, encouraging a thoughtful exploration of these strategies as a foundation for local development.

6. Standing Reports

6.1 Financial Report

Reference was made to the Board Packet for review of monthly sales tax and General Ledger Detail vs. Budget. In February of 2025, Chris Hill will provide a 1st quarter update on the financials.

6.2 Executive Director Report

No report was provided.



7. Topics for Future Meetings: Board/Staff discussion

The Executive Director committed to presenting the completed annual report and the six priorities identified in the HEDC's strategic plan during the next board meeting. The goal is to enable the board to collectively prioritize these six focus areas, aligning their efforts for maximum impact.

Board members expressed interest in refreshing their understanding of the strategic plan to better connect emerging opportunities to these established priorities. The Director acknowledged the request and assured the board that the strategic plan would be revisited in detail at the upcoming meeting.

8. Executive Session: As authorized by the Texas Open Meetings Act, Texas Government Code Section 551.001, the Board may enter into a closed Executive Session at any time concerning any and all subjects and for any and all purposes permitted by the Act, including, but not limited to, the following:

- 8.1 Section 551.071 - Consultation with the Board's attorney
- 8.2 Section 551.072 - Deliberation regarding the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property
- 8.3 Section 551.074 - Deliberation on personnel matters
- 8.4 Section 551.087 - Deliberation regarding economic development negotiations

9. Actions Resulting from Executive Session

The Board did not convene to Executive Session.

10. Adjournment

A motion was made by Ronnie Miller to adjourn the meeting. Roger Hernandez promptly seconded and the meeting was adjourned at 8:11 a.m.

ATTEST:

Ashley Lowe, Board Secretary

On 2/20/25