



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

Review/Approval of Minutes - July 15th minutes were unanimously approved (Alyn motion, David second)

New Business

1. Helmsburg Community Development Corporation Presentation

Adrian O'Shea, President of the **Helmsburg Community Development Corporation** (established 2018), presented on current and future community projects. The CDC has been operating with a \$5,000 initial gift from the RDC and additional grants from the Community Foundation.

Key projects discussed included:

Storm Siren Installation: The community identified a critical need for emergency warning systems, as current sirens cannot be heard by residents, particularly elderly community members. O'Shea reported discussions with emergency management coordinator Jacob and potential locations including the fire station and future sewer plant site.

Street Lighting Initiative: Plans for solar-powered, battery-operated street lights with a turn-of-the-century aesthetic to match Helmsburg's 1906 founding. The CDC explored options with internet repeater capabilities to improve connectivity when main infrastructure fails.

Business Development: The community seeks to attract businesses to vacant commercial properties, including the former CMC equipment building (recently purchased and being

renovated) and other available industrial spaces. The **General Store** was noted as the primary existing business providing community support.

Corridor 45 Festival: A proposed regional event spanning from Lake Lemon through Helmsburg to Bean Blossom, aimed at increasing tourism and showcasing local businesses. The concept would include food trucks, live music, and coordination with existing events like the artist studio tour.

The commission discussed potential funding sources including innkeeper's tax revenue and suggested pursuing historical markers to increase state recognition and funding opportunities.

2. STEAMERY Community Learning Center Presentation

Kirstie Tiernan presented plans for the **STEAMERY**, a comprehensive community learning center to be housed in 12,000 square feet of the former sock factory building in Helmsburg. The project evolved from elementary coding clubs to a full community education center.

Facility Design: The center would feature technology labs, ceramics lab, culinary lab, art studio, e-gaming studio, multimedia production lab, and flexible startup/meeting spaces across two floors. Current budget estimates \$500,000 for Phase 1 (first floor buildout) and \$1 million total for complete facility.

Programming Focus:

- STEAM education (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics) for students K-12
- Adult education in AI, technology skills, and income generation
- Virtual AI tutoring systems
- E-gaming programs aligned with Indiana state competitions
- Professional development and certification programs

Partnerships: Established relationships with Purdue Extension, IU School of Informatics, Cummins/Columbus, and various regional educational institutions. The project has ROI grant committee support and multiple site visits from evaluation teams.

Revenue Model: Subscription-based programming, facility rentals, tournament hosting, overnight events, and tourist experiences. Two full-time positions budgeted for facility management and program development.

Additional Business

The commission discussed the home rehabilitation grant program administered through the Office of Community and Rural Affairs, which received 32 applications for up to \$25,000 per home in major infrastructure repairs. Decision expected by September 30th with potential second round if awarded.

Quality of Life Committee meetings continue with focus on innkeeper's tax revenue allocation for community improvement projects.

The meeting concluded with recognition of Helmsburg as a primary focus area for economic development efforts, given existing infrastructure, community organization, and development opportunities.

Follow-up Actions

- Chris Schneider to research/summarize documents on Helmsburg economic development.
- Sue Lindborg to investigate TIF district possibilities and limitations for Helmsburg
- Alyn/Jeremiah to work with Adrian O'Shea to compile inventory of available commercial properties in Helmsburg
- All members to identify potential business prospects and networking opportunities for Helmsburg development

September Meeting Agenda Items

The commission scheduled the following items for the September meeting:

- Habitat for Humanity presentation by Jim Snyder
- Helmsburg land inventory presentation
- Economic development plan review for Helmsburg
- RED grant application update
- Quality of Life Committee progress report
- Home rehabilitation grant program results (32 applications submitted)

THE STEAMERY

Introduction to the Vision

THE
STEAMery

THE
STEAMery
a place to dream // a space to create

Fuel young minds with STEAM!

The STEAMery is where creativity meets curiosity — a space where kids learn, build, tinker, and imagine. Your gift helps us equip the next generation of inventors, artists, and problem-solvers.

Donate today and be part of their future!



THE STEAMERY.ORG

THE INSPIRATION BEHIND THE VISION

- Initiated by hiring challenges in building an AI consulting team.
- Observed low female representation despite leading the women inclusion group.
- Investigated early education to find where STEAM interest declines.
- Discovered critical drop-off points in elementary school STEAM engagement.
- Insights shaped the creation of a community-focused STEAM learning hub.
- Aimed to foster inclusivity and sustain STEAM enthusiasm from a young age.







WHAT IS THE STEAMERY?

- A non-profit community hub in Helmsburg designed to foster hands-on learning in **Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math (STEAM)**.
- Accessible to students, adults, and visitors to inspire creativity, innovation, and lifelong learning.
- Our mission is to bridge the gap between education, workforce development, and community needs, while making Brown County a leader in educational tourism.

Key Spaces:

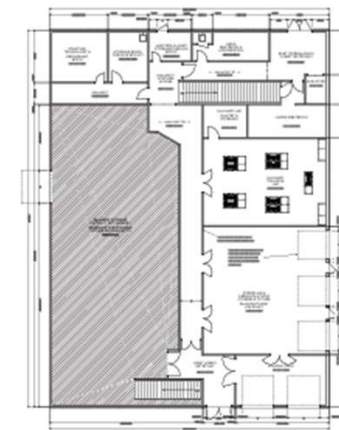
- **Technology Lab:** Robotics, coding, AI, and IT.
- **Culinary Lab:** Culinary training for students and adults.
- **Art Lab & Ceramics Studio:** Classes in pottery, painting, and multimedia art.
- **Music & Broadcast Production Studio:** Audio/video production for learning and recording.
- **eGaming Lab:** Competitive gaming, coding, and programming.
- **Community Spaces:** Lounges and collaborative areas for connection and creativity.

Current Space

- Old sock factory administrative office areas owned by The Beamery
- Over 12,000 square feet
- Agreed upon intent to lease
- Solid structurally but will need build-out, including elevators, restrooms, hallways, etc.



Floor 1

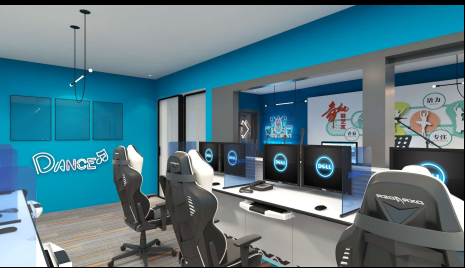


Floor 2



Visioned Space





IMPACT ON SCHOOLS AND THE COMMUNITY

Benefits to Schools:

- **Expanded STEAM Access:** Enhances student learning beyond the classroom.
- **Robotics and Coding Clubs:** Supports competitions and team-building.
- **Career Readiness:** Hands-on training for tech, hospitality, and arts jobs.
- **Field Trips and Programming:** Engages students across all Brown County schools.

Community Impact:

- Draws visitors, boosts local tourism, and strengthens the local economy.
- Offers lifelong learning opportunities for adults and students.
- Supports workforce development in key industries like hospitality and technology.

Projected Outcomes:

- First year goal of 1,000 guests expected, driving tourism and economic growth.
 - Increased community engagement and educational support through events, classes, and workshops.
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THE PLAN

Three Phases of Development:

- 1. Phase 1:** Structural build-out for level 1 – hallways, lounges, HVAC, restrooms, culinary, and ceramics labs.
- 2. Phase 2:** Structural build-out for level 2 + Lab build-out – equipping technology, culinary, music, art, ceramics, and eGaming labs.
- 3. Phase 3:** Operational sustainability – ongoing programming, staff, IT, security, utilities, and maintenance.



THE PLAN

Where We Are Now:

- ~~Planning and Visioning~~
- ~~Community Support~~
- Fundraising via Grants and Prospective Donor Outreach

How You Can Support:

- Sponsorship of a Named Lab or Program Track
 - Fund a core learning space (e.g., Engineering Lab, Innovation Studio) or a recurring program track (e.g., Energy Systems, Mobility & Automation) tied to Cummins' strategic workforce priorities.
 - Engineer-in-Residence Partnership
 - Provide rotational staff from Cummins to serve as mentors or technical advisors in STEAMery programs, helping to guide students through real-world challenges and prototype development.
 - Collaborative Project Development
 - Co-develop a capstone challenge, student-led innovation sprint, or internship pipeline that focuses on emerging fields like sustainable power, AI in manufacturing, or data-driven maintenance.
 - Capital Equipment or Technology Donation
 - Donate retired tools, machines, or software licenses to outfit the Fab Lab, Mechanical Systems Lab, or data science program with industry-grade capabilities.
 - Attend our monthly **Vision Open House** to learn more. Our next one is - **August 18, 2025, at 6 PM** to see the space and learn more.
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RESOURCES

- **Website:** <https://www.thesteamery.org/>
- **Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/theSTEAMery>
- **Instagram:** [The STEAMery \(@the_steamery_org\)](#)
- **ChatGPT:** [ChatGPT - Ask The STEAMery](#)
- **Featured Article:** [Our Brown County](#)
- **Board of Directors:**
 - Kirstie Tiernan
 - David Watters
 - Scott Damer
 - Alyssa Stanley
- **Committees:** 20+ community members



THANK YOU

Kirstie Tiernan
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www.thesteamery.org



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