



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

Commission Members Present: Eric Byrd, Robert Cusack, Marantha Edwards, Jason Miller, Linda McCray, Britta Neel, Brittany Youkