



Montgomery Economic Development Corporation
Regular Meeting Minutes
December 17, 2024 at 6:00 PM

CALL TO ORDER

The Regular Meeting of Montgomery Economic Development Corporation was called to order by Jeff Angelo at 6:00 p.m. on December 17, 2024, at City Hall 101 Old Plantersville Rd. Montgomery, TX and live video streaming.

With the Board Members present a quorum was established.

Present: Arnette Easley, Vice President
Carol Langley, Treasurer
Dan Walker, Board Member
Jeff Angelo, President
Ryan Londeen, Secretary
Casey Olson, Board Member

Absent: Wade Nelson, Board Member

PUBLIC FORUM

No public comments were presented for this meeting.

REGULAR AGENDA

1. **Consideration and possible action on the Regular Meeting Minutes of October 15, 2024 and Special Meeting Minutes of November 07, 2024.**

Discussion was held among the Board about making the minutes brief and not so lengthy. The Board indicated that verbatim minutes are time consuming.

City Secretary Beaven recommended summary motion minutes since the video recording is available, and explained the summary motion minutes are not too brief and are not verbatim minutes. The boards consensus was to try summary motion minutes since the video is backup.

Motion: Board Member Langley made a motion to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of October 15, 2024 and Special Meeting Minutes of November 07, 2024, as presented. Board Member Walker seconded the motion. Motion carried with all present voting in favor.

2. **Consideration and possible action on awarding the Re-Branding Initiative from among the bid proposals.**

President Angelo highlighted that the Montgomery Economic Development Corporation was looking to create a branding initiative that sort of rebranded our logos

for the for the entire city along with merchandise that captured the trademark for the birthplace of Montgomery or birthplace of the Texas flag.

President Angelo explained he was tasked with the job of finding a graphics group that could accommodate that. He received 15 or 20 responses from graphics groups who wanted to participate. He chose the top three or four that would have the greatest opportunity. President Angelo stated, the one at the very top, Ayesha Ahmed, has done a phenomenal job with rebranding Round Rock Texas, her proposal shows her capabilities and also happens to be the most reasonable with a bid price of \$1,500.

President Angelo stated all he really needed is the go ahead since we have the budget to be able to accommodate her bid. For the most part, he thinks we have the right person to do the job. He stated that he believes it is somebody that will give us good work and she has great ratings. President Angelo explained he checked her background and all that.

Secretary Londeen inquired about coming back with a contract. President Angelo said yes there would be a contract but stated he really did not want to wait another month and inquired with the Board if it was something that could be submitted to the City Secretary. He said he hated to wait two more months to get something in front of everyone. Secretary Londeen stated he would like to see the scope of work and fee to make sure we're on the same page as far as what level of detail and what our product is that we are going to get. He went on to explain it would not hurt to see that and, we need to make sure that she can provide the file types that we are requesting. Secretary Londeen stated he we would like to see that in writing and then see what the final contract amount is. He would not mind waiting for the contract.

Board Member Olson stated we need to make sure about the specific digital files that we would need. Specifically, about illustrator files such as a vector image for social media. Board Member Olson stated we need to make sure the product that we get is something that we can use.

Vice President Easley inquired about the timeline on getting the finished product. President Angelo stated it would take a few weeks.

Treasurer Langley inquired about where she is from and then stated we need to review a contract.

President Angelo stated if he can get the contract then will try to have it on the next meeting's agenda.

Motion: Secretary Londeen made a motion to proceed with President Angelo to negotiate a contract with Ayesha Ahmed, for a graphics package, and bring back to be reviewed at the next meeting. Vice President Easley seconded the motion. Motion carried with all present voting in favor.

3. Consideration and possible action on a grant application behalf of Lily Pyle for Montgomery Cleanup Project.

President Angelo gave a brief introduction on Lily Pyle explaining that she is a high school student who has applied for a grant for a Montgomery Cleanup Project where a

group of volunteers go clean up specific areas in Montgomery. Arnette Easley has been helpful in acquiring some of these volunteers. Ms. Pyle is asking for a little support, is planning on t-shirts for all the volunteers and working to get some Community effort going. Lily Pyle was introduced to the Board and asked to speak.

Lily Pyle addressed the Board, and stated she recently started driving, as she has been paying more attention to the road, she has noticed an abundance of garbage on the roads. As a person who cares deeply about the environment, it truly breaks her heart. She stated she began to think to herself, well if someone else does not do this then who is going to take the first step? So, she decided to take the first step in organizing an event in Montgomery on January 11, 2025 that would take volunteers from all over the city to clean up different areas of the town. She explained she is currently working on finding more volunteers. Ms. Pyle is still working on some of the finer details of the event as a whole but would like to ask for a grant for permission to fund the event.

President Angelo inquired with Ms. Pyle about her mother owning a t-shirt company. Ms. Pyle stated, yes, that she designs t-shirts and she would be able to print the designs onto t-shirts, given that the t-shirts were already provided. President Angelo stated that he helped Ms. Pyle create a logo for the event and then they took it to her mother who made some examples and has agreed to do it at cost.

President Angelo took a moment to applaud Lily Pyle for wanting to take her community seriously and do something special for the community out of the goodness of her heart. He spoke about how most 17-year-olds are playing sports, probably studying trying to get ready for college, but you are taking an active participants role in helping our community in a way that even us adults probably should spend more time doing.

Board Member Olson inquired about the grant total. Ms. Pyle stated she believed it was \$600. President Angelo explained that she is asking for a third of that at \$200. Secretary Londeen inquired who the money is going to? Ms. Pyle stated it would go to her, and it would go into funding for what is needed like garbage bags, safety vest, and gloves.

Secretary Londeen inquired with the Board if it is a problem to be granting money to an individual versus a company or nonprofit? President Angelo stated it is a very small amount of money. He stated we will make sure that the project gets pulled off and we're also going to try to get some volunteers and sponsorships too. He stated we have talked about maybe bringing in Jims, which Jims would probably be helpful, maybe he could provide some of these items at cost. Some of our local Montgomery stores may be able to participate. Vice President Easley stated, since I am a part of it a nonprofit for Montgomery County United (MDC) you could do that since I am a part of it versus the individual. Secretary Londeen stated that it might be cleaner. Since we don't know the answer to that it might just be cleaner to go through a nonprofit.

Discussion was held about budget money, making sure we do it the right way, questioning if we do have the nonprofit could MDC just bill us directly? President Angelo said he does not really know the answer to that.

Secretary Londeen inquired can they just bill us (EDC) directly for blight removal without having to do a grant. Board Member Langley stated it is usually a company that is doing the service that would bill us. So, if Vice President Easley will fill out the

application in the morning then I don't know what else we would need.

Chief Solomon stated, 4B is kind of strict on these things, so let us check with the attorney first thing in the morning and then we'll let you know. You may be able just to give it to her or her organization but we will check first thing in morning and let you know because they're pretty strict. President Angelo asked could we approve the grant request based on the attorney's advice? Treasurer Langley said the grant is different than spending money for purchasing stuff so the grant is allowable. I just don't know our rules on the Grant. Chief Solomon said, I think you can approve the grant on the contingency of the attorney's feedback. Chief Solomon asked how much is she looking for? President Angelo responded \$200. Board Member Walker said he will pay \$300.

Motion: Board Member Olson made a motion to approve the grant funding contingent of lawyer approval. Board Member Walker seconded the motion. Motion carried with all present voting in favor.

President Angelo told Ms. Pyle she did a good job and thanked her. He told her I know you're nervous but guess what? This is the hardest it's ever going to be and as you go through your life and you continue to do remarkable things it'll get easier and easier. You should be applauded for your effort and I'm grateful. I'll be right beside you to help you and so will Arnette as well as of these other board members.

4. Consideration and possible action on suggestions and ideas to enhance and add value to the Light Up the Park event.

Stephanie Johnson, Special Events Coordinator, addressed the board and said "Light Up the Park" on December 7, 2024, was a great event and overall, the event was a success. She praised everyone for all the creativity and hard work that went into everyone's decorative pole that they did.

Ms. Johnson stated she would like plan and maybe do the "Light Up the Park" and "Light Up the Town" all in one event since it is the businesses, residents, and it is the park. The plan is to get people participating and registering beforehand, which would make it much easier in the judging process. Even though we are five square miles it is just a little time consuming to drive around. If everyone registered for the event, we would know exactly where to go.

Ms. Johnson gave a huge thank you to Home Depot for providing the Christmas décor and kid activity section. It was really good, and the kids really enjoyed the craft kits. Home Depot really went above and beyond with the décor. They loaned us some of their big, decorative items like the Nutcracker soldier, some pre-lite presents, and a Christmas tree. It really made the event spectacular. In addition, thanked HEB who personally came and handed out hot cocoa and cookies to all that attended. Hopefully we will have them back next year.

Ms. Johnson stated, moving forward she would like to do bigger if possible. Maybe Public Works could do some downtown decorating since they do a great job decorating the park and around town. She stated we could do a little bit more and really light up the town. She would like to see all of downtown lit up. President Angelo said he loves the idea of "Light Up the Town" and stated why just do the park? Let's get the whole

town lit up. It is a great name, "Light Up the Town". He said it is perfect for a small community like this.

Ms. Johnson stated, since we are on the subject of Christmas, she would like to move forward and theme "Christmas in Montgomery". She noted there are a lot of different names for all the events. There is "Historic Christmas" and "Christmas in Montgomery". We need to brand it and stick to that every year so everyone knows. We are known as the "Historic Montgomery" so then our event name should be like "Christmas Parade" instead of the "Historic Christmas Parade in Historic Montgomery, Texas".

Ms. Johnson went on to say, she said what she would like to do is "Christmas in Montgomery". She does not think she can do "Light Up the Park", the "Christmas Parade" the next day and the "Snow Party" that evening, but ideally, she would like to do it all in one weekend, if possible. President Angelo stated it used to be done in one weekend. Board Member Walker stated this year it is spread out too much. Ms. Johnson noted, people are busy and there are a lot of other great events going on in our community. Secretary Londeen said, he thinks the snow party was too late. We tried to push them together and it did not work schedule wise.

President Angelo thinks that really having someone at the helm that can pull that off is important. He praised Ms. Johnson for a spectacular job. Ms. Johnson took this position five or six weeks before the event and went non-stop, never ending, having to get up to speed and pulled it off. He said it absolutely went off without a hitch and was grateful for no rain during the parade.

President Angelo asked Ms. Johnson to update the directors on the budget and what was spent. Ms. Johnson said the budget for "Light Up the Park" was \$4,400 and out of that she had \$2,710 in expenses with an estimated remaining \$1,689.

President Angelo said he spoke with Ms. Johnson and next month they are going to have a financial comprehensive debrief to step it up a notch. Ms. Johnson agreed and said that it sounds good, because there is no décor for any of the events. Moving forward, once we get our logo, she would like to get some branded table covers that have our city logo on it. Also, a tall, branded sign that has our city logo on it.

President Angelo stated, they talked about creating a project list they can work backwards from. They can have everything from press releases to all the major publications to let people know about "Christmas in Montgomery", about "Light Up the Town", and about all these different initiatives. This way we can fill up the city with new residents and old residents can partake in some of the gift shops, as well as the restaurants, other hotels, and B&Bs in the area.

