

# Committee debates pros, cons of forming EDC

By COURTNEY HUGHETT  
Brown County Democrat

The Brown County Quality of Life Innkeepers’ Tax Steering Committee met again Wednesday morning, July 9 to continue shaping a plan for how to use millions in new innkeepers’ tax revenue, with a focus on economic development, tourism infrastructure and long-term sustainability.

Much of the meeting centered on the future formation of an Economic Development Corporation (EDC) for Brown County, a nonprofit organization that would pursue outside funding, manage local projects and support both quality-of-life improvements and tourism-driven initiatives.

Committee Member Brian Tadlock began the meeting by presenting a comprehensive “project component summary,” a document compiled from notes taken during every committee meeting to date. The summary outlines potential projects, needed upgrades, and ideas for generating sustainable revenue through events like pickleball tournaments and ball diamond rentals.

“This document shows how each project might bring in revenue and what maintenance or upgrades would be required,” said Tadlock. The summary also includes cost-recovery possibilities and estimates for potential earnings at places like the fairgrounds, Covered Bridge, or the overlook.

Another part of the presentation focused on a 2019 economic development plan that, while dated, still offers relevant goals for the county. Those include tackling population decline, increasing housing diversity and affordability, upgrading water and wastewater infrastructure, preserving the environment and boosting tourism.

“There’s a lot in the 2019 plan that still applies today,” one committee member noted, citing specific examples like trail expansions, outdoor spaces, festival enhancements and artisan markets. “The difference now is that we actually have money to work with.”

Participants repeatedly emphasized the connection between workforce sustainability and quality-of-life factors. “We have to ensure our school system remains viable. That means having families and young people living here and staying here,” said Committee member Scott Rudd. “And quality of life is what keeps people here.”

Affordable housing was identified as a key barrier. Rudd pointed out that even households earning \$60,000 or more struggle to find suitable housing in Brown County. “We need more housing stock across all income levels,” he said.

Several members supported creating an EDC as a way to coordinate investments and pursue grants, especially given the limited capacity of existing

county government offices. A draft proposal for the EDC was presented, outlining its structure, purpose and funding mechanisms. The nonprofit would include a board of directors representing key sectors like tourism, housing, business, education and local government. It would also serve as a central hub for grant applications, project vetting and aligning county projects with regional planning efforts, including those by ROI, Uplands and other development districts.

The EDC could potentially receive funding from several sources: annual contributions from local governments, membership dues from local businesses and utilities, administration fees on grants, developer coordination fees, and sponsorships from events and corporate partners.

However, the group made clear that it does not have the authority to officially form an EDC. “This group wasn’t created to decide which nonprofits get formed,” said Rudd. Instead, the committee will make a recommendation to county decision-makers on the formation of such an entity.

A discussion also emerged about possibly creating a second nonprofit focused strictly on quality-of-life initiatives, with the EDC focusing more narrowly on economic development and tax base growth. Several members noted

the strong overlap between the two missions, suggesting the need for collaboration but clear role definitions.

“Both organizations would likely be working on the same types of projects, like housing, trails, infrastructure, but from different angles,” said Committee member Jimmy Tilton.

The group discussed how an EDC could act as the main point of contact for outside investors and developers, helping guide them through the complex local government landscape. “The most important thing this entity can do is help people get things done,” said Committee Member Gary Huett. “Right now, there’s no one to call.”

The committee also reviewed a preliminary budget projection. If current innkeepers’ tax collections hold steady and with the 3 percent recently implemented, the county could collect around \$2.1 million in 2026. Committee members discussed using a portion of that, possibly around \$250,000, to offset county general fund expenses, such as parks and public safety costs currently paid by taxpayers.

“This tax can provide real relief to residents,” one committee member said. “But we also have to be careful and accountable about how it’s spent.”

A key point of the discussion was whether projects should be fully funded by innkeepers’ tax money or if the county should

use it as match funding to unlock larger state and federal grants. Committee members agreed that a match-based strategy would likely stretch funds further.

Toward the end of the meeting, members acknowledged that the county’s current comprehensive plan, used for long-term land use and development, is outdated. Though an updated plan is in the works, concerns were raised about low public participation and whether the new plan will be adopted anytime soon.

Rather than wait for that plan, Committee member Rudd proposed supporting a new regional economic development strategy through an existing partnership with Monroe and Owen counties. That project is already fully funded and ready to launch.

The meeting concluded with agreement on next steps including gathering questions for subject matter experts from the Indiana Economic Development Association and ROI, who are expected to attend the committee’s next meeting. These experts will help guide the group on best practices for forming and operating an EDC and quality-of-life-focused nonprofit, while also ensuring legal compliance and transparency in how tax dollars are allocated.

The next Quality of Life Innkeepers’ Tax Steering Committee meeting is scheduled for July 23 at 9 a.m.

## Entertainment committee discusses STEAMery support, future jazz event

By COURTNEY HUGHETT  
Brown County Democrat

The Nashville Arts and Entertainment Committee met on July 10 to discuss ongoing funding priorities, community project support, and a potential new concert event at Deer Run Park.

### STEAMery Project

Committee members spent a significant portion of the meeting discussing The STEAMery, a community maker space and education initiative based in Brown County. Although a planned presentation by STEAMery Director Kirstie Tiernan did not occur due to her absence, the group reviewed materials summarizing the project’s goals and fundraising needs.

