



**Leesburg Economic Development Commission
REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING**

April 7, 2021

7:00p.m.

WebEx

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Roll Call**
- 3. Adoption of the Agenda**
- 4. Approval of Minutes**
 - a. March 3, 2021
- 5. Petitioners (5 minutes each)**
- 6. Liaison Comments (5 minutes)**
- 7. Staff Report**
- 8. Liaisons to Other Commissions and Committees**
- 9. Old Business**
- 10. New Business**
 - a. Planning for the Business Forum
 - b. Planning and Zoning Presentation
- 11. Commissioner Comments (5 minutes)**
- 12. Chairman's Comments (5 minutes)**
- 13. Adjournment**

This meeting will be held electronically pursuant to and in compliance with the Amended Ordinance to Ensure the Continuity of Governance during the State of Emergency Caused by the COVID-19 Pandemic, adopted by the Leesburg Town Council on January 12, 2021. Members of the public who wish to participate or to provide comments during any public comment portion of the meeting may do so by WebEx or phone. Additionally, comments may be emailed to Russell Seymour at rseymour@leesburgva.gov.

Join by WebEx:

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**Leesburg Economic Development Commission
REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING
March 3, 2021
7:00p.m.
WebEx**

Commission Members Present: Eric Byrd; James Choi, Marantha Edwards, Britta Neel, and Brittany Youkers

Commission Members Absent: Curtis Allred, Patrick Williams

Staff Liaison Present: Leesburg Councilman Ara Bagdasarian; Dana Kunzelman, Diversity Commission Liaison

Staff Present: Economic Development Director Russell Seymour; Business Development and Retention Manager Melanie Scoggins

AGENDA

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00p.m. by Chair Byrd.

2. Roll Call

Chair Byrd asked for the Calling of the Roll by Director Seymour; Director Seymour stated a quorum was present.

3. Adoption of the Agenda

Motion by Commissioner Edwards to adopt the Agenda; seconded by Commissioner Choi. Motion carried.

4. Approval of Minutes

Motion by Commissioner Edwards to adopt the Minutes; seconded by Vice Chair Youkers. Motion carried.

- February 3, 2021
- February 11, 2021
- February 22, 2021

5. Petitioners

None.

6. Liaison Comments

Councilman Bagdasarian expressed his gratitude for his role as liaison to the EDC, and added that economic development is critical now more than ever due to the pandemic. He noted that getting through the next six months to a year and emerging strongly is critical, and looks forward to assisting from a Council perspective. Councilman Bagdasarian referenced an email sent by Susan Berry Hill regarding the Town Plan, and added that alignment with the Plan is critical.

Dana Kunzelman, Diversity Commission Liaison, mentioned the importance of the EDC's work, and looks forward to being a liaison since diversity and inclusion are important topics.

7. Staff Report

Leesburg Business Survey. Director Seymour provided an update on the pandemic business program, and credited Manager Scoggins with her hard work on the program, including double checking the many applications received. Director Seymour added that the applications opened on Friday, and had to be closed early Monday. Director Seymour mentioned that 150 businesses will be receiving funds as a part of this program. Further discussions ensued on the business survey trends.

Flower & Garden Festival. Manager Scoggins is working with Leesburg Parks & Recreation to ensure inclusion of downtown businesses in this event. Manager Scoggins added information on promoting the event including promoting downtown businesses is forthcoming. Manager Scoggins noted several marketing ideas have been discussed such as a physical card obtained at the Festival; eat a meal/have a drink, visit a public art installation, in addition to various social media components. Manager Scoggins mentioned that a business may choose to participate in any way they wish, and that information will be scanned to our website. She added that presently the Festival will not have food trucks on site, and welcomes any suggestions from the EDC on ways to bring visitors downtown during this event.

Curbside Pick-Up Signage. Director Seymour mentioned that, in addition to parking meters being covered up, some areas feature curbside pick-up signs. Director Seymour noted it is staff's recommendation to keep some of those operational, as businesses rely heavily on those signs. Director Seymour added that the Department of Public Works is developing in-house a metal 10-minute curbside pick-up sign which is scheduled for approval at the second Council meeting in March.

Economic Development Website. Director Seymour indicated that an RFP is moving forward; and that he and Manager Scoggins will respond to the 147 questions received. He added that the website will be an advertising arm for local businesses, and will be an upgrade to the many different items we were unable to provide at this point.

Airport Commission Liaison. Director Seymour referenced the Leesburg Airport Ad Hoc Committee meetings of February 24, March 3, and an upcoming meeting on March 10. He added that Vice Chair Youkers attended the first two meetings, and will attend next week as well. Director Seymour noted the Airport Commission's interest in appointing a liaison to the

EDC and suggested that the EDC place on its April 7, 2021 Agenda the appointing of a liaison to represent the EDC. Regarding the airport, Councilman Bagdasarian referenced a past annual airport presentation to Council which he would like to see again in the future.

