



**Leesburg Economic Development Commission
REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES
April 7, 2021
7:00pm.
WebEx**

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

Commission Members Absent: Curtis Allred, Eric Byrd, and Patrick Williams

Staff Liaison Present: Mayor Kelly Burk, and Councilman Ara Bagdasarian

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

AGENDA

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:07pm. by Vice Chair Youkers.

2. Roll Call

Vice Chair Youkers 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 Choi to adopt the Economic Development Commission Meeting Minutes of March 3, 2021; seconded by Commissioner Neel. Motion carried.

5. Petitioners

None.

6. Liaison Comments

Commissioner Edwards attended a recent COPA meeting at which the following topics were discussed: redevelopment concept for the Liberty Street parking lot; the return to Leesburg of the Virginia Museum travelling art mobile; mural on South King Street; potential mural at

Loudoun museum; potential art mural on the Mervin Jackson side of the building, and on Wirt Street; potential mural on Liberty Street; cultural district banners; and a scheduled special meeting regarding how the arts and cultural district will be addressed in the Town Plan.

7. Staff Report

Flower & Garden Festival – Ida Lee Park Recreation Center – April 17-18, 2021

Director Seymour indicated that the Economic Development Department will host a table at the Flower & Garden Festival, and added that the event is completely sold out. Manager Scoggins has worked with downtown businesses, and 31 businesses are participating in a Bingo card game which will last for the month. Director Seymour indicated that 5,000 Bingo cards have been printed which will draw people into town for the entire month. Director Seymour mentioned that CEO Consultants donated \$300 to create two gift baskets of products purchased from downtown vendors. Manager Scoggins provided additional details on the various promotions being offered.

Manager Scoggins will provide Mayor Burk with a supply of Bingo Cards to personally hand out, as well as a supply for Town Council members to hand out.

Small Business Week – May 3-7, 2021

Director Seymour mentioned that Mayor Burk and Supervisor Kristen Umstattd will be visiting several local businesses to recognize their achievements as part of Small Business Week.

Economic Development Website

Director Seymour indicated that the 30 responses to the RFD has been narrowed down to six and that interviews have been scheduled.

Liberty Street Parking Lot

Director Seymour noted a request from Peter Burnett and Bowman Consulting to present to the EDC their ideas regarding the Liberty Lot. The discussion was to have them attend the June 2, 2021 EDC meeting.

8. Liaisons to Other Commissions and Committees

Proposed appointments discussed at the March 3, 2021 EDC meeting were:

- Diversity Committee – Commissioner Neel
- COPA – Commissioner Edwards
- Planning and Zoning Commission – Vice Chair Youkers
- Parks & Recreation Commission – Commissioner Choi
- Airport Commission – To be determined.

9. Old Business

None.

10. New Business

Business Forum – April 22, 2021

Commissioner Edwards moved for discussion the Virtual Business Forum; seconded by

Commissioner Choi. Motion carried.

Commissioners Edwards and Choi are working on specific content and questions for the forum, and will coordinate with Director Seymour. Director Seymour indicated the necessity for the forum to be held as a recorded, public meeting; thus allowing EDC members to present questions, gather input, and take notes. Commissioners were in agreement that the main goal is to hold a forum. Mayor Burk stressed the importance that the standard procedure of recording Town meetings be kept in place.

Regarding content/questions, Commissioner Edwards proposed topics such as “how are you safely serving your customers?” Commissioner Choi suggested to publicize how well businesses are doing together as a Town to make things safe for consumers, and expressed his appreciation of Staff’s efforts in providing businesses with marketing assistance and advice.

Director Seymour indicated that advertising for the forum will be featured on the Town website, local papers, and an email communication.

Commissioner Choi moved to hold a Virtual Public Business Forum on April 22, 2021, from 8:30am-10:30am; and that the meeting will be recorded; seconded by Commissioner Edwards.

Planning and Zoning Presentation

Susan Berry Hill, Director of Planning and Zoning made a presentation to the EDC on the Legacy Leesburg Town Plan. Ms. BerryHill indicated that the Plan is a policy document for the Town and guides community development, land use, infrastructure planning, roads, utilities, public buildings, parks, and recreation facilities. Ms. BerryHill mentioned that the Plan is mandated by Virginia state code which requires periodic updating, and added that the Plan was last reviewed in 2012. Ms. BerryHill’s presentation included an Overview, Vision Statement, Guiding Principles, and Maps.

Director Seymour noted that the focus from an economic development standpoint should be placed on employment opportunities for Town residents and commercial investment. Director Seymour added that initiatives throughout the Town be focused on a positive impact to the Town’s economy; a highly accessible space to attract a wide variety of users. Director Seymour indicated that from a planning standpoint, to protect residential from commercial; and from an economic development standpoint, protect commercial from residential.

Ms. BerryHill indicated she is seeking the EDC’s overall reaction to the Plan, and welcomes any and all questions and comments. Vice Chair Youkers stated that the Plan is extremely impressive, and agrees with the focus on the commercial tax base. Vice Chair Youkers opened the floor for EDC member comments and discussions ensued. Director Seymour emailed to EDC members a document previously provided to Ms. BerryHill which included his comments on the Plan.

Action Item: Ms. BerryHill seeks comments on the Plan from the EDC which may include the topic of dollars and cents, as well as any other parts of the Plan. Director Seymour requested comments from the EDC no later than April 26, 2021, at which time comments will

be compiled for discussions and voting at the May 5, 2021 meeting.

Motion by Commissioner Edwards for EDC members to submit comments on the Legacy Leesburg Town Plan to Director Seymour; seconded by Commissioner Neel. Motion carried.

11. Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Neel expressed her appreciation of Ms. Berry Hill's presentation; and added it provided good coverage. Commissioner Choi expressed his gratitude for a great meeting. Commissioner Edwards thanked Ms. Berry Hill and commissioners for a great meeting.

WETA Series: "If You Lived Here"

Commissioner Edwards expressed interest in featuring the Town in the local WETA series "If You Lived Here" and added that people may be interested in finding out about the largest Town in the State of Virginia, so close to Washington, DC.

Action Item: Director Seymour will reach out to WETA and advise the EDC on his findings at the May meeting.

Mayor Burk mentioned that Staff is doing a great job promoting Leesburg businesses during these difficult times, and that the Town is holding an average of two ribbon cuttings per month. Commissioner Edwards inquired as to a future plan to reopen commission meetings to in-person meetings. Director Seymour indicated that, presently, there is no definitive date to proceed from virtual to in-person meetings. Mayor Burk mentioned that several commissions have resumed in-person meetings.

Councilman Bagdasarian reiterated the importance of the EDC's input in the Legacy Leesburg Town Plan. Councilman Bagdasarian seeks the EDC's expertise in how to make Leesburg an even better place to do business in a post pandemic world. Councilman Bagdasarian also mentioned that Goossecup Coffee praised Manager Scoggins and Director Seymour for working with them to open a new business during a pandemic; and added that the business is doing very well.

12. Chairman's Comments

Vice Chair Youkers thanked the members of the EDC for a productive meeting, and mentioned that she is looking forward to the Business Forum on April 22, 2021.

13. Adjournment

Motion by Commissioner Edwards to adjourn the meeting at 9:05pm.; seconded by Commissioner Choi. Motion carried.