

## Chehalis Community Renaissance Team (CCRT)

April 14, 2017

### Meeting Notes

David Hartz called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m. The following were present: John Abe, Julie Balmelli-Powe, Stacy Davis, Susan Delaire, Bill Deutscher, Michele Gallagher, Terry Harris, Tamara Hayes, Flossie Heymann, Lori Kahn, Dan Kay, Randy Mueller, Dr. Isaac Pope, Lindsey Senter, Andy Skinner, Annalee Tobey, Ed Wegele, Bill Schulte, Brian Wilkins, Mike Beehler and Hunter Weeks.

**1. Welcome and Introduction of Guests.** David Hartz welcomed Bill Schulte, Brian Wilkins from Rainier Connect, Mike Beehler from the Centralia-Chehalis Railroad & Museum, and Hunter Weeks from the Chronicle newspaper. David noted a larger presence from the L.C. PUD today with both Dan Kay and Stacy Davis in attendance. He asked Dan to discuss the upcoming PUD rate changes with the CCRT group at a future meeting.

### **2. Partner Updates & News**

**Rainier Connect:** Brian Wilkins from Rainier Connect presented information and handed out packets regarding the upcoming fiber optics that will be provided to downtown businesses. There is a need for faster WI-FI for downtown business customers as well as POS system requirements. The fiber optic system does not “go down” like DSL systems. They have plans to run fiber from the back sides of Market Boulevard on both sides of the street. They will be tapping into an existing hub at Security State Bank and then it will be an aerial install down both sides of the street. There will be no underground digging. They will be offering fast speeds at 3 levels: 50/25, 150/175 and 500/250 with prices ranging from \$99/month to \$349/month. Brian can be contacted at 253-683-4231 or email [Brian.Wilkins@RainierConnect.net](mailto:Brian.Wilkins@RainierConnect.net). Dan Kay asked about connection to the Southwest Washington Dance Center located in downtown Chehalis, where he serves as a board member. They have 50+ students and parents accessing the wi-fi daily and they have a need for faster speeds to accommodate multiple users. Annalee will speak with Marsha Greenfield at the Southwest Washington Dance Center to discuss options.

**Southwest Washington Fairgrounds:** Tamara Hayes from the SWW Fair shared that there have been a series of public meetings to get the public's input on what to have at the fair. There is a push to bring “Old Town” back to the fair in August. The previous one was destroyed in the flood in 2007. A few committees have been formed from these meetings: an “Old Town” committee, a work day committee, a STEM committee, and a social media committee. They are hoping to bring back the bank, jail, saloon and blacksmith facades and are trying to rebuild for the fair this year. They have fair clean up days scheduled for June 11, 12-6 pm, and July 8, 10-6 pm for gardening, clean up and general TLC of the grounds. They are hoping to get the high school STEM program involved with the fair this year. They are currently looking for vendor participation for this year's fair. Tamara shared that they are open to alternative ways to be involved in the fair vs. the traditional 6 days/12 hrs. per day vendor participation. Upcoming activities at the fairgrounds include: Community Garage Sale on Saturday, April 15 from 8-5 pm, Country Chicks April 21-22 and the Spring Youth Fair May 5-7. The fair will be August 15-20, 2017 with a theme of “I'm a Fair Kid”. They are asking for and accepting photos from the community from childhood memories at the fair. They are hoping to be able to have vendors or volunteers create collages that can be posted on the fairgrounds for public viewing. Tamara shared that there will be free live music performances during the fair but they did not have the budget this year to bring in a ticketed musical performance. David Hartz asked Tamara to provide a handout at the next CCRT meeting with options/costs for vendor participation at the SWWA Fair. If you would like to be involved with a committee or if you have any questions, Tamara can be reached at 360-740-2656.

**Centralia-Chehalis Chamber of Commerce:** Lindsey Senter reminded everyone that Spring Fling is this Saturday, April 15 in downtown Chehalis from noon-2 pm. They are expecting up to 700 children for the egg hunting and there will be an Easter Bunny for photos at the L.C. Historical Museum. The Rob Fuller Scholarship Luncheon is on May 8 at the Great Wolf Lodge. Lindsey has scholarship forms available if you know any seniors that would like to apply. Also, the Home & Garden Show is coming up May 19-21, 2017. They are currently accepting vendor applications for this upcoming event. They have a good number of vendors already and Lindsey shared they are quite diverse. If you would like to volunteer for this event, please contact the Chamber at 748-8885 or email [thechamber@chamberway.com](mailto:thechamber@chamberway.com). David Hartz asked that Lindsey bring Chamber Directories to the next CCRT meeting for the members.

**Chehalis-Centralia Railroad & Museum Update:** Mike Beehler shared that there will be a new website coming for the CCRM. All ticket sales for special events are online only and they have sold out for the 4 Easter Train rides (200/train) on April 15. Upcoming will be the Mother's Day Brunch Train on May 14, 2017. They are getting an SBS train car from Moses Lake. They currently lease the tracks from the Port of Chehalis and the annual track inspection is coming up. Mike shared that the 1<sup>st</sup> annual Valentine's Day Dinner Trains sold out for both nights this year and this will now be an annual event.

