

Chehalis Community Renaissance Team (CCRT)
November 3, 2017
Meeting Notes

Larry McGee called the meeting to order at 8:32 a.m. The following were present: Stacy Davis, Susan Delaire, Bill Deutscher, Trevor Elliott, Michele Gallagher, Terry Harris, Tamara Hayes, Flossie Heymann, Patty Kaija, Tanya Laeger, Jason Mattson, Larry McGee, Mitch Moberg, Randy Mueller, Vicki Muething, Dr. Pope, Chris Sampson, Lindsey Senter, Andy Skinner, Annalee Tobey, Lilly Wall, and Brian Wilkins.

1. Welcome and Introduction of Guests. Larry welcomed everyone to the meeting. There were no guests in attendance.

2. Partner Updates & News

Young Professionals of Lewis County: Trevor Elliott shared that this has been a huge year of growth for the YPLC organization. This organization connects young people professionally; providing them with available resources, socially; via connections and activities with other young professionals, and through community; by connecting them to groups and community service organizations in the area. Last year they had 125 members and this year they currently have over 300 members. They host local speakers during their events. Some of their presenters have been Lewis County Commissioners, Twin City Rotary members, Lewis County PFD, ToledoTel and City Council members. They recently hosted a combined Lewis County and Thurston County networking event. They are utilizing outreach strategies with Centralia and Chehalis High Schools as well as Centralia College to engage students in the community, to promote post-secondary school attendance and to stay in the area after college graduation. They will be speaking on November 16 at Centralia College, TransAlta Commons, for a college networking event with the business department students. This will be an opportunity to teach students networking and public speaking skills. They will be partnering with the Lewis EDC and will be attending Business Week activities at Centralia College. The next YPLC meeting is scheduled for November 8. Scott White, Executive Director of the Centralia Downtown Association, will be the guest speaker. Councilor Pope shared that the YPLC is a good program and agreed that it is important to instruct young people and high school students the skill of self-advocating. Larry shared that the YPLC group originally started from a CCRT plan idea to promote and involve local young people in the development and growth of Chehalis. Susan Delaire shared a real-life story of how her 22-year-old son reached out to YPLC for interview process experience and has now been hired as a professional engineer in Chehalis.

Southwest Washington Fairgrounds: Tamara Hayes shared that the SWW Fairgrounds had 170,000 visitors this year. The Fair showed a 6% growth in gate receipts, a 20% growth in carnival receipts, a 10% growth in food sales and a 5% growth in total fair revenues. They will continue to host free entertainment with paid admission to the fair. She suggested that other organizations can sponsor/host paid entertainment events but the SWW Fairgrounds cannot afford to host a paid entertainment event on their own due to staffing and funding limitations. They have two new websites: the SWW Fair site and a Garlic Fest site. The Fairgrounds hosted eight events this year including the Youth Fair, the SWW Fair, Garlic Fest, Garage Sales (2), Country Chicks Market, PNW Barn Hunt competition and the Gun Show. Tamara thanks the community for all of the volunteer support this year. They had many 4-H members, high school students, and community volunteers to help maintain the buildings, facilities and the grounds. Starting today, they are hosting a homeless cold weather shelter at the fairgrounds. This is a partnership between Bethel Church, City of Centralia, City of Chehalis and Lewis County to find a solution to the homeless situation in the upcoming cold weather. They have units from Pacific Mobile in a fully enclosed space on the fairgrounds. They can host 38 homeless people: 23 men and 15 women. The shelter is open from 7 pm until 7 am with passes provided for bus transportation to the local mission in the morning for breakfast. On January 1, 2018 the SWW Fairgrounds is taking over the Discover Lewis County website project.

Centralia-Chehalis Chamber of Commerce: Lindsey Senter shared that they have hired her replacement and she will start at the Chamber next Monday, November 6. Lindsey may be attending the December CCRT meeting with her. The November Business After Hours event will be held at the Chamber of Commerce office on November 16. The Black Friday bags will be given away on Wednesday, November 22 at 5:00 p.m. until all gone. They are continuing to accept donations until Sunday, November 19th and welcome any volunteers that would like to help filling the bags. Businesses do not need to be Chamber members to donate items. Some businesses are donating prize items for the community members. They hold drawings while the bags are being distributed at the Chamber office. The Black Friday Bags Public Service Announcement will

be going out today. The Santa Parade theme this year is "White Christmas." The parade will be held at 11:00 a.m. on December 2 and Frank Mason is the Grand Marshal for the parade. Registration for parade participants will be available online. The cost is \$20 to participate. Lindsey will be distributing the Santa Parade posters next week. The Chamber Annual Banquet will be held on January 19, 2018 at the Trans Alta Commons. Due to the size of this facility, the number of attendees has grown from 200 to 300 for this event. Online registration options will be available next month. The Trick or Treat Transit was held on October 31. Twin Transit donated the buses and the drivers donated their time for this event. There is a new location this year: the Twin City Town Center (by Walmart.) There was a very large turnout this year. Trevor shared they had 600 children at VR Lee downtown, David had over 900 at Book N Brush and Stacy from the LC PUD shared that they had a lot of children this year as well. Lindsey shared that there are local business sponsorship packets available at the Chamber offices with a variety of marketing and promotion options.

