



**Leesburg Economic Development Commission
REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING
25 West Market Street
Town Hall - Council Chamber
February 2, 2022
7:00p.m.**

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Roll Call**
- 3. Adoption of the Agenda**
- 4. Approval of Minutes**
 - a. January 5, 2022
- 5. Petitioners (5 minutes each)**
- 6. Liaison Comments (5 minutes)**
- 7. Staff Report**
- 8. Liaisons to Other Commissions and Committees**
- 9. Old Business**
 - a. Main Street Program Update
- 10. New Business**
 - a. Small Business Support Options Discussion
- 11. Commissioner Comments (5 minutes)**
- 12. Chairman's Comments (5 minutes)**
- 13. Adjournment**

If you require any type of reasonable accommodation to attend and/or participate in this meeting due to a physical, sensory, or mental disability, please contact Russell Seymour at 703-771-6530. Three days advanced notice is requested.

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**Leesburg Economic Development Commission
REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES
Town Hall – Council Chamber
January 5, 2022
7:00pm.**

Commission Members Present: Curtis Allred, Eric Byrd, James Choi, Marantha Edwards, Jason Miller, Britta Neel, Brittany Youkers

Commission Members Absent: None

Staff Liaison Present: Mayor Kelly Burk; 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 7:05 p.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 Choi. Motion carried.

4. Approval of Minutes

- a. Motion by Vice Chair Youkers to adopt the Retreat Minutes of November 29, 2021; seconded by Commissioner Neel. Motion carried.
- b. Motion by Vice Chair Youkers to adopt the Meeting Minutes of December 8, 2021; seconded by Commissioner Neel. Motion carried.

5. Petitioners

None.

6. Liaison Comments

None.

7. Staff Report

New Business Coming to Leesburg

Director Seymour mentioned that Pupatella Neapolitan Pizza will be coming to Leesburg and will occupy the old Pizza Hut building; zoning issues are being worked on.

HUBZone Informational Forum

Director Seymour referenced the upcoming HUBZone Informational Forum on January 26, 2022 and mentioned that

several regulation changes have been made since 2020. Director Seymour mentioned that Kindra Harvey, of PurposeWorX, will participate in a virtual meeting with approximately 117 active HUBZone businesses in the Town. He added that a link to the meeting will be provided to the EDC to enable participation in the virtual meeting.

Technology and Tourism Zones

Director Seymour mentioned there are two zones (Technology and Tourism) that the state allows a locality to create to provide incentives for business attraction and expansion. Director Seymour indicated there are incentives put together by the Town specifically to help with technology and tourism. He added that information will be provided to the EDC in February or March with a goal to present to Council by summer 2022.

8. Liaisons to Other Commissions and Committees

COPA

Commissioner Edwards was not in attendance at the recent meeting; discussions were held on how to go forward in 2022. She referenced a January 10, 2022 meeting regarding a black history mural, and that submissions for the art park are being placed on social media.

Murals on Private Buildings

Commissioner Miller was not in attendance at the recent meeting; however, noted that good progress is being made. Further information will be available after this Friday's meeting.

Airport Commission

Chair Byrd mentioned a public info session is planned for next Tuesday night at the airport, and a joint presentation is planned to go to Council in February.

Diversity Commission

Commissioner Neel had nothing to report due to a conflict with the EDC meeting date, and she plans to attend the next scheduled meeting.

9. Old Business

Virginia Village Redevelopment Update

Chair Byrd indicated this is the first major redevelopment in the Crescent Design District with major impact in multiple areas for the Town for the next 20 to 30 years. Chair Byrd suggested discussions focus on the economic impact perspective, whether positive or negative, with a goal to provide a recommendation to Council.

Director Seymour indicated that the information is a summation of comments provided as part of the economic development process to be presented to Council as part of the staff package. Director Seymour emphasized that the focus of redevelopment is critical and referenced the limited amount of vacant space remaining in the Town. Director Seymour mentioned he is not concerned about a 60 residential/40 commercial split and believes this may be worked around easily. Director Seymour expressed concern with losing commercial space, since the phasing for this project is heavy on residential at the beginning.

Chair Byrd opened the floor for commissioner comments. Commissioner Miller emphasized that this area needs to be developed, and the idea of legislating how one runs its business goes against his beliefs as a business owner. He emphasized the goal of the EDC is to look out for the economic good of the Town just as any developer or business goal is to make money.