Secretary Londeen mentioned he would like to try to work with the Historic Society on the historic home tour. An in-depth discussion was held among the Board Members and Ms. Johnson. The meeting revolved around finding ways to improve marketing and collaboration with the City's Historic Society. It was suggested that a brand be created that the Historic Society and the City can work together under, bridging the gap left by past conflicts. To achieve this, a meeting between the groups is proposed, where the Society can share their vision and goals, and the City can offer assistance and support. Further discussion revolved around the City linking our website to the Historic

Society's and potentially helping with suggestions to manage their website to improve its maintenance and functionality. Ms. Johnson, who will lead the collaboration, is tasked with working with the Historic Society's current contact, Bea, to create a cohesive and clear promotional strategy, leveraging the City's knowledge of local history to provide accurate information and context.

Treasure Langley said the item said consideration and possible action and asked if there is anything Ms. Johnson needs action on? Board Member Walker said she made suggestions on branding per se for Christmas and the website branding. President Angelo said she has a whole list of suggestions that's in the deck so maybe we just look at that.

An In-depth discussion was held among the Board Members and Ms. Johnson. The discussion centered around the need to streamline and manage the city's website and social media presence. President Angelo recommended hiring a professional web development company to oversee social media, events, and website management, with Ms. Johnson or her designee having final say over online content. The goal is to create a cohesive and professional online presence, correcting outdated information and inefficient systems, such as the current event registration process. The City Secretary, Ruby Beaven, is familiar with the website platform, Civic Plus, and plans to work with Ms. Johnson to update and edit the website, with potential assistance from OCS for more in-depth changes. Additionally, Chief Solomon mentioned a meeting to consolidate the city's multiple websites, including the police department's site, and Secretary Londeen requested that the EDC site also be reviewed for accuracy.

No action was taken.

5. Discussion of McCown St. infrastructure and new construction/development.

An In-depth discussion was held among the Board Members and Chris Roznovsky, WGA. The discussion revolved around the delays and confusion surrounding a construction project due to dependencies on infrastructure work, particularly drainage and utility placements, with a need to coordinate between utility plans and streetscape improvements.

Mr. Roznovsky stated we are still all kind of confused because the utility plans have been waiting on the above ground for final placement of inlets, etc. The drainage study was completed in October of 2023. The waterline and the sanitary sewer rehabilitation project lines were televised in 2021. The rehabilitation of all those lines in downtown of everything from FM 149 to Prairie, to Clepper, to SH-105, the whole downtown area. It was completed in 2023 so the sewer line work was done. The water line replacement plans went to a 90 percent phase and they were put on hold waiting on the streetscape improvements for final placement. We don't want to put a hydrant in front of wherever the streetscape would come back and this is a parking spot. They were pretty well wrapped up and done minus the final place with some of the above ground

stuff to go in connection with the streetscape project. We were waiting on a final design of the streetscape to finish the water line plans and then the coordination of the two because we didn't want to replace the water lines and tear everything up, fix it, and then the streetscape comes in and tears everything up. We'd rather do that right on top of each other so we're not paying to repair stuff.

Secretary Londeen mentioned that the project was stalled, emphasizing the need for a regroup to clarify roles and streamline communication while ensuring a cohesive strategy for the downtown area, including consideration of a potential one-way street scenario.

Corinne Tilley, Code Enforcement/Planning & Development Administrator, highlighted the upcoming downtown development interim ordinance from Kendig Keast Collaborative (KKC), prompting a discussion on its implications for building regulations, materials, and historical overlays within the downtown development district. Mr. Roznovsky clarified the relationship between the downtown zone and the historical overlay, suggesting possibilities for extending the architectural regulations along key roadways. Secretary Londeen emphasized the importance of maintaining control over street developments to ensure cohesion with future plans, while President Angelo noted that considerations for sidewalks and building ordinances reflect the unique nature of downtown's non-traditional layout, which requires tailored approaches to landscaping and public spaces.

President Angelo said there is also Retail Strategies helping them do streetscapes as well. President Angelo and Secretary Londeen discussed progress on the streetscapes initiative, emphasizing that much work has already been accomplished in terms of sidewalk and landscaping layout in line with the downtown master plan. While expressing satisfaction with the existing plan, they acknowledged the need for final adjustments and coordination with Retail Strategies to ensure comprehensive input and effective completion of the project. Mr. Roznovsky indicated ongoing communication with Retail Strategies, suggesting a willingness to address any additional considerations they might have.

