



MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date: July 15th, 2025

Location: Salmon Room, 201 Locust Lane

RDC website: www.choosebrowncounty.com

Call to Order

Persons in attendance: Sue Lindborg, Chris Schneider, Alyn Brown, David Coucke, Amy Oliver

Absent Members: Jeremiah Reichmann

Review/Approval of Minutes - June 17th minutes were unanimously approved (Alyn motion, David second)

Old Business

- **RDC Website** - Chris reported completion of a comprehensive website overhaul. The site was reduced from approximately 50 pages to 8 pages, removing unstable links to private organizations and maintaining only reliable links to entities like the Community Foundation, Brown County Democrat, Town of Nashville, and Brown County government websites. The site retains the work/live/play model with consolidated content and improved mobile functionality. All RDC board information, meeting schedules, and agendas are now prominently displayed on the front page at choosebrowncounty.com. The website was designed to be evergreen and require minimal updates for several years. The commission agreed to add a link from the Brown County government website directing users to the RDC website for additional information.
- **Community Project Coordination Hub ("Playbook")** - Chris presented a detailed proposal for establishing a volunteer-driven community project coordination hub to facilitate collaboration across county development projects. The concept involves maintaining awareness of development projects, facilitating communications, identifying resource sharing opportunities, preventing duplication of efforts, and connecting projects with appropriate resources. The commission discussed overlap with existing efforts by the Community Foundation's Connections Group and the

Organizations for Nonprofit Excellence (ONE) group, noting potential duplication of efforts. As such, this idea was tabled at this time.

New Business

1. Site Visit to The Steamery

Three commission members visited The Steamery facility in Helmsburg, which is developing STEM-focused educational spaces including music labs, e-gaming areas, culinary labs, ceramics studios, and hospitality training facilities. The facility represents a significant investment in adult and youth education programming and is actively seeking grant funding from foundations including Lilly Endowment and Cummins Foundation. Discussion centered on the facility's potential as an economic development catalyst for Helmsburg, with comparisons made to successful arts-driven community revitalization projects in other regions.

2. Helmsburg Economic Development Discussion

The commission engaged in extensive discussion about economic development opportunities in Helmsburg, noting the area's potential for arts-driven revitalization. Key points included:

- Multiple empty commercial buildings available in Helmsburg core area
- Existing Helmsburg Economic Development Association (EDA) led by Adrian O'Shea
- Previous successful community cleanup efforts that eliminated blighted properties
- Ongoing sewer infrastructure needs with plans submitted to state revolving fund
- Census data indicating Helmsburg/Lake Lemon area has higher population density than Nashville

The commission discussed the need to engage with local stakeholders to understand current development plans and identify how the RDC could provide support.

3. Site Visit Planning

Status updates were provided on planned educational site visits:

- **Hard Truth Distillery** - David reported difficulty scheduling but noted recent Connect event attendance by management

- **Habitat for Humanity** - Sue offered to arrange a presentation by Executive Director Jim, including video materials about their Helmsburg operations
- **Seven Ridge Farm** - Visit pending Jeremiah's availability

4. RED Grant Application Status

Commissioner Tim Clark reported that the grant application was submitted with approximately 22 participants from Brown County and Nashville seeking to develop collaborative planning partnerships. Decision expected in August.

5. Quality of Life Committee Update

Amy provided updates from recent Quality of Life Committee meetings, noting discussions about the new 3% innkeeper's tax (separate from existing 5% allocation) generating approximately \$500,000 annually. The committee is developing framework for administering these funds for tourism and economic development projects, with focus on county facilities like fairgrounds, Deer Run, and Pioneer Village. The committee is seeking economic development expertise to guide decision-making processes.

6. County Comprehensive Plan Status

The commission discussed the current status of the County Comprehensive Plan, which has been approved by the Area Plan Commission and forwarded to County Commissioners for consideration. Concerns were raised about limited public input (46% incomplete survey responses, minimal public meeting attendance). The RED grant application, if successful, would provide resources for enhanced community engagement to strengthen the plan's foundation.

Follow-up Actions:

- Chris to contact the County Government to link the RDC website to the Brown County government website
- Amy to contact Adrian O'Shea about attending the next RDC meeting to discuss Helmsburg development opportunities
- Sue to arrange Habitat for Humanity presentation with Executive Director Jim for future meeting
- Commission to consider drafting a letter of support for the Steamery project