Commissioner Neel is in favor of Virginia Village with concerns, particularly that the commercial office space be more of a priority. She mentioned that it is a street on which most drive daily and has concerns as part of the EDC but also as a resident regarding parking and traffic created throughout the construction.

Vice Chair Youkers believes it is a great project that will extend downtown Leesburg and expand the "live/play" aspect but expressed concerns on the "work" part of the plan. She mentioned that current business may be lost, including commercial space, and the overall trend is that not much space remains to be developed in Leesburg. Vice Chair Youkers also indicated that people may become accustomed to the temporary park built next to a construction zone and fight back upon its removal for an office building. Vice Chair Youkers referenced the Legacy Town Plan Strategy 2.3.3 – focusing growth and redevelopment on projects that will produce non-residential tax revenues. Residential taxes have been

increasing, and that will have to be offset with commercial space. She added that new businesses wish to come to Leesburg and the Town needs space for them to land and grow.

Chair Byrd is in favor of redeveloping the site and for the opportunity to upgrade from Class B to Class A office space. Chair Byrd believes serious risks include phasing and a net loss of commercial space on the property. Chair Byrd indicated that regarding phasing, having commercial office space happen so late puts it at risk, as it may result in losing a significant amount of commercial space on that property.

Commissioner Choi looks forward to the project and mentioned the EDC should provide opinions on economic impact. He added that Leesburg is a great place to live and added that individuals he knows that live in the Town do not work in Leesburg and with so many houses Leesburg is becoming a commuter town. Commissioner Choi expressed excitement about the aspect of commercial space.

Commissioner Allred indicated the importance of making financial sense, and the opportunity for a moderate sized day-time employer (not a government) is extremely appealing. While six to eight years is not that long of a time, Commissioner Allred stated it is not an ideal timeline. He believes that a way to incentivize all players in the process of that timeline could be adhered to. Commissioner Allred questions whether six to eight years from now 115,000 sq. ft. of office space will be needed as much as today. He does not believe the 60/40 piece is relevant. Commissioner Allred believes the entire project moves energy in the downtown area which just becomes a lot larger and consumer demand is there.

Chair Byrd mentioned he heard a lot of echoed themes for the project, that all wish to see some redevelopment there (ultimately a good thing), and that discussions should be held on what to recommend to Council.

Vice Chair Youkers stated when thinking about businesses moving into Leesburg, so many medical tech, bio medical tech and other types of businesses will continue to require them to be manned in person. She added that there are a lot of industries that require space, and that it is too early to determine if people will or will not return to the office again. Vice Chair Youkers wishes to bring into Leesburg larger commercial businesses that are going to pay folks that live in the Town the six-figure salary.

Commissioner Choi had not thought about the aspect of future office space and finds it interesting especially in 10 years from now with technology exponentially changing.

Commissioner Miller mentioned that business owners in Town with whom he has spoken convey the need for daytime people to work in Leesburg, however, the question is whether it is needed desperately enough. Creating an opportunity for placing businesses where people reside and making it happen is important, when and how is the question (perhaps smaller office buildings). Commissioner Miller indicated the example of the Reston Town Center which remains packed and added that people from the office buildings are still going to restaurants.

Commissioner Neel mentioned that human nature indicates people work better in person. Commissioner Neel also mentioned a potential need for more parking spaces.

Commissioner Allred inquired as to the statistics of occupancy for office square footage. Chair Byrd indicated the vacancy rate is 12% or thereabouts. Chair Byrd indicated since building is proposed in phases, he fears commercial phases are at risk. Commissioner Allred asked whether Council could encourage the development plan and influence phasing, or will the developer be honored to adhere to a plan. Chair Byrd mentioned there are ways to structure approval of permits/dependencies and indicated more important is phasing.

Vice Chair Youkers mentioned it is safe to say that not everyone is going to be working from home. She expressed concerns if the trend of projects proposing commercial space coming to Leesburg turns into building all homes, the resulting loss of office space will significantly hurt the Town.