A plan to follow up with Ardurra regarding cost estimates and project timelines was agreed upon, along with scheduling meetings to keep the momentum going on this multi-million-dollar project, emphasizing the urgency to move forward. Mr. Roznovsky said they will follow up with them and include Chief Solomon, Ms. Tilly, and Secretary Londeen and let you know what we find out.

6. Consideration and possible action on the status of the Wayfinding signs.

An In-depth discussion was held among the Board Members. The discussion surrounding the Wayfinding signs revealed confusion regarding cost estimates, responsibilities, and prior decisions made by the board. President Angelo emphasized the need for updated information and clarity on what signs had previously been

selected, expressing frustration over the lack of follow-through after initial discussions and presentations. Board Member Olson echoed these concerns, highlighting that costs had risen significantly and that they needed to ensure compliance with planning and zoning ordinances, particularly regarding historic district regulations. The group agreed to review past documents to re-establish their choices, with President Angelo taking responsibility for compiling and forwarding the necessary information to get everyone aligned and ready to make a final decision.

No action taken.

7. Discuss progress of the project Retail Strategies is collaborating on with the MEDC and the City.

President Angelo highlighted, during a stakeholder meeting on November 11, 2024, there were collaborative efforts for downtown revitalization, showcasing the potential new cityscape with input from local businesses. He facilitated introductions between Jeremy from Retail Strategies and various business owners to gather insights, emphasizing the community's desire to maintain the historic, hometown vibe of downtown. However, communication challenges arose due to staff changes and email issues with the Barracuda software, which hindered connections among key officials, but efforts are underway to restore those links, with Ms. Titus assisting in resolving the situation.

President Angelo discussed the progress of their planning project platform, Base Camp, which contains all necessary documents and plans for upcoming meetings, including a potentially impactful one in January. He highlighted the interest from several high-profile companies eager to establish operations in Montgomery, emphasizing the need for a cautious selection process to ensure alignment with community values. Additionally, he mentioned coordination efforts with KKC and Retail Strategies for seamless planning, while also addressing some technical issues with document sharing that need to be resolved for proper communication among key officials.

President Angelo expressed confidence in the initiatives underway and is eager to share current developments. He has already followed up with local businesses that attended the meeting, and notable changes include the renaming of the Lone Star art gallery to Montgomery Art Gallery, alongside potential updates to its color scheme for a more upscale appearance. He praised Tony and Jackie for their excellent work in creating a beautiful space and noted that many businesses exhibit strong engagement, which bodes well for generating momentum as progress unfolds.

8. Discussion of Finance Report.

Finance Director Carl said she did not have the Finance Report ready in time for the packet last week, but you have a copy in your hands. This gets you from October 1st through the end of November so it's reporting on two months. I don't have anything of alarm to point out. We're still working to get last fiscal year closed out. We've had to upload a whole bunch of things for interim audit and our annual audit will be taking

place at the end of January so it'll be March before I have the closing information from last fiscal.

President Angelo asked in regard to the trick-or-treat candy and actually writing checks, is it possible for the City to purchase gift cards or purchase the candy. Ms. Carl said the City cannot purchase gift cards. The City could potentially purchase candy to do a donation. It would be the City sponsored candy and you would donate that out through the vendors. That is a potential option.

I know there's been some push back on giving us the W9s. Just to fill you all in as to why we asked for that. It would be to issue a 1099 if you got to that \$600 threshold. I totally understand you're probably not getting to that \$600 threshold. As a governmental entity we are talking about government funds that we are passing out. We have to do our due diligence to make sure that the person receiving those funds is eligible to receive those funds. That's the only reason we ask for it.

President Angelo said it's different with government. He said 501c3 could just issue a gift card but a government agency cannot. Ms. Carl said we cannot use government funds in that manner and these are public funds and so I have to make sure that you have a legal status with the IRS to be able for me to give government funds to you.