**ChehalisFest:** As Mitch Moberg was unable to attend today's meeting, Lori Kahn and Annalee Tobey shared some of the preparation activities for this year's ChehalisFest. Last year this event was a success with high sales volumes and the LC Historical Museum actually running out of food. This year the event will be on Saturday, July 29. The Chehalis Theater will be showing "American Graffiti", there will be a classic car show, a kid zone, and the Artrails of SW Washington will have art displays downtown. They are hoping to have several vendors from Country Chicks participate this year. Joel from The Shire is looking to have an indoor show for kids, possibly a magic show and music for the kids. Lori shared that there will be media packages available at varying prices available for businesses. Annalee shared they are looking into live music options and a new location for the rally races. Julie Balmelli-Powe suggested Wayne Gray's property as he hosts an annual Jeep Rally on his property and Tamara Hayes suggested the SWW Fairgrounds as they have a track. Annalee advised there will not be a Taste of the NW as Carla will be out of town during this event.

**Executive Director:** Annalee Tobey shared she had been approached by Paul Parker to present at the upcoming WA State Transportation Commission Meeting on April 26 at Centralia City Hall. They will be hearing from local governments and tourism groups from 9-4 on Wednesday, April 26. This is a state policy and goal setting group. Annalee will be out of town, attending the RevitalizeWA Conference. She has asked Randy Mueller from the Port of Chehalis and he has agreed to speak on behalf of CCRT at this event. If you have transportation issues or concerns, let Annalee know and she will share these with Randy prior to his presentation to the committee. Julie Balmelli-Powe asked if the Hwy 6 issues would be applicable to this presentation and Randy Mueller said that yes, it is. Annalee and Michele Gallagher will be attending the RevitalizeWA Conference in Ellensburg April 24-26. This is Washington's annual statewide conference focused on historic preservation and economic revitalization. RevitalizeWA is brought to you by Washington State Main Street Program, Washington Trust for Historic Preservation and the Department of Archaeology & Historic Preservation. The CCRT downtown office now has Chehalis Community Renaissance Team, Main Street Program lettering on the windows (installed by Sign Pro.) There has been additional foot traffic and visitors stopping by now that the signage is in place. Annalee shared that The Pearl Café posted on their Facebook page that they will be leasing the Judge Seymour White House, an historical Victorian house in Chehalis. They have signed a lease, and will begin transforming this beautiful 1904 home into a super cozy, very cool, coffee and book shop called Shakespeare and Company.

### **3. Committee Reports**

**Design**-Michele Gallagher shared that the bike racks have been ordered and they will be donating them to the City soon. The decals have been ordered locally from Twin City Sign and Graphics. Regarding the storefront window display, the Chehalis Foundation will be displaying K-3<sup>rd</sup> grade art work. They are currently looking for future downtown banner locations and the existing banners did very well in the last windstorm. They are still accepting donations for the "Beautify Chehalis" project for plants for the islands and tree pots downtown. She said they are also collecting donations to support the Boys & Girls Club of Chehalis. The next committee meeting is Thursday, May 4 at 9:00 at the CCRT Office located at 60 NW Boistfort St.

**Organization**-David Hartz reported that they will be voting to approve the bylaw changes that have been made for the 501(c)3 organization and Annalee is keeping close tabs on the budgets for CCRT projects. The CCRT Board meets on the third Thursday of each month at 3:00 pm in the City Hall Basement meeting room. The next meeting is Thursday, April 20. CCRT members can suggest board member appointments to the CCRT board.

**Economic Restructuring**-Susan Delaire reports that the Façade subcommittee is using the Yakima Main Street Group as a guide for the CCRT façade program. The program will accept applications for matching grants up to \$2,500 per business location. They will be approaching businesses around May 1<sup>st</sup> for the façade program. Susan Delaire, Trevor Elliott, and Annalee Tobey had a presentation to the Port of Chehalis Board on co-working spaces: a style of work that involves a shared working environment, often an office, and independent activity. This is an opportunity that CCRT can offer small businesses. Randy Mueller shared that the Port Commissioners are looking to boost small business in downtown Chehalis. This has been welcomed by the downtown business community. CCRT has done research and received feedback from downtown businesses. The Port appreciates these efforts. This committee meets the last Friday of the month at noon at Sweet Inspirations. The next meeting is Friday, April 28 at noon.

**Promotion**- Lori Kahn shared that the Experience Chehalis Visitor Guides and the Lewis County Visitor Guides are complete and distribution has begun. Lori advised that Live95 has a public service announcement calendar and you can email Lori at lori@live95.com to add events to the calendar. The committee is now working on the “Why Chehalis” brochure. The Fourth Friday Downtown event is coming up on April 28. “Blazing Saddles” will be playing at the Chehalis Theater and live music will be hosted at Studio K, in addition to other activities downtown.

#### **4. Other Updates/Announcements/Good of the Order**

- There was a suggestion that reminder emails go out to CCRT members regarding committee meetings. One reminder per month for all upcoming meetings was suggested. Lindsey from the Centralia Chehalis Chamber of Commerce offered to add to their existing calendar online if Annalee will provide her with the dates. As CCRT currently uses the City of Chehalis for the website, they do not have a calendar for these meetings. She advised that they will be on a calendar with the CCRT website is up and running.
- Annalee reported the downtown bathroom remodel is underway and the old bus stop is to be walled off and will be a City storage room. The Twin Transit bus stop was moved on April 3. The exterior is to be painted beige and the final project will be to add a colorful mural-type design.
- Flossie Heymann advised that the Chehalis Valley Wine Tour will be the 1<sup>st</sup> weekend in May, May 6-7.

The meeting adjourned at 9:31 a.m.

**Next Meeting is scheduled for May 12, 2017 at 8:30 a.m. City Hall Basement Meeting Room**

Meeting Notes respectfully submitted by Denny Peace, City Manager's Administrative Assistant.