Commissioner Miller asked whether an incentive may be given to encourage a change the phasing. Chair Byrd mentioned that attention must be paid to trends, to be taken seriously is the fact that the Town is running out of office space and is in favor of incentivizing. Commissioner Miller is in favor of incentivizing non-retail-oriented businesses. Vice Chair Youkers hopes for a sustainable community where everyone is thriving. Commissioner Allred believes it is important to

keep in perspective the redevelopment of Virginia Village and the Crescent Design District and does not believe there is a lot of negative. Vice Chair Youkers inquired as to the benefits if it is all residential. Commissioner Allred does not advocate all residential, and there is going to be a split no matter what. Chair Youkers mentioned the percentage of a 90/10 split, and that hypothetically the commercial could be retail space – a big difference from office. Commissioner Miller agrees that something should be developed there rather than nothing and mentioned the creation of incentives and steps to make those things happen. Commissioner Neel does not wish to look at pushback but what is trying to be achieved. Commissioner Neel mentioned that the economic part of the project is important, and that all seem in favor of wanting something great, not a pushback but a concern.

Chair Byrd inquired as to what happens if this development is denied at this point and understands that nothing happens; not advocating for that. He indicated that if it is not the right development with serious concerns why would we say yes. Chair Byrd does not yet know exactly what the office/work-at-home environment is going to be. It is his understanding that if the application is denied then Virginia Village continues to work as it is presently. Chair Byrd mentioned that if it can come out of the ground all at the same time, it would be awesome. He added that commercial space is needed (tax base) and noted the benefit of having more people work in Town. Chair Byrd encourages the EDC to look at this.

Commissioner Miller stated that if it comes down to our believe that an office building is important to the future of Leesburg, then we should do everything in our power to see that happen. Commissioner Allred inquired as to how to put together a recommendation to approve this project or work with developer to advance Phase 2C. Chair Byrd is in favor of discussing some type of recommendation.

Commissioner Neel mentioned that it would be helpful to understand how phases are done and how the overall decision is made. She understands that phases done in a certain order, with residential being the first to make money to finishing up commercial; and whether we may hear from the developer as to why.

Director Seymour mentioned that information was provided to Planning and a presentation was made to Council. Chair Byrd emphasized the EDC's role is to recommend to Council how it views this project as proposed. Director Seymour emphasized redevelopment is critical. Commissioner Miller mentioned that while complicated, it does not change the recommendation but how the recommendation is reached. Commissioner Choi inquired as to whether the EDC is asking for a change of phasing or for a guarantee and suggests more of a commitment is asked from the developer rather than the phasing. Chair Byrd mentioned he does not believe the Town can force a developer to build the office building, but whether an incentive may be made to make that change. Vice Chair Youkers suggests pointing out for Council more than general recommendations of things to consider; and make a case of trends seen to push commercial earlier in the phases. Commissioner Miller suggests making a recommendation for the optimal outcome. Chair Byrd indicated it is safe to say the EDC is generally in support of the project with the following recommendations:

Motion by Chair Byrd to send to Council the following:

“The EDC supports the Virginia Village Redevelopment Project with a strong recommendation that Phase 2C be moved to the Phase 2A position using whatever methods are available to Council including incentives.” Motion seconded by Commissioner Allred. Motion opposed by Commissioner Neel; motion in favor by Commissioners Allred, Byrd, Choi, Miller, and Vice Chair Youkers.

10. New Business

EDC Retreat

Motion by Chair Byrd to hold an EDC Retreat on Wednesday, January 26, 2022 from 8am-12pm, Town Hall Lower-Level Conference Room 2; motion carried. Chair Byrd indicated topics for discussion will be EDC annual planning/priorities, Town support of small businesses, and the Main Street Project. The commission agreed that non-commission members or liaisons from other commissions will not be invited to participate in the Retreat. Commissioner Edwards mentioned to include fundamentals that Director Seymour and Manager Scoggins wish to work on.

Election of EDC Officers

Chair Byrd opened the floor for nominations for 2022 EDC officers.

- a. Motion by Chair Byrd to reelect Brittany Youkers as Vice Chair; motion carried.
- b. Motion by Commissioner Allred to reelect Eric Byrd as Chair; motion carried.

11. Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Allred is excited about putting together the plan, assuming he remains able to do so. Commissioner Allred expressed his disagreement with the Town regarding the Covid vaccine documentation mandate, and he does not believe the Town is entitled to be advised of one's vaccine status. Commissioner Allred expressed that he has enjoyed the past three years serving on the EDC and looks forward to what the EDC is able to do in 2022.

Commissioner Choi expressed his excitement about the upcoming year and the TKD tournament planned for August 2022.

Vice Chair Youkers thanked the EDC for a great discussion and looks forward to the upcoming year.

Commissioner Neel was happy to voice opinions and concerns, believes the EDC is off to a good start, and wishes to see great things happen at Virginia Village.

Commissioner Miller is happy to have been part of a spirited conversation and debate and noted the importance of being open and willing to voice one's position.

Commissioner Edwards hopes everyone enjoys a healthy, happy, peaceful, and kind 2022.

12. Chairman's Comments

Chair Byrd expressed his appreciation for the commission's willingness to take time for this important work, and he looks forward to working as a team despite occasional disagreements. Chair Byrd hopes he continues to do a decent job as Chair.

13. Adjournment

Motion by Commissioner Edwards to adjourn the meeting at 9:00pm; seconded by Commissioner Neel. Motion carried.

The Town of
Leesburg,
Virginia

PRESENTED: September 28, 2021

RESOLUTION NO. 2021-149

ADOPTED: September 28, 2021

A RESOLUTION: AUTHORIZING THE SUBMISSION OF A TIER TWO APPLICATION FOR THE MAIN STREET PROGRAM TO THE VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

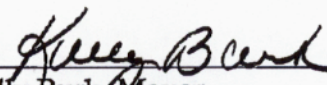
WHEREAS, the Virginia Main Street Program has been established in the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to assist localities in the revitalization of their downtown commercial areas: and

WHEREAS, localities may elect to participate in the Main Street Program at one of four established Tiers; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Leesburg currently desires to participate in the Program at the Tier Two level, and supports the submission of the respective application.

THEREFORE RESOLVED, by the Council of the Town of Leesburg in Virginia that the Council authorizes the Town Manager to sign and submit the formal application for the Town to the Virginia Main Street Program at the Tier Two, Exploring Main Street level.

PASSED this 28th day of September, 2021.



Kelly Burk Mayor
Town of Leesburg

ATTEST:

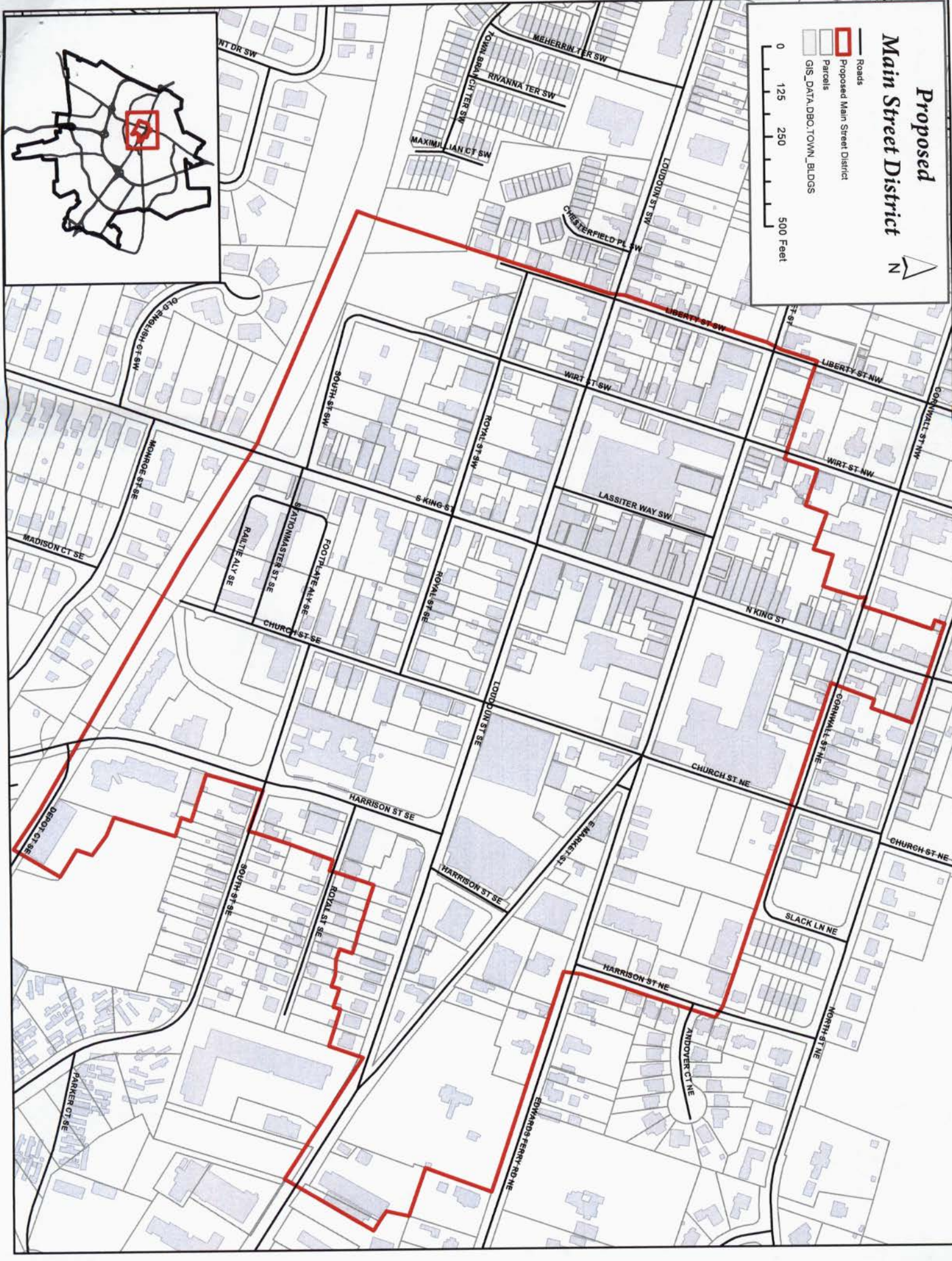


Clerk of Council

Proposed Main Street District

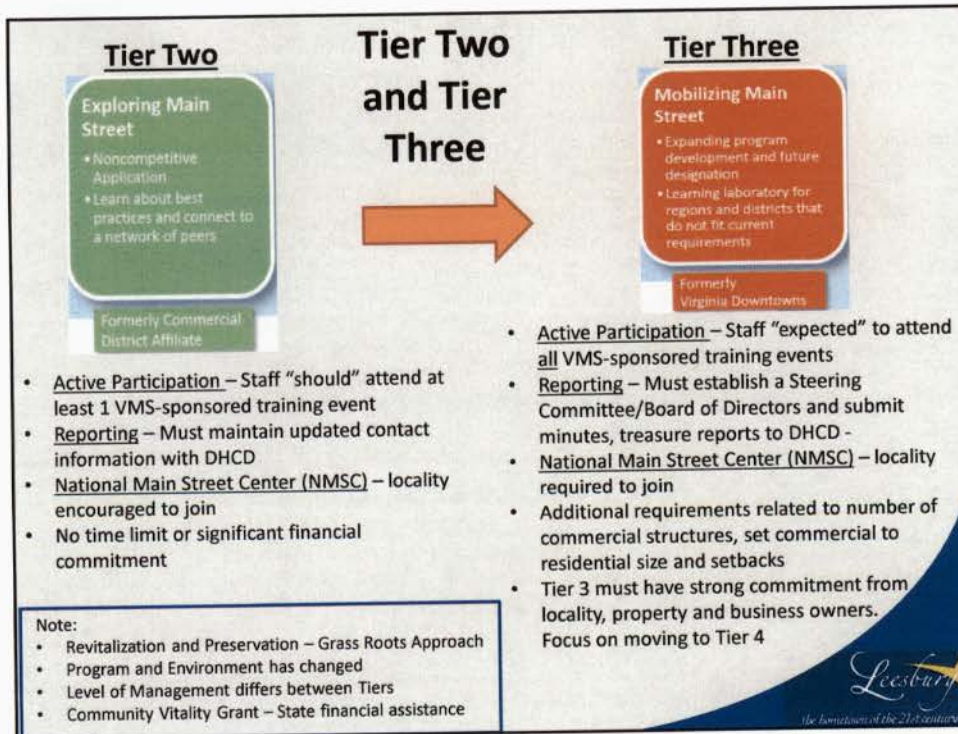


- Roads
- ▭ Proposed Main Street District
- ▭ Parcels
- GIS_DATA.DBO.TOWN_BLDGS





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