

City of Forsyth
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Resources/City Council/Information

March 2018

Community Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)

The CEDS process involves a community member meeting, held each year, at which community members list strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the City. The meeting is arranged and hosted by Southeastern Montana Development Corporation (SEMDC) with executive director Jim Atchison facilitating the discussion.

Community members attending the 2017 meeting listed 68 community strengths including: library, RHCC, county health, fairgrounds, recreational opportunities, airport, museum, parks, Riverview Villa, Chamber of Commerce, Roxy Theatre, Quigley Shoot, senior center, golf course, city and county government, Yellowstone River, good schools, pool.

Community members also listed 48 concerns including: streets, water drainage, recertification of the dike, lack of child care facilities, lack of business promotion, affordable housing, drug use, mental health services, future of power plants, junk vehicles, lack of hospice care, changes at BNSF, downtown business district suffering, old building abatement.

The entire document with the full list of strengths and concerns can be found on the Chamber's website: forsythmt.com; Resources; City Council Info; Agendas, Minutes, News.

The attendees were asked to determine areas that need special emphasis:

Economy and Housing (*#1 Priority)

Marketing Hometown America: Emphasize marketing Forsyth to bring home youth and provide job opportunities for younger persons;

Tourism Projects: Complete the Custer Circle Project and the Historic Tour Brochure to help direct traffic off interstate and bring tourists into Forsyth and throughout Rosebud County;

Market Recreational Sites: Establish signage, improve facilities, improve boat launch, promote recreational opportunities;

**Entrepreneurial Training:* Develop/implement mentoring programs and quarterly training programs;

Processing Center for Independent Banks: Establish a processing center to serve independent banks throughout the region.

Quality of Life (*#1 Priority)

Park Improvements: Purchase and install new playground equipment in parks, remodel bathroom at Riverside Park;

**Healthy Activities:* Establish a recreational center and a mentoring program similar to Big Brothers and Sisters to connect youth with strong role models;

Drug Court/DUI Court: Establish a drug/DUI court program in Rosebud County to assist persons with dependency problems;

Community Leadership: Establish a leadership training program to expand leadership capacity in the community.

Services and Infrastructure (*#1 Priority)

Levee Project: Work with federal agencies to guarantee certification of the dike;

**Rosebud County and Forsyth CIP:* Both governmental entities would like to pursue the development of Capital Improvement Plans (CIP) to categorize and prioritize infrastructure needs, required maintenance and replacement schedules. This will assist with many items including budgeting and planning;

Hospital Roof: The hospital roof is in need of replacement;

City Fire Truck: A more modern fire truck is needed by the City of Forsyth to provide adequate fire protection;

Wind Farm: roads, an off loading site and electric lines need attention if the proposed wind farm is to be realized.

The 2018 CEDS meeting has not been scheduled but information will be posted in the Independent Press and strategic locations around town.

GROWTH PLAN

This is the third and final article that will provide information associated with the City's growth plan. In my article of October 23 I provided a summary of some of what has been done to implement those goals and objectives. This third article will finish the review of the growth plan.

SAFETY AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

Improve Fire Protection Services – The City has an excellent volunteer fire department. The City works with the volunteers to provide the most current training. There is a cooperative effort to provide excellent equipment. In the past 4 years the City has purchased a “quick response unit” for approximately \$163,000.00; contributed \$28,000.00 toward the acquisition of personal safety equipment and is currently working to obtain a coal board grant for the purchase of a new fire truck (\$384,000.00). The 2017-2018 budget allocates \$246,378.00 for the fire department. The City will work with the department to make sure the best possible service is provided to the citizens of Forsyth.

Improve Law Enforcement Services – An officer from law enforcement attends City council meetings. The department provides the council with a monthly report, summarizing the type of call and location of each call responded to during the month. If needed, issues can be addressed as part of the council meeting. The City/County, just recently, reviewed the existing contract, made positive changes and approved a new contract. One major issue mentioned in the Growth Plan was the drug problem. Information was provided to the sheriff’s department and there is an expectation that the sheriff’s department will keep the council informed of major changes in the drug use issue. The City provides. The City budgeted \$191,244.00 for fiscal year 2017-2018 to support law enforcement and the City will continue to work cooperatively with the County and department to ensure law enforcement service.