President Angelo said rather than sort of try to traverse that hurdle which seems to be a problem every year maybe we just purchase the candy if that's okay. Ms. Carl said it potentially is. I can ask legal for you but based on the fact that you do events under the way that you all are organized, this would be a part of that event and you would be contributing to that event. I believe that it is an okay thing.

President Angelo said he and Ms. Johnson just talked about an alternative way to try to get to the end game and we might get more participation that way too. Ms. Johnson said it's like that for the Light up the Park too. Ms. Carl said if you're giving out a cash prize it's yes. President Angelo said so you'd have to give something other than a cash prize. No gift card or anything like that.

Board Member Walker asked what if you had sponsors that were giving these gifts? Ms. Carl said that would be fantastic. Ms. Johnson said especially with the parade because that's one of the things with registration. These schools, these associations, they don't have \$25. They don't have funds and so they have to get sponsors to do that. President Angelo said maybe we go that route because I think sponsors might even pony up a little more. Ms. Johnson said moving forward in 2025 when I have an opportunity to look at all the events and the budget, I would like to get with Chief Solomon and find out who the City does business with. Who has our contracts as those are your big sponsors. There's no reason why Waste Management should not be sponsoring. President Angelo said they are very good about community outreach too. Ms. Johnson said it just has to be written out if you are a title sponsor or presenting

sponsor and then your gold, bronze, and silver. This way your EDC could be for infrastructure or whatever it may be and the events run off of their sponsorships.

Vice President Easley said this weekend they had over \$100,000 donated to businesses. It was a big event. Ms. Johnson said it's a little too late this year but everyone budgets next October for 2026 unless someone has leftover funds they don't need or that they have to donate. She said sponsorship is a big possibility and that's one way we grow our events, we add value. When you have a \$20,000 sponsor for the parade you can do big things. Board Member Walker said also we patronize the sponsors. President Angelo said that is true. The other thing is like Vice President Easley was saying at Winter Wonderland they had a loop over the loudspeakers, the music was playing and every so often a very well done professional voice over would say we'd like to thank our sponsors. Ms. Johnson said she has Mr. Smith their announcer announce our sponsors at all of our events but she has to be able to give some rate of return. Usually it's like real estate. The bigger the logo the more they like it, the bigger money they pay. We put their logo on our website or our social media but then again, all that has to be correct before we start doing sponsorships. You have to make sure you do what you say in that agreement. President Angelo said remember what we talked about when we met about having for instance the parade where we would have an LED wall similar to what they had at Fellowship of Montgomery. You would have speakers, snow, and fireworks. You can do a lot with \$20,000. You' be able to put their logos, names, sponsors continually announcing throughout the parade. That's a big deal to a lot of people you and then you give them placements throughout such as Waste Management trash cans all over the place. Ms. Johnson said there's definitely a lot of potential. This is a great community and the town just really comes together. It's really amazing to see the involvement of the community and the sponsorships would be great.

9. Consideration and Possible action on the recommendation to City Council to reappoint expiring term members to the MEDC Board for 2 years.

President Angelo said Arnette Easley, Carol Langley, Ryan Londeen, and Jeff Angelo are up to expire at the end of December. He said everyone has indicated they want to continue to serve so it is a matter of bringing it before Council.

Motion: Board Member Walker made a motion to recommend to City Council to reappoint expiring term members to the MEDC Board for 2 years Jeff Angelo, Arnette Easley, Carol Langley, and Ryan Londeen. Board Member Olson seconded the motion. Motion carried with all present voting in favor.

BOARD INQUIRY

No inquiry was presented for this meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: Treasurer Langley made a motion to adjourn the Regular Meeting of Montgomery Economic Development Corporation at 7:17 p.m. Secretary Londeen seconded the motion. Motion carried with all present voting in favor.

APPROVED:



Jeff Angelo, President

ATTEST:



Ryan Londeen, Secretary