



**Leesburg Economic Development Commission
REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES
Town Hall – Lower Level Conference Room 2
October 5, 2022
7:00pm.**

<u>Commission Members Present:</u>	Eric Byrd, Robert Cusack, Marantha Edwards, Linda McCray, Jason Miller, Britta Neel,
<u>Commission Members Absent:</u>	Brittany Youkers (remote participation)
<u>Staff Liaison Present:</u>	None
<u>Staff Present:</u>	Russell Seymour, Director, Economic Development Melanie Scoggins, Business Development & Retention Manager Allison Wood, Small Business Development & Tourism Specialist
<u>Petitioners Present:</u>	None

1. **Call to Order**
The meeting was called to order at 7:00 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.

Motion by Chair Byrd for Vice Chair Youkers to participate in the meeting remotely. Motion carried.
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 Commissioner Edwards to adopt the meeting minutes of September 7, 2022; seconded by Commissioner Cusack.
5. **Petitioners**
None.
6. **Liaison Comments**
None.
7. **Staff Report**
Director Seymour reported on various subjects:
Leesburg Air Show – Economic Development hosted a booth and passed out brochures highlighting local businesses and provided pretzels and tattoos for visitors. Traffic at the booth was very heavy and constant.

Height Restriction in the B1 District
 - Recommendation is to follow the TOPO lines.
 - Will be looked at by the Planning Commission.
 - Consider allowing special exceptions within that area.
Economic Development Strategic Plan RFP
 - Second addendum completed; received answers to questions.
 - Anticipate by end December or first part of January will have somebody onboard to initiate the Town ED process.

Morven Park – Harry Potter Theme

- Opportunity to get people visiting the event to go downtown.
- Selfie stations with wizardly-themed banners will be featured.
- Visitors are expected from up and down the East coast.
- Seek a way for “subscribers” to receive future event information.

Main Street Program – Allison Wood

- Participants consist of business owners, residents, and community leaders.
- Small-group meetings were held, and people were engaged.
- Next meeting Oct. 19th, links to join the meeting will be provided.
- Resident sessions scheduled for early November.
- Surveys were sent out for feedback on whether businesses interested in moving forward with the program.
- Positive feedback received, with minimal negative feedback.

Compass Creek Project

- Project not yet slated for the Planning Commission.
- Second round of responses.
- Will bring it back to the EDC to take official action once it is on the Council agenda.
- U.S. Tennis Association provided information on what similar cities have done with hotels.

Haunting of Museums - Melanie Scoggins

- The Town is a partner for Loudoun Museums Hauntings (Oct. 21-22, 2022).
- A map is being compiled which will include the Glenfiddich House, Eliza House, Courthouse, the Museum, Presbyterian Church, and the Johnson House.

8. **Liaisons for Other Commissions** - Chair Byrd requested that the Airport Commission, which was omitted on the agenda, be added to the list of liaisons for other commissions.

Airport Commission - Chair Byrd indicated discussions are moving ahead regarding the development of property on the North end to build hangars; this is separate from the task force looking at the West side and other properties across from that location. Chair Byrd added there is significant commercial jet traffic in and out of the airport, with a large corporate presence.

Diversity Commission - Commissioner Neel reported that the commission is experiencing a transition, and that a quorum was not met at its last meeting.

Technology Commission - Chair Byrd indicated he intends to speak with the Technology Commission regarding the recent cyber security process email.

9. **Old Business**

Economic Development Authority - Chair Byrd has no new information to report and will discuss the subject further with Director Seymour.

Town Zoning Ordinance - Commissioner Edwards mentioned a discussion with Betsy Arnett, who expects to begin an outreach in January. The outreach will be to staff and not commissions, and possibly some outreach to businesses. The process should take 12-18 months.

EDC Processes and Templates - Topic not discussed, as Vice Chair Youkers provided a presentation at the September Meeting.

Downtown Redevelopment Projects

Director Seymour indicated that ground is being broken on Church and Market project; parking lot closed on October 2nd.

Liberty Lot

- Director Seymour noted meetings with Planning/Zoning; members will prepare a response to the RFP proposal.
- Proposal received was to build a large housing development and the Town to build a performing arts facility (\$40m cost to the Town).
- Future meeting with Town staff to discuss height restrictions and flood zone.

Downtown Hotel

- Proposal to build a structure next to Black Walnut Brewery.
- A boutique hotel would require a Special Exception.
- Flexibility of current parking will be required for the proposed 40-42 rooms.

Office Demand in Town

Director Seymour indicated he has not seen a slowdown in demand for office space and that the flex office component remains strong. Presently there is very little office space available in the Downtown area.

Mobile Home Site

Director Seymour mentioned that recent discussions with staff included establishment of a residential development on the site and that the owner had also purchased additional property abutting Building People's location (202 Depot Court). Commissioner Cusack noted recent activities focused on utilizing HUBZone resources to provide training and employment opportunities to the residents of the park.

10. New Business

Incentive Zones – Technology/Tourism Zones – Director Seymour indicated that Technology and Tourism zones are incentive zones that provide localities with opportunities to develop local incentives for business attraction and growth. He added that zones are designed, laid out, monitored, and are the responsibility of the locality. Discussions ensued regarding:

- The definition of a technology/tourism company is entirely up to the locality.
- Both initiatives would be a good marketing opportunity.
- Talks with Planning & Zoning Department regarding expedited review and fee waivers.
- Businesses seek to get up and running quicker with less red tape; expedite the review process.
- Look at BPOL as another option to provide a reduction.
- Director Seymour will bring to Council in November, with focus on the Tourism Zone.
- Incentives based on new revenue/additional property tax that would be generated.

11. Commissioner Comments

- Commissioner Cusack appreciated the information on the Main Street Program and believes that the technology zones are worth pursuing. He will soon begin working on that and will provide feedback to the EDC.
- Commissioner Miller is highly in favor of the Main Street Program.
- Commissioner Neel mentioned that the meeting provided a lot of useful information and is in favor of Commissioner Cusack's proposition to work with other businesses.
- Commissioner Edwards was enlightened by the amount of great work staff is doing and wishes to help move it forward. Also mentioned that Leesburg ranked one of the top places to live in U.S. by Fortune Magazine.
- Commissioner McCray appreciated everyone's input and is highly supportive of the zonings; she thanked and recognized staff for their great work.

12. Chairman's Comments

Chair Byrd expressed his appreciation of the group discussions; and is excited at seeing this great team working together.

13. Adjournment

Motion by Commissioner Neel to adjourn the meeting at 8:43p.m.; seconded by Commissioner McCray. Motion carried.