WATER AND WASTEWATER

Water/Wastewater Permitting and Redundancy – The City’s water and wastewater systems are inspected on a regular basis, meet all permitting requirements and reports are published in the Independent press. The plants have systems to protect service when there is a loss of power and backup systems are in place to make sure service is provided even in extreme emergencies.

DIKE

The City is working with the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and the SWIF (System Wide Infrastructure Framework) program to make improvements in the dike. The improvements and City maintenance will guarantee that the dike will provide safety from floods in years to come. A major requirement is that all non-conforming vegetation and stored items must be removed from designated dike property. The dike area has been surveyed and property line markers have been placed. The City is working

with property owners, along the dike, to make sure that non-approved vegetation is removed and that all non-allowed equipment and other items are removed.

PARKS AND RECREATION PLAN

There is still a need to develop a parks and recreation plan. The City will be reorganizing the Tree Board and involvement in the Tree City USA program. Along with this involvement the development of a parks and recreation plan might be added.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Much needs to be done in the following areas: (1) develop a community marketing plan to attract new businesses (2) examine the potential for creating a senior living hub (3) examine potential for creating a transportation center in Forsyth (4) develop a tourism marketing plan (5) improve enforcement of the community decay ordinance (6) create an incentive program to remove or renovate dilapidated or unsound housing. City representatives are involved with Visit Southeast Montana Tourism, SouthEast Montana Development Corporation (SEMDC), City/County Planning Board. Each year community members can participate in the CEDS (Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy) process. The CEDS allows participants to discuss City strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

Additional information is available from the mayor's office or at City council meetings. Meetings are normally held on the 2nd and 4th Monday of each month; 7:00 PM, City Hall.

Capital Improvement Planning

As part of the growth plan process the City undertook Capital Improvement Planning in the spring of 2017. All department heads were surveyed and required to provide a list of their capital improvement needs for the next 5 years. The items were prioritized: #1 Immediate Needs, #2, Needs for the Near Future; #3, Long Term Needs. After department head and council review the council approved the following projects:

Upgrade computer & control panel at water plant – Work to be completed this fall or early winter

Replace current meter reader system – Work to be completed this fall or early winter

Renovate/rebuild the bathroom at Riverside Park – Work is in progress

Camera video of culverts associated with dike improvements - Done

Riverside Park playground equipment – Work is in progress

Roof repairs at the pool – Work to be done this fall

Roof repairs at City Hall – Work to be done this fall

New front doors at City Hall – Work to be done this fall

SWIF (System Wide Infrastructure Framework)

The City continues to work with the United States Corps of Engineers on maintenance plans for the dike. The dike has been surveyed. Property owners with items on the designated, surveyed “dike area” will be required to move all items. The City continues to remove brush and other vegetation from required areas. As the Corps provides more requirements to meet their standards the City will work with the Corps to make improvements to the dike.

Fire Truck

The City fire department has requested \$384,000.00 for a new fire truck. This budget year the City has placed \$220,000.00 in the capital improvement fund, a coal grant application for approximately \$164,000.00 has been approved by the Coal Board. The City has started the bid process

City Code Review

The City council will continue its work of reviewing and revising the City’s Code book. The council has reviewed Titles 1-6, 8, 10, 12, 13, 14. Titles 7, 9, and 11 still need to be reviewed and revised as needed. Notice of Code review items are always appropriately posted at City Hall, the post office and courthouse.

Snow & Ice Removal

With the arrival of winter all property owners are responsible for removing snow and ice from sidewalks adjacent to their property.

Business License

With the start of the new year business licenses for 2018 will be due. License payments are due and payment can be made at City Hall. License forms for new or existing businesses can be obtained at City Hall.

City Council Meetings

Agendas for all City Council meetings and committee meetings are always posted at least 48 hours prior to the meeting. Notices are always posted at City Hall, the post office and at the Rosebud County Courthouse. Community members are always welcome to attend meetings. The next City council meetings are scheduled for March 12, 2018, 7:00 PM, City Hall and March 26, 7:00 PM City Hall.