

**CITY OF SAN CARLOS  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMISSION (EDAC)  
Meeting Minutes of July 1, 2009**

The meeting was called to order by Chair at 4:06 pm.

**1. Commissioners present:**

Laura Battaglia	Scot Marsters
Bob Farkas (Vice Chair)	Harold Schuette
Mark Lockenmeyer (Secretary)	Gary Wiessinger (Chair)

Commissioners absent:     Connie Barton Barba  
  Mark Green  
  Mark Luckenbach

Advisory:     Mark Sawicki, Economic Development & Housing Manager  
                  Al Savay, Community Development Director

**2. Approval of minutes:**

Minutes of the June 3, 2009 EDAC meeting were unanimously approved.

**3. Public Comment:**

There was no public comment

**4. Agenda Review:**

The planned meeting agenda was not changed.

**5. Old Business and Reports:**

**a. Update from Staff**

Mr. Sawicki reported that the July 13, 2009 Council agenda includes consideration of a revenue ballot measure and the recommendation of a Marketing/Branding consultant. The General Plan will be reviewed by Planning Commission in July and Council in August. Sales tax revenues, preliminary estimates, for the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter were down 2.25% from the prior period compared to a decrease of 29% for the County. A new Japanese restaurant, Shiki, will open at the former Siskin's Pharmacy location at 825 Laurel and the Reading Bug, a children's bookstore, will open at 785 Laurel.

**b. Update from Economic Development Partnership (EDP)**

Chair Wiessinger reported the fourth EDP outreach meeting will be conducted on July 14 & 15, 2009 involving downtown area businesses. The developers of Transit Village and potential Wheeler Plaza project have been asked to attend and field any questions on those projects.

### **c. Update from Ad Hoc Housing Task Force (AHHTF)**

Mr. Sawicki reported that the AHHTF meeting was postponed until late July or August.

## **6. New Business**

### **a. Endorsement of Selection Committee Recommendation for Marketing/Branding Consultant**

Mr. Sawicki described the Selection Committee process which led to the recommended proposal to engage North Star Destination Strategies for a phase one branding/marketing research exercise and later on to engage Look Design for marketing implementation. North Star is a national leader in branding communities. Look is a local firm that has been previously engaged by the City and Chamber on successful marketing campaigns. The Committee received 14 submissions and interviewed 5 firms. Among the considerations were the advantages and disadvantages of a local versus national firm, whether we could hire more than one firm to work together, and which of the firm's best fit with San Carlos' needs.

Commissioners held an extensive discussion regarding the branding/marketing scope of work and the factors that led to the Selection Committee's recommendation. Following are some of the key discussion points and Selection Committee responses from that meeting (as later reported in Council staff report) :

- *Do we need to do this?*

In preparing a draft Marketing Strategy, the Economic Development Partnership recognized that the expertise of an outside professional consultant or marketing firm was needed to inform the Strategy document before it was complete and to help implement it. It was also recognized that as a precursor to implementing a marketing strategy, the City needed to conduct research to better understand its brand identity and define its unique marketing message and platform. EDAC and the City Council supported the recommendation to seek and engage a marketing consultant.

- *Can we afford to do this?*

While it is an understandable concern as the City is grappling with a General Fund budget deficit and contemplating service cuts and revenue measures, this economic development initiative has no fiscal impact on the General Fund since it will be paid from restricted Redevelopment Agency funds. These funds are not available to pay for general City services and can only be used for projects and activities that mitigate physical or economic blighting conditions in the Project Area (generally encompassing the east side industrial area, El Camino and downtown). The Agency can provide funding for economic development activities, including marketing strategy initiatives, which are expected to increase economic activity in San Carlos, expand the sales tax base, improve leasing activity and property values, and eventually improve the long term fiscal condition of the City.

- *What is the budget for the second phase of marketing implementation?*

There is no defined budget at this time. Staff expects to negotiate a scope and budget with LOOK Design during the latter stage of phase one, based on a more complete and final marketing strategy informed by the research, concepts and recommended

strategies from the phase one effort. Marketing implementation is expected to be conducted over several years.

- *Will we keep or replace the “City of Good Living”?*

While North Star would be asked to take an objective approach to researching San Carlos’s brand identity and propose alternative concepts, there is such strong attachment and history associated with the “Good Living” moniker that it would be unlikely to be replaced. The expectation is that research will focus more on what the phrase means and how to more effectively use it as a branding/marketing tool.

Other questions and comments among the Commissioners and public included the following, with responses from Selection Committee members Sawicki and Wiessinger:

- (Battaglia) Was there a big difference between national and local firms? The Committee recognized advantages and disadvantages of each, but felt the selected combination captured the best of both.
- (Public comment – Pat Potter) Make sure you get local stakeholder feedback on suggestions before moving forward.
- (Battaglia) Will local businesses and Chamber be asked to contribute funding to a marketing campaign? We would consider this, although economic conditions may limit local business ability to participate. However, a similar shared marketing approach has been used in other cities that have done branding/marketing campaigns.
- (Lockenmeyer) Have North Star try to talk to companies that have recently relocated here or have considered San Carlos to determine what factors they focused on, both positive and negative.

**Motion/Second by Marsters / Schuette:**

***EDAC endorses the Selection Committee recommendation to engage North Star Destination Strategies for economic development marketing services.***

**Approved unanimously**

**7. Adjournment:**

Meeting was adjourned at 5:55 pm.