



Leesburg Economic Development Commission
REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING
25 West Market Street
January 5, 2022
7:00p.m.

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Roll Call**
- 3. Adoption of the Agenda**
- 4. Approval of Minutes**
 - a. Retreat - November 29, 2021
 - b. December 8, 2021
- 5. Petitioners (5 minutes each)**
- 6. Liaison Comments (5 minutes)**
- 7. Staff Report**
- 8. Liaisons to Other Commissions and Committees**
- 9. Old Business**
 - a. Virginia Village
- 10. New Business**
- 11. Commissioner Comments (5 minutes)**
- 12. Chairman's Comments (5 minutes)**
- 13. Adjournment**

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**Leesburg Economic Development Commission
RETREAT MEETING MINUTES
November 29, 2021
8:30a.m.**

Commission Members Present: Eric Byrd, Marantha Edwards, Britta Neel, Brittany Youkers

Commission Members Absent: Curtis Allred, James Choi, Jason Miller

Staff Liaison Present: None

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

Petitioners Present: None

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 8:30a.m. by Chair Byrd.

2. Roll Call

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

3. Adoption of the Agenda

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

4. Welcome Introduction

5. Discussion – Legacy Leesburg Town Plan

Chair Byrd brought to the floor for comments and discussion the review of the EDC suggestions to the Legacy Leesburg Town Plan, and mentioned that, for the most part, the initial suggestions made remained pretty much intact. Discussions ensued relating to the following points:

- Commissioner Edwards suggested the commission not miss the opportunity to reference Councilmember Bagdasarian’s comments.
- Chair Byrd suggested the wording “providing opportunities to residents of the Town” but put back.
- Section 2.1 – Vice Chair Youkers indicated that the words “jobs for residents” were removed for purposes of enhancing tourism.
- Vice Chair Youkers inquired as to whether there is a section on tourism in the document?
- Commissioner Edwards indicated that dollars and cents is the primary area unless the section is on historic preservation.
- Manager Scoggins indicated the word “tourism” was found five times in the document.
- Page 109 - Director Seymour referenced “collaborating with local business groups, marketing and initiatives....to building the Leesburg brand.”
- Chair Byrd referenced wording generating revenue and hotel tax.
- Chair Byrd referenced Section 2.3.1 Diversity Town Tax Base – should tourism be mentioned in this section?
- Commissioner Edwards indicated it is important that the tourism industry be encouraged.

- Wording to be included such as “encourage and promote a strong tourism industry within the Town and tourism contributes to the overall tax base in multiple ways.”
- Vice Chair Youkers mentioned to define the term “day trippers.”
- Commissioner Edwards mentioned that residents are tourists in their own communities.
- Chair Byrd mentioned the importance of focusing on tourists both inside and outside of Loudoun County.
- Vice Chair Youkers mentioned “leveraging Leesburg’s unique brand.”
- Director Seymour indicated he will incorporate into the document discussed comments and changes.
- Chair Byrd is in favor of the term “visitors,” and mentioned that tourists come from out of town.
- Director Seymour indicated that the VTC uses the term “visitors,” and that tourism may take on a very narrow/wide definition when the economy ebbs and flows; and focus will be placed on local and out-of-town “day tripper” visitors.
- Chair Byrd noted that tourism is a specific, significant industry in the Town and cannot be ignored.
- Chair Byrd indicated that in Section 2.1.2 (page 108) suggestions the EDC made were included.
- Commissioner Edwards mentioned the importance to promote the ability of entrepreneurs to startup businesses.
- Chair Byrd indicated the importance of continuing to work with programs to help small businesses grow.
- Commissioner Edwards referenced “flex space” is missing and it does not tie into zoning.
- Vice Chair referenced “maintain a strategy” and to prepare an Economic Development strategy.
- Chair Byrd mentioned the last bullet point of working collaboratively and experientially; Director Seymour indicated this was tweaked a bit to “collaborating with local business groups.”
- Commissioner Edwards asked whether any changes were made to development capability in site transitions; Director Seymour indicated no changes were made.
- Section 2.1.2 – Director Seymour indicated the word “develop” was changed to “encourage.”
- Chair Byrd mentioned that “promote” means to encourage somebody else to do it; “develop” means you do it. He added that it also encourages public/private partnerships; that the Town has an active role in what is developed.
- Vice Chair Youkers believes the word “encourage” takes ownership of the Town rather than develop it.
- Director Seymour referenced the words “develop, encourage, and promote” in the tax base section.
- Vice Chair Youkers inquired as to whether the word “sustainability” would be better; promote and sustain?
- Chair Byrd believes the section referencing “Development and Capability” was all intact.
- Commissioner Edwards referenced the Liberty Street Lot redevelopment and whether comments will be made regarding compatibility with surrounding buildings.
- Commissioner Edwards believes that the Crescent District Master Plan needs to be referenced.
- Section 2.2 – Chair Byrd is in favor of this paragraph and referenced Main Street and diversifying local jobs.
- Section 2.2.1 – Chair Byrd indicated everything was intact.
- Director Seymour concurred, and that language regarding food trucks was added.
- Vice Chair Youkers suggested to add back into the document the words “consider expanding areas in Town for food trucks to brick and mortar locations.”
- Commissioner Edwards mentioned that a half dozen restaurants started up as food trucks; and that should be included in Section 2.2.1 in place of “consider expanding areas of Town for food trucks.”
- Section 2.2.2 – discussions were held regarding promoting economic equality, women, and minorities.
- Director Seymour mentioned the words “continue to identify local opportunities;” Commissioner Edwards believes the words “local” or “primarily local” would suffice.
- Manager Scoggins believes, from a standpoint of working with the business community, the Town needs to develop, work, and promote business.
- Commissioner Neel does not wish to limit opportunities and focus should be on both in and out of Leesburg.
- Vice Chair Youkers desires to keep this broad in the Economic Development strategy; and to break out into goals of local and non-local opportunities.
- Vice Chair Youkers mentioned numerous comments but only one change was made to Section 2.2.2 to the last bullet where “small women and minority owned businesses” was added.
- Director Seymour thought the words “Light and industrial flex space in Town” were important and indicated “primarily in the arc” was broadened to cover the Town.
- Section 2.3.2 regarding the words “invest town funds strategically in areas where town can grow to commercial tax base” were changed to “property tax base.”