Executive Director: Annalee attended the quarterly Main Street leadership conference in Quincy, WA. The State requirement is to attend 3 of the 4 leadership conferences per year. Annalee was paired with the Wenatchee director, Linda Hagland, for mentoring and sharing Main Street program ideas. The recent "Opportunity Tour" idea came from the Wenatchee program. Some topics presented were resiliency of organization and communication techniques. Annalee presented a quarterly report to the Port of Chehalis Commissioners last week. The Commissioners have committed to pay \$50,000 in 2018 to CCRT for a contract for services. By doing this, the Port is matching the City of Chehalis B&O contribution amount for 2018. She shared the importance of the partnership between CCRT, the Port of Chehalis and the City of Chehalis. This partnership is imperative to the success of the CCRT Main Street organization. Callisons has committed to a \$10,000 B&O donation in 2018. The Silver Agency has also committed to a B&O donation in 2018. The 2018 CCRT project ideas will go to the Board for approval/budget purposes in November. There has been a lot of activity in the downtown business area with new businesses moving downtown and downtown buildings being sold.

3. Committee Reports

Economic Restructuring- Trevor Elliott reported that this year this committee has created the "Available Building List on the Renaissance website and hosted an "Opportunity Tour" of downtown businesses in October. When they started the opportunity tour project there were twelve available buildings downtown and when they did the actual tour, there were six available buildings. Eighteen people attended this event: investors, business owners, realtors and property managers. Since this tour, three of the buildings have been sold and multiple businesses have moved into the downtown area. There are currently four buildings for sale or lease downtown. They plan to host a second opportunity tour mid-year 2018. The "Choose Chehalis, Where Business and Lifestyle Meet" business guide brochures are now available for the Lewis EDC, Port of Chehalis and other agencies, to hand out/provide to prospective business prospects. The Port of Chehalis has purchased the building for the CCRT/Port Coworking Chehalis project. A soft launch is scheduled for January 2018. Randy Mueller advised that the interior remodel work has begun. A project for 2018 is to hold a workshop or series of workshops-a business academy for marketing, business planning, and encouragement for new business owners. The next committee meeting is November 24, noon at Sweet Inspirations.

Design-Michele Gallagher shared that the first bathroom mural is complete and the second mural (on the door side) will be completed in the spring of 2018. They are beginning the bench refurbish/repair project with the Twin Cities Rotary club. They have ordered 24 more historical banners for downtown. She thanked the Lewis County Historical Museum for the photographs. She advised that the United Way will be putting up eight banners in Chehalis and Centralia in 2018. Projects for 2018 include: Storefront display windows (if there are available spaces), downtown plantings/flowers, continue to refurbish the benches, work on pedestrian safety during the Farmer's Market, the second bathroom mural, historical banners for Louisiana Avenue, three painted art benches to be auctioned off after the Farmer's Market season, beautify recycle containers for downtown, a Market Boulevard welcome sign, and add four additional bike racks. Long term projects include a street light project. They will be meeting with the City of Chehalis to discuss the possibility of replacing the dying rose bushes on 13th Street and the scheduling of a replacement plan. There may be grant opportunities to partner with the City of Chehalis with safety crosswalk lights for pedestrians on Louisiana Avenue and West Street to access the Airport Road Trail. The next committee meeting is December 7 at 9 a.m. at the CCRT office.

Organization- No Report. The next CCRT Board Meeting (Organization Committee) is November 16, 3 p.m. at City Hall.

Promotion- Tanya Laeger shared they will be working on the marketing plan for the coworking space project. They will be using the website and social media to market the building and the coworking program. The Chehalis downtown business relocation guide, "Where Business and Lifestyle Meet" is completed. An RFP has gone out for the CCRT website design/creation and will be received by November 12 with a decision being made by November 15, 2017. 2018 projects include: the Lewis County Visitors Guide, the 2018 Experience Chehalis Brochure, e-newsletters and Facebook management, and ChehalisFest 2018 (sponsorships to fund this event.) The next meeting is Wednesday, November 15 at 9:00 a.m. at City Hall.

4. Other Updates/Announcements/Good of the Order

Larry shared that the December 1 CCRT meeting will be 30 minutes longer than normal to discuss the 2018 project list. He shared that the CCRT organization is looking good financially for 2018.

The City Council honored Orin Smith at the October 23 City Council Meeting with a proclamation and the renaming of 16th Street to "Orin Smith Commemorative Way." Larry shared that both Mayor Dawes and J. Vander Stoep did a lovely job speaking about and honoring Orin at the council meeting. Larry shared that Orin is a great example of how a local individual can make a difference in this community and is an inspiration to everyone.

Dr. Pope stated that he has been approached by a few professional people that have not been able to find a house to purchase in Chehalis in order to relocate here. He said that there is a great need for new housing in the city. He asked that if anyone knows a developer, to please promote this need in Chehalis. Larry shared that realtors are saying that the housing inventory is the lowest it has ever been and the Hirst decision is holding up new construction in unincorporated Lewis County due to water rights. Terry Harris shared that the City is running out of physical space for development. Randy Mueller stated that the Lewis EDC strategic plan shows this area in need of professional housing.

Patty Kaija shared an upcoming Holiday Open House at Kaija's Garden & Pet on November 17, 18, and 19. The announcement will be on Facebook today. She is offering 25% off for local businesses.

Chris Sampson shared the upcoming Boys & Girls Club breakfast fundraising event, "The Most Important Meal of the Year", is being held on November 8 at 7:30 a.m. at the Pacific Athletic Center Building, 2091 Jackson Hwy. Tickets are \$20 and are available online at <http://tinyurl.com/mimybqcc> or at the Boys & Girls Club office.

The meeting adjourned at 9:48 a.m.

Next Meeting is scheduled for December 1, 2017 at 8:30-10:00 a.m. City Hall Basement Meeting Room
Meeting Notes respectfully submitted by Denny Peace, City Manager's Administrative Assistant.