The STEAMery is currently seeking \$250,000 for building renovations in phase one and up to \$900,000 in total for launch costs, including equipment for its innovation labs, which focus on science, technology, engineering, arts, and math education.

“This continues to grow. It’s going to be stellar,” said Phil McKown, with others agreeing that it could be a valuable asset for both local youth and tourism. Members praised STEAMery’s partnerships with CRC (Career Resource Center) to offer classes in culinary arts, AI, robotics, and coding.

Committee members discussed attending the upcoming open house and expressed interest in offering financial support or another form of assistance. “We should support them in every way possible,” said Committee Member Melanie Voland. The other committee members agreed.

### Jazz concert

The committee plans to apply for an Indiana Arts Commission (IAC) grant to fund a free outdoor jazz concert called “Music Under the Stars” at Deer Run Park in summer 2026.

The event would likely take place in the evening - possibly from 7 to 10 p.m. - and feature jazz bands or performers in a picnic-style setting. The area around the park’s shelter house, with electricity and ample space, was identified as a preferred location.

Committee members noted that this type of music event fills a gap in the county’s current cultural offerings. “We don’t have a jazz niche here, and we want one,” Committee Member Voland said.

The idea is to test the event format and community response, with the possibility of expanding to a recurring concert series in future years. Committee members will clarify questions about alcohol rules, insurance requirements, and noise ordinances with the Parks Department and other county entities before finalizing the grant application, which is due in September.

A potential collaboration with the Brown County Community Foundation’s picnic basket fundraiser was also discussed, aiming to enhance the event experience while supporting local causes.

The next committee meeting is expected to include updates on logistics, budgeting, and potential artist bookings for the proposed concert.

### Other business

■ Art Walk Brochures: 1,000 brochures were printed and will be

distributed to local businesses, visitor centers, and public facilities. The committee is also considering updating the event’s logo and signage to reflect its new “Second Saturdays” schedule.

■ Art Walk Signage: Members agreed that visual markers — such as flags or signs — should be placed outside participating galleries and businesses. They are exploring inexpensive printing options to create reusable signage.

■ Second Story Studio’s Exhibit Success: The recent “Intimate Forms” exhibit, a collaboration with the Kinsey Institute, was praised as a major success with over 100 attendees and strong sales. The committee hopes the event becomes annual.

■ Sidewalk Art Enhancement Grant: Although still in early stages, members are interested in working with the town on a future artistic sidewalk improvement project, potentially leveraging innkeepers’ tax funding or other grants.

■ The committee reviewed its current budget, noting: The Arts and Entertainment fund held \$4,559 as of June 12.

■ A Brown County Community Foundation fund managed for the committee had \$97,475.70 as of June 30.

■ The 307 EDIT fund is fully depleted, while the 306 EDIT fund retains a balance of \$1,500.

Given the strong fund balance, the committee discussed potential locations later this year, including funding for the Christmas tree lighting ceremony music and possibly the Christkindl Market.

The next meeting of the committee is Aug. 14 at 10 a.m.

## GOVERNMENT CALENDAR

### Wednesday, July 23

**BROWN COUNTY QUALITY OF LIFE WORK GROUP MEETING** — 9-11 a.m., Salmon Room, Brown County Government Building, 201 Locust Lane, Nashville.

**BZA MEETING, 6-9 P.M., SALMON ROOM** — Brown County Government Building, 201 Locust Lane, Nashville.

### Monday, July 28

**BROWN COUNTY ALCOHOL BEVERAGE & TOBACCO COMMISSION** — 11 a.m.-noon, Salmon Room, Brown County Government Building, 201 Locust Lane, Nashville.

**HELMSBURG REGIONAL SEWER EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING** — 5:30 p.m., Brown County Community Church, 2370 Main St., Helmsburg. To discuss the SRF Fund to update the current Sewer Plant.

## Introducing Madalyn Doublett, DO General and Breast Surgery



Dr. Doublett is a board-certified general surgeon specializing in breast surgery, colon surgery, and hernia repair.

She was drawn to work at CRH for our “strong reputation among patients and within the community for compassionate and comprehensive care.”

Dr. Doublett attended Arizona School of Osteopathic Medicine in Glendale, Arizona, and completed her residency at Wright State Boonshoft School of Medicine in Dayton, Ohio.

She recently joined Columbus Regional Health General Surgery located at 2325 18th Street, Suite 220, Columbus.

Contact Dr. Doublett at her office at **812.376.5640**.



Scan the QR Code to watch a short video featuring Dr. Doublett.



Learn more at **crh.org/surgery**

### Rotary Club

Members of the community, especially those interested in exploring opportunities to participate in projects and to be of service to our community, are invited to attend. You may also join us via Zoom

using a link obtained by visiting [www.RotaryClubofBrownCounty.org](http://www.RotaryClubofBrownCounty.org) and clicking on the “Contact us” URL.

### Hopeful Planters Club

The Hopeful Planters Gardening Club of Nashville is seeking new

members for 2025. The club, which has been in operation since 1951, meets the third Tuesday of each month at different places. Club members study plants and trade seeds.

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## CLUB NEWS