- Chair Byrd pointed out the rationale of commercial property tax; and added if there is a residence whomever owns it pays property tax. That property is not responsible for any other tax the Town and no longer generates revenue. Chair Byrd added that a business/commercial property does generate revenue, and that several other taxes are generated from that property. Chair Byrd indicated this needs to be changed back to “commercial tax base.”
- Section 2.3.2, Commissioner Edwards inquired as to Town intention to invest funds in the Liberty Street Development.
- Director Seymour indicated Council was specific in its directive to focus on commercial/tourism.
- Vice Chair Youkers inquired as to whether Sections 2.3.2 and 2.3.3 may be combined?
- Chair Byrd is happy with Section 2.3.4.
- Chair Byrd inquired as to adding a Section 2.3.5 that focuses only on tourism.
- Commissioner Edwards noted branding is important for the Town to realize it is about the experience.
- Commissioner Edwards added there is more talk in the draft plan about data centers than tourism.
- Chair Byrd is in support of adding a Tourism Section 2.3.5 that says one of the strongest industries in the Town is tourism and is in favor a keeping a strong a strong tourism industry with dollars from outside the area.
- Director Seymour reviewed the Utilities section; Vice Chair Youkers does not believe it requires any changes.
- Chair Byrd did not see any required changes on Sections 2.4 and 2.4.1.
- Section 2.3.5 – Commissioner Edwards believes the words “should not be converted to allow” seem strong and suggested changing it to the Town not wanting exclusive residential development.
- Director Seymour referenced Lee Gate, as an example, and preventing this from happening again.
- Chair Byrd is in favor of the words “existing commercially zoned or planned land should remain commercial”.
- Chair Byrd did not see anything on Section 2.4 – Utilities.
- Director Seymour indicated that the HubZone section has to be updated.
- Chair Byrd mentioned he does not want to lose emphasis on the HubZone and to retain entrepreneurs.
- Commissioner Edwards referenced that the Planning Commission talked about solar and wind power, and the importance to specifically call out at a minimum solar power; believe the Town Plan should recognize it. She is in favor of adding the word “solar” before “internet.”
- Chair Byrd indicated that his comments were included in Section 2.6.1.
- Regarding the Economic Development section, Commissioner Edwards inquired as to whether the new fiscal analysis section was passed. Commissioner Edwards suggested adding “This strategy should follow the guidelines provided as part of the Town’s fiscal impact model.”

ACTION ITEM:

Motion by Chair Byrd to provide the aforementioned comments to Council; seconded by Commissioner Edwards. Motion carried.

6. Wrap Up

Commissioner Edwards referenced discussions at a recent Town Council meeting regarding the trailer park, and this is something which the EDC should be aware of. Chair Byrd indicated he is not in opposition. Commissioner Edwards suggested that Director Seymour be present in these discussions, as it ties back to Leesburg not just being a community of \$600,000(+) homes. Director Seymour indicated that the Town has reached out to the County and to his knowledge has not gotten back on setting up that to work on this issue. Director Seymour is of the belief that addressing affordable housing should be addressed by a committee, and that Council has requested, and staff has reached out with no response back from the County.

