

FRIDAY WITH *Friends*

MEETING NOTES

Experience Chehalis

November 18, 2022 | 8:30 a.m.

Attendees: Brian Wilkins, Annalee Tobey, Terry Harris, Laura Six, Chelsea Barr, Jill Anderson, Jason Mattson, Joanne Schwartz, Kate McDougall, Jeff Robertson, David James, Chris Dumas, Eric Sonnenberg, Susan Delaire, Ashley Stotts

Partner Updates

Jill Anderson, City of Chehalis

- Shaw Aquatic Center had a great 2022 season after expanded services and updates to equipment.
- Music in the Park was a huge success and saw great crowds for each of the three Friday night snows.
- Parks & Recreation's day camps with Skyhawk Sports were a success for a second year in a row.
- National and Chehalis Avenue construction is complete. Both surface and underground infrastructure work was done.
- The fire station has moved to the temporary fire station. The new fire station will take a minimum of 5 years to complete. The new location is on city-owned property on State Avenue.
- The city continues to address issues around the unhoused population. The city is experimenting with options to protect businesses including landscaping and lighting that deters loitering and trespassing. The city is making sure that all their actions are in accordance with recent court rulings. The police department has been working with businesses to collect shopping carts.
- Staff has been working on emergency preparedness as well as staff appreciation. There has been 50% turnover in the past 2-3 years. Cassie Frasier, Jill's admin assistant, is moving to a new position at the airport.
- They city has been in contact with the State about flooding preparedness.
- The city council approved the first reading of the 2023 budget. There are 2 readings. The budget includes a healthy planning budget for upcoming projects. The UGA has expanded in the past years. The city continues to look at annexation and expanding south in the UGA. This expansion would require more police and fire staff which becomes expensive.

Ashley Stotts, Gemini Events

- Gemini Events organized the very successful ChehalisFest vendor fair for the last two years, in addition to hosting many other vendor fairs throughout the year.
 - Ashley is working on a new Ladies Night event on March 11, 2023. She would like to host 25 vendors at the Vintage Grand Ballroom with champagne and shopping. In addition, we would like to use the event to bring traffic downtown to stores during the shoulder season.
 - Ashley would like to have Experience Chehalis sponsor the advertising for the event.
- There was feedback that Centralia hosts a successful event similarly, but the focus of the shoppers often falls on collecting quick freebies and the participants don't do a lot of shopping.

Committee Reports

David James - Promotion Committee

- Holiday bingo begins December 1st
- Experience Chehalis is partnering with Book N Brush and Totally Pawsome to host Santa mailboxes downtown. Kids can "mail" letters to Santa and Experience Chehalis "elves" will see they receive a reply.

Laura Six - Economic Vitality Committee

- 19 grants have been approved this year with \$62,000 worth of private improvements accompanying the grant projects.

Annalee Tobey – Executive Director Report

- Mint City Coffee Company will be opening very soon in the coming weeks.
- Stout Coffee House also opened this week at their location on Pacific Avenue.
- Dandelion Creative Space opened in November. The owner, Jen Kinsman has been working towards this space for some time realizing her dream of creating a space for our community to get creative. She hosts events for people of all ages and her new space is beautiful.
 - Enjoy Christmas in Chehalis on December 3rd. The Chamber will host the annual Santa Parade. Afterwards, McFiler's Chehalis Theater will host three classic kids' movies. From 2-4pm Elf on the Shelf will visit businesses downtown. At 4pm there will be a tree lighting at the Lewis County Historical Museum. Mint City Coffee Company will be providing free hot cocoa.