Ribbon Cuttings. Director Seymour mentioned upcoming ribbon cutting ceremonies:

- Leesburg Gourmet
- HoneyBaked Ham Company
- Robin Lee Hair and Makeup
- Smiles Leesburg

8. Business Recovery

a. Virtual Business Forum

Chair Byrd opened the floor for discussion on holding a virtual business forum. Discussions ensued. Motion by Chair Byrd; seconded by Commissioner Edwards. Motion carried.

- The EDC scheduled a business forum for Thursday morning, April 22, 2021.
- A subcommittee will establish a format to be reviewed and submitted for final approval at the April 7, 2021 EDC meeting.
- Commissioners Edwards and Choi are willing to work on the subcommittee; Vice Chair Youkers can provide back-up and review.

b. Leesburg Gift Card Program/Campaign –

Chair Byrd opened the floor for discussions on a gift card program to tie into Locally Leesburg, and added that there are many details to work through. Manager Scoggins expressed concern about how the program would be addressed. Chair Byrd added that logistics and complications make it difficult. Commissioner Choi expressed that it would be a large task. Vice Chair Youkers indicated it would be a challenging situation, and that she would be willing to explore other ways to encourage residents to get out and support the community. Commissioner Edwards stated that part of the Locally Leesburg campaign is the value of shopping local. Discussions ensued and Chair Byrd indicated that the gift program would no longer be considered.

Chair Byrd suggested the EDC hold another brainstorming meeting and for the commissioners to bring ideas.

Ms. Kunzelman indicated she would be happy to work to reach businesses, and that Leesburg businesses may not be Covid ready; provide education on how to bring in people safely is an area of opportunity. Councilman Bagdasarian mentioned the importance of building confidence to dine in and shop safely.

Director Seymour suggested that commissioners submit ideas to him, which he will compile and send out every other day. Chair Byrd indicated that, as an action item, commissioners email to Director Seymour a list of ideas to share at the April 7, 2021 EDC meeting, and directed that an Agenda item be added to choose two or three ideas to explore and that discussions be held regarding sub-committees/task forces, etc. Chair Byrd noted at the beginning to keep the ideas

broad, and confirmed the dropping of a gift card program.

9. Liaisons to Other Commissions and Committees –

Chair Byrd noted the importance of the EDC commissioners to interact with other boards and commissions. Chair Byrd added the areas of importance are Diversity, Public Arts, Airports, and Technology. Chair Byrd opened the floor to discuss the interest of any commissioner in a particular board/commission. Discussions ensued and the following liaison recommendations were suggested:

- Commissioner Neel appointed as liaison to the Diversity Committee.
- Commissioner Edwards appointed liaison to COPA.
- Vice Chair Youkers appointed liaison to the Planning and Zoning Commission.
- Commissioner Choi appointed liaison to the Parks & Recreation Commission.
- Yet to be determined is liaison of the Airport Commission.

Motion to appoint the commission liaisons made by Commissioner Edwards; seconded by Commissioner Choi. Motion carried.

Ms. Kunzleman mentioned the Diversity Committee's commitment to community outreach, and to build personal relationships and trust with local businesses. She added that it is important for the EDC to focus on the development of local business through diversity and inclusion.

Councilman Bagdasarian indicated that Council is totally aligned with economic development as a priority, and he is in favor of appointing liaisons to different commissions as everything centers on economic development in the arts, diversity, and the airport.

10. SBDC – Activity Report for 2020.

Chair Byrd provided an update on the SBDC with an activity report and a Covid activities submission to the Town of Leesburg. Chair Byrd added that the SBDC team is larger than it previously was, and that he was able to increase staff. Chair Byrd added that he was holding webinars since the end of March 2020, and added that the SBDC is available to town businesses for ideas/coaching.

11. Old Business

None.

12. New Business

Commissioner Edwards inquired as to the Mason Enterprise Center (MEC) annual report to the EDC and Council. Chair Byrd indicated he will compile those reports together with Susan Henson.

13. Commissioner Comments

Vice Chair Youkers indicated the presentation helped to see what is presently going on with the SBDC. Commissioner Choi mentioned that the presentation was excellent, and he looks forward to the work discussed in this meeting and to be able to help the Town in any way. Commissioner Neel indicated that the presentation was great, and was interested to see the

percentage of different groups that would be helped by the SBDC. Commissioner Edwards mentioned that it is important to look at the SBDC statistics and the variety of businesses in Leesburg in the future, and she encourages the EDC to review the Town Plan draft.

Uniwest Strip Center

Director Seymour reviewed the status of two developments next to the Home Depot in Leesburg. He noted that a Marriott Hotel is planned, and ground is being broken for a townhouse/condominium development as well. Director Seymour mentioned that the previous Walmart space has been leased, and the developer is hoping to begin breaking ground in late spring or early summer. Director Seymour added that the Shenandoah Square property owners are looking at a development plan that will cover the entire area.

14. Chairman's Comments

Chair Byrd thanked the commissioners for the important work they have done, and suggested that they review the Town Plan documents as mentioned by Commissioner Edwards.

15. Adjournment

Motion by Commissioner Edwards to adjourn the meeting at 9:10p.m.; seconded by Commissioner Choi. Motion carried.