Commissioner Edwards recommended that Director Seymour and Staff work with the Planning Commission to inform the business community of the public hearing on the Town Plan.

ACTION ITEM:

Director Seymour indicated Staff will send out to the business community a Notice of Public Hearing on the Legacy Leesburg Town Plan.

7. Adjournment

Motion by Vice Chair Youkers to adjourn the meeting at 11:00a.m.; seconded by Commissioner Neel. Motion carried.



**Leesburg Economic Development Commission
REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES
Town Hall – Lower Level Conference Room 2
December 8, 2021
7:00pm.**

Commission Members Present: Eric Byrd, Marantha Edwards, Jason Miller, Britta Neel

Commission Members Absent: Curtis Allred, James Choi, Brittany Youkers

Staff Liaison Present: Council Member Ara Bagdasarian

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

Petitioners Present: None

- 1. Call to Order**
The meeting was called to order at 7:04p.m. by Chair Byrd.
- 2. Roll Call**
Chair Byrd asked for the Calling of the Roll by Director Seymour; Director Seymour stated that a quorum was present.
- 3. Adoption of the Agenda**
Motion by Commissioner Edwards to adopt the Agenda; seconded by Commissioner Miller. Motion carried.
- 4. Approval of Minutes**
Motion by Commissioner Edwards to adopt the EDC Meeting Minutes of November 3, 2021; seconded by Commissioner Neel. Motion carried.
- 5. Petitioners**
None.
- 6. Liaison Comments**
Council Member Bagdasarian mentioned key issues such as the Mason Enterprise Center, the SBDC, the Main Street Program, and the Legacy Leesburg Town Plan. He added that Council will seek input from the EDC on economic development issues.
- 7. Staff Report**
 - Economic Development Website**
Director Seymour indicated work continues on the new website. The website will be the primary marketing and informational tool.
 - Korean Consulate**
Director Seymour mentioned that he, Mayor Burk and Council Member Steinberg attended a luncheon with the Korean Consulate General which focused on opportunities for the groups to work together. Director Seymour mentioned plans

for a cancer fund raising Tae Kwon Do tournament with international competitors to be held at the Ion International Training Center. Grand Master Eung Gil Choi and Master James Choi, of United States Tae Kwon Do Martial Arts Academy (USTMA) will collaborate on the tournament with Leesburg Economic Development, Visit Loudoun, and Ion International.

Main Street Program

Director Seymour indicated that Leesburg has been designated a Tier 2 locality, and that several town-hall style meetings are planned to allow businesses to hear from the State. Director Seymour indicated staff will be attending future Main Street training programs. Council Member Bagdasarian believes this is an opportune time to form a downtown Main Street organization.

Liberty Lot

Director Seymour indicated an RFP is currently being developed the by Town Attorney and is scheduled to go out in January.

8. Liaisons to Other Commissions and Committees

COPA

Commissioner Edwards was unable to attend the recent meeting.

Murals on Private Buildings

Commissioner Miller indicated that progress is being made and a decision is very close.

Airport Commission

Chair Byrd mentioned recent meetings with interested developers and businesses, and that discussions will be held regarding the next steps and providing a report to Council.

Technology Commission

Chair Byrd was invited to the Technology and Communications Commission meeting to share information regarding the EDC. John Binkley has been appointed liaison to the EDC.

Diversity Commission

Commissioner Neel indicated the commission joined the Leesburg Kiwanis Halloween parade for the first time and won the Best Interpretation of the Halloween Theme. She mentioned that several law firms are planning to arrange racism training, and whether the Diversity Commission may participate in such training. Commissioner Neel mentioned the positive feedback of recent visits to Leesburg businesses. Commissioner Edwards believes that a visit to Echo, a nonprofit that offers lifelong support for adults with disabilities, would provide an opportunity to understand how they may hire persons with handicaps.

9. Old Business

a. Virginia Village – Update

Commissioner Edwards recused herself from the discussion on the Virginia Village application agenda item because she has a professional, paid relationship with the applicant. Chair Byrd read the following statement prior to discussion on this item:

"For the record, Ms. Edwards has recused herself from the discussion and any action that the Commission may take on the agenda item related to the Virginia Village land development application, due to an employment relationship she has with the applicant. For the same reason, Ms. Edwards should not have solicited a particular position on this item, as she did in the postscript to her email correspondence to the full commission last evening. I trust that the remaining members of the Commission who will be participating in this discussion will disregard the postscript to Ms. Edwards' email, and that you will act on this agenda item in accordance with your own assessment of its merits.

I would also like to take this moment to remind us all that it is critical that the EDC maintain the highest ethical standard as we do our work. Protecting the integrity of the Commission's recommendations and feedback to Council is of utmost importance. That integrity is what enables the citizens of Leesburg to trust our findings, suggestions and input on matters that affect the businesses and residents of the town. Without that trust we cannot effectively advise and be taken seriously. Since I joined this body six years ago, the entire group has worked very hard to be

thoughtful, transparent, and credible. It is imperative that we continue to do so as we discuss important issues and items now and in the future."

Director Seymour indicated that the item has now gone from the Planning Commission to Council. He added that minutes have been provided to EDC members, along with a presentation to the Council Work Session. Chair Byrd mentioned that it is up to Council to request an official opinion from the EDC.

Chair Byrd indicated the consensus is that a message will be conveyed to Council. Council Member Bagdasarian recommended watching the public hearing, as Council may request feedback on how the economic impact aligns with the economic portion of the Town Plan. Chair Byrd indicated further discussions will be held at the January 5th EDC meeting.

Director Seymour mentioned that the Town usually requests the ROI financial impact, and that Town staff had compiled the project's estimated economic impact on the Town. Director Seymour suggested that Cole Fazenbaker, Town Finance, be invited to the meeting.

b. MEC/SBDC – Update

Chair Byrd recused himself from the discussion of the MEC/SBDC agenda item because he is an employee of GMU, who operates the MEC & SBDC programs, as the manager of the SBDC program being discussed.

Commissioner Edwards indicated that the Town and County of Loudoun have come to an agreement that the MEC will not continue, and will no longer fund the Mason Enterprise Center (MEC). Council Member Bagdasarian indicated the County economic development initiated withdrawing of funding, however, the Town cannot provide support after years of expressing concerns regarding the directory of the MEC and the involvement of the University. He emphasized that this is an opportunity to develop and implement programs to serve those businesses.

Commissioner Edwards indicated that the SBDC has been operating virtually for some time, and questioned should the SBDC begin to see clients in person will that occur at that business or would the County wish the SBDC be located in eastern Loudoun? Discussions ensued on how to grow the entrepreneurs (technical/medical technology) and focus to continue to grow small businesses.

Director Seymour indicated that joint Town and County meetings with each business will continue. Director Seymour believes that several functions of that building should not be lost, including the SBDC, and focus be placed specifically on entrepreneurs and small, start-up businesses.

Director Seymour indicated that Loudoun County did not receive the representation from George Mason that others have received, such as Arlington and Fairfax. Council Member Bagdasarian suggested determining a new model for the SBDC by taking the best of the programs of Mason and aspirations for the MEC.

Director Seymour pointed out the success of the SBDC, including their development of virtual programs. Commissioner Edwards mentioned the importance of the Town being distinguished as a launching pad to attract businesses and added that it is critical to try and keep the SBDC in Town. Director Seymour suggested looking at the successful Williamsburg launch pad/incubator. Council Member Bagdasarian encouraged having connectors, mentors, and advisors and that organizing events/creating opportunities for entrepreneurs such as One Million Cups and happy hours is invaluable.

10. New Business

a. Small Business Focus

Chair Byrd indicated that any budget implications items need to be brought forward. Director Seymour mentioned that the budget process is currently underway. Chair Byrd believes January retreat topics include short term budgeting priorities, present requirements of businesses, achievement goals, determining partners required, sponsors to be pulled in, and grants for which to apply.

Motion by Chair Byrd for an EDC retreat in January to discuss 2022 focus, and to include discussions on short term impact and a long-term small business support plan; seconded by Commissioner Edwards. To enable staff participation in the retreat, Commissioner Edwards suggested that a facilitator other than ED staff lead the meeting.

b. Legacy Leesburg Town Plan

Director Seymour updated the EDC on items to be presented to the Planning Commission and ultimately to Council. He indicated initial mark-up comments of the EDC were provided and that additional EDC comments will be provided to the Council.

11. Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Neel indicated that the EDC has accomplished a great deal, looks forward to the January retreat to continue its work, and thanked the commission and staff.

Commissioner Edwards thanked the commission and expressed her appreciation to staff for their hard work. She suggested that an update on the Technology and Tourism Zones be discussed at the January meeting.

Commissioner Miller is grateful for the chance to play any part in shaping what the Town becomes and is grateful for the work the EDC has done.

12. Chairman's Comments

Chair Byrd thanked the commission for their work and for volunteering their time and is pleased with the contributions of everybody. He added he is fortunate to work with a fantastic staff and is blessed to be working with the EDC.

13. Adjournment

Motion by Commissioner Miller to adjourn the meeting at 8:54pm; seconded by Commissioner Neel. Motion carried.