



**Leesburg Economic Development Commission
REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES
Town Hall - Council Chamber
August 3, 2022
7:00pm.**

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

Commission Members Absent: James Choi, Jason Miller

Staff Liaison Present: None

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

Petitioners Present: None

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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 McCray to adopt the agenda; seconded by Commissioner Edwards. Motion carried.
 4. **Approval of Minutes**
Motion by Vice Chair Youkers to adopt the meeting minutes of July 6, 2022; seconded by Commissioner McCray. Motion carried.
 5. **Petitioners**
None.
 6. **Liaison Comments**
None.
 7. **Staff Report**

Director Seymour mentioned the recent Ribbon Cuttings events:

- Rebellion Bourbon Bar & Kitchen
- Trek Bikes
- Sienna Sky Boutique
- Pedego Electric Bikes
- F45 Training
- Floor & Décor

Director Seymour mentioned Allison Wood will join the Economic Development Department staff on August 8, 2022, as its Small Business Development and Tourism Specialist. Ms. Wood will focus on areas such as the Main Street Program, small business/entrepreneurs, and tourism.

Director Seymour mentioned the Economic Development volunteer, Stephanie Slocum, will soon begin work. Ms. Slocum has experience in running Main Street programs in other areas and will work closely with Ms. Wood in developing a program for our area.

Director Seymour presented an article on data centers and referenced the uncertainty of their impact on the Northern Virginia market, particularly regarding electricity. Director Seymour also presented an article on Virginia state data and the labor market. Long term occupational projections show information technology as No. 1 in annual percentage of growth, with the next four being medical, vets, and statisticians/IT-related jobs. Director Seymour mentioned that data indicates the difficulty retailers are having in hiring and maintaining employees.

Liberty Lot

Director Seymour mentioned that the one respondent to the RFP will present their proposal at the Council Work Session of August 8, 2022.

Chair Byrd seeks data sources that might be tracked on Covid, ways to gauge working at home vs. office and labor statistics on a state level. Commissioner Edwards suggested this be designated a Tiger Teams task. Director Seymour mentioned that unemployment in Leesburg remains lower than the national average and has returned to levels prior to Covid.

Commissioner Edwards introduced discussions on growth and how the Town may attract workers in the IT and medical fields. She noted this would be an opportunity to determine how universities may provide candidates to us. Director Seymour indicated that reaching out to NOVA would be an option and referenced past successful events with local technology companies. Discussions ensued.

Chair Byrd opened the floor for discussions regarding data centers.

- Whether the subject is a serious part of the EDC's strategy
- Marketing is not required to attract a data center to Leesburg
- Data centers follow the infrastructure
- Leesburg possesses the infrastructure/data center market
- Important that data centers be included in Town Planning
- Data centers are an opportunity that the Town takes seriously

Boutique Hotel

Commissioner Neel inquired on a Council Work Session item for a potential boutique hotel in Town. Director

Seymour mentioned interest has been expressed for a boutique hotel in Leesburg and that people are actively looking for space. He added that the item will be on the Council work session agenda for discussion. Director Seymour supports a downtown boutique hotel, and indicated that it would have to go through the 60–90-day study period, and regular zoning/pre-applications, etc. Vice Chair Youkers and Commissioner Edwards expressed their desire to attend the work session.

Compass Creek Self Storage Facility

Director Seymour anticipates that the Compass Creek Self Storage Facility will return and begin the planning process and that the EDC will have something to review/provide an opinion.

8. Liaisons for Other Commissions

Commissioner McCray mentioned the successful Diversity Commission employment fair in June which provided good insights on job seekers. She added there was great participation from a diverse group of 25 employers, and that IT workers are in demand. Commissioner McCray indicated another employment fair is planned for January 2023.

Vice Chair Youkers reported that the Planning Commission will discuss temporary zoning and provide a recommendation to Council. She also mentioned that Council approved an extension of the temporary outdoor dining zoning, including removal of the six feet distance between tables.

9. Old Business

Tiger Teams Updates

Chair Byrd is looking into how an Economic Development Authority (EDA) gets formed, and to have discussions with Director Seymour on possible benefits/how to utilize that type of body in the town vs. the County. Chair Byrd seeks to not duplicate functions and effort but focus specifically on Town-oriented things.

Town Zoning Ordinance

Commissioner Edwards reported that almost all the elements have been agreed upon, however, there is no timeline. She will provide information to the EDC regarding the zoning ordinance once a consultant is in play. Chair Byrd emphasized the importance of understanding the consultant process. Chair Byrd requested that, as the EDC hears from businesses, that information is provided to Commissioner Edwards. An expected timeline has not yet been established.

10. New Business

Commissioner Edwards mentioned the passing of Paul Reimers, of P&R Construction (in Leesburg for 35 years) and proposed a suggestion to Council to commemorate Mr. Reimers with something that bears his name, whether it be a building plaque, alleyway, wall, or something appropriate. Commissioner McCray asked if a proclamation could be made. Chair Byrd and Commissioner Edwards will work up language and send to Council to appropriately recognize and memorialize Mr. Reimer's contribution to Leesburg.

Commissioner Edwards opened the floor to discussions regarding sidewalks/ADA compliance, Air B&Bs, and the need to check further into zoning ordinances of Air B&Bs.

- Walkability from a diversity perspective – how to get it right
- Some parts of pedestrian system in Town are great; some not so great
- New builds (Evergreen/Meadowbrook) – no sidewalks along downtown to King Street
- Plan to widen Evergreen Mill Road up to Simpson
- Kate Trask, Deputy Director of Parks and Recreation, oversees compliance regulations

- Compliance of major renovations vs. new builds
- Need to check zoning ordinance of Air B&Bs

11. **Commissioner Comments**

Commissioner McCray mentioned the successful Police Night Out event which was held at the mobile home park community which is working on bridging a possible trust gap with this community.

Commissioner McCray inquired as to protocol of commissioners attending ribbon cutting ceremonies. Chair Byrd encourages all commissioners to attend these important events. Director Seymour provided a brief review of the ribbon cutting process and welcomes all who wish to attend.

Vice Chair Youkers thanked the EDC for a productive meeting and mentioned she will forward to them information regarding the Loudoun Aces baseball team all-day event.

Commissioner Neel thanked Director Seymour for the data/mainstream information and mentioned she will provide a Tiger Teams update at the next meeting.

Commissioner Edwards hopes that, at a future meeting, the planning & zoning position on shared parking conversations may be determined as it is critical to future redevelopment in Leesburg. A brief conversation on Zoning Ordinances ensued.

The EDC expressed their congratulations to Commissioner Miller on the opening of Paulie's Italian Kitchen at the ChefScape food incubator.

12. **Chairman's Comments**

Chair Byrd thanked the commissioners for a productive meeting.

13. **Adjournment**

Motion by Commissioner McCray to adjourn the meeting at 8:15pm; seconded by Vice Chair Youkers. Motion carried.