

City of Harlowton
Phase IV Water Project Public Hearing
June 13, 2017 6:00pm
Harlowton Public Library Conference Room

Craig Erickson of Great West Engineering, Inc. facilitated the public hearing.

The purpose of the hearing was to give citizens an opportunity to identify and discuss their community's overall community development and housing needs and priorities, including the needs of low and moderate-income persons, and to propose possible community improvement projects and to meet those needs before the Harlowton City Council makes decisions on what project or projects it will seek federal or state funding assistance on.

Craig provided a summary of possible grant funding for economic development, housing and infrastructure projects. Craig explained that in the City of Harlowton, 57.3% of the residents are in a low to moderate income level which makes the City of Harlowton eligible for many of these grant funds. The application for the CDBG grant is due July 14, 2017.

Economic development opportunities for Harlowton were discussed. Recently the National Guard Armory was up for sale. It was unknown by anyone in attendance if the auction was held or not. There is an estimated unemployment rate of 4-5% for our area. Job creation and lack of qualified employees is an issue for our area. The Milwaukee railroad shut down in stages with the final stage being in the early 1980s. An estimated 50-60 jobs were lost. Then an area sawmill that employed 20-30 employees burned and closed in the mid-1990s. There has been a steady decline in the NRCS and Forest Service jobs located in Harlowton. Wheatland Memorial Healthcare and the school district are the largest employers in the area.

Infrastructure opportunities for Harlowton were discussed. Bryan Tomlinson stated that much of the city's infrastructure is "shot" but we are working on improvements.

Ian indicated the city has been operating without a wastewater permit since 2014. It is unknown when a permit will be issued and what criteria there will be to get a permit renewed. If a land application for the lagoon is going to be required that could be a \$5 million project. A wastewater project was completed in 2014.

The city's water project has been engineered out to seven phases with this one being our fourth phase. Sidewalks in the city business areas are not in too bad of shape but sidewalks in residential areas are in need of repair. There are areas where there are no sidewalks and residents including school children are walking in the streets.

The city does not have a storm water system. There are no curb and gutters in some areas of town so heavy rain events cause some flooding of resident properties.

City streets are generally in poor condition. The new gas tax is expected to only generate about \$33,000 for the first year.

There are three park areas in the city. Deer Park is not developed and borders a low to middle income area of the community.

The city's pool was built in the 1950's and has recently undergone some repairs. However the pool building structures are in need of repair.

The city council members present felt that the water infrastructure was the city's number one priority.

Housing opportunities for Harlowton were discussed. There is a shortage of quality single home dwellings. Most homes in Harlowton were built in the 1930-1950s. There are approximately 5 multi-unit dwellings (apartments) one of which is in good condition and the others being more rundown. There are rental homes available however many of them are in substandard conditions. No one in attendance was aware of a 1st time home buyers program in the area. Snowy Mountain Development Corporation has an energy rehabilitation program but it is administered through the area counties with only one project per county getting authorized.

There is a potential for economic development and housing needs to increase if the Gordon Butte (located in Meagher County) and Coffin Butte (located in Wheatland County) pumped storage energy project take place.

Ian asked about the availability of grants for sidewalk projects. Craig informed Ian that he would have a representative from Great West contact him to discuss opportunities. Craig stated that a phased approach with the city dealing with focus areas and populations usually works best with approximately 12 blocks per phase and \$300,000-400,000 per phase. There are grant criteria that need to be met such as environmental reviews and complex grant administration requirements.

With no further questions the public hearing was adjourned at 7:28 pm.

Council Members Present:

Jim Kalitowski, Paul Otten, Ron Teig, Bryan Tomlinson

Employees Present:

Ian Reed, Kathie Newland

Bryan Tomlinson, Council President

Kathie Newland, Clerk