

**PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
SEPTEMBER 21, 1:30 P.M. ANNEX BUILDING**

ATTENDANCE: Chairman Justice Michael White, Justice Rick Ash, Justice Neil Burge, Justice Molly Jackson, Justice Betty Hepler, Justice Tobye McClanahan, Justice Harbans Mangat, Justice Cecil McDonald, Economic Developer Cliff Chitwood, Tamika Jenkins, Public Affairs Tom Henry, County Judge John Alan Nelson, GRED Board Member Randy Scott, GRED Board Member Brad Harrison and Osceola Mayor Sally Wilson.

1. Meeting was called to order by Chairman Michael White. Order of business today. The committee met with Economic Developer Cliff Chitwood to discuss the incentive package for Majestic Steel, an investment in the National Cold War Museum and other ongoing economic development projects.
2. Mr. Chitwood reminded the committee of the previously discussed performance-based incentive package for what was then Project A, but is now Majestic Steel. After much discussion from numerous justices regarding how many jobs would be a realistic number to expect from the Majestic Steel project thereby not encumbering too many economic development funds, a desire for more information to be presented in the future so that justices could make more informed decisions, and a timeline that the Majestic Steel project should be based upon, it was finally decided to offer a three year performance based incentive to Majestic Steel that included a \$300,000 "Screen, Hire and Train program at Arkansas Northeastern College and a \$1 million incentive (\$12,000 per job of Mississippi County residents and \$6,000 per job of Bootheel residents). It was also agreed to express their intention to fund up to 225 jobs at Majestic Steel, if they should attain that number. Mr. Chitwood discussed future plans of housing incentives that would hopefully lead more incentivized workers to live in Mississippi County. County Judge John Alan Nelson informed the committee that there was a group that was exploring Mississippi County as a place to build their new facility. He added that there was a potential of up to 800 new jobs. Justice Tobye McClanahan made a motion to offer Majestic Steel a \$1.3 million incentive that included \$300,000 for the "Screen, Hire, Train Program" at Arkansas Northeastern College. Justice Cecil McDonald seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Mr. Chitwood then said there are two entities (each a \$150 million investment), within the solar field, not connected with any city, that is requesting property tax abatements. He then asked if the county would be interested in issuing those industrial revenue bonds. Next, Chitwood passed around a copy of a \$5 million check written to the City of Osceola from Big River Steel. He added that the check itself proved the value of projects that size. He also passed around an article that discussed an expansion of \$3 billion. Mr. Chitwood said that project would represent a check twice that size and was a project that we would not want to lose. He informed the committee that the state is currently working up their incentive package and once it is completed, he would draw up the county's. Judge Nelson said we need to be very aggressive with the expansion project and not get caught asleep at the wheel. He added that we need to do what is necessary and to make sure the company lands here in Mississippi County and that we are a good partner. Osceola Mayor Sally Wilson told the committee that she wanted to thank the county for the help in the original Big River Steel project, with \$125 million coming from the state, \$14.5 million from the county

and \$2 million from the City of Osceola. She also asked for help in the future and praised the infusion that these types of investments bring. Justice Neil Burge replied that our industrial base is what is making the difference in whether Mississippi County is in a strong financial position in relation to other Delta counties. We've lost population, but we're probably in the best financial position in 20-30 years because of the return on our investment. Judge Nelson and Justice White both agreed. Justice Cecil McDonald asked if there was any way to incentivize the hiring of more local people into management positions. Chitwood next discussed a potential truck assembly plant. Justice Tobye McClanahan then made a motion to appropriate \$500,000 for the National Cold War Museum and Justice Neil Burge seconded. The motion passed.

3. Meeting adjourned.

Minutes submitted by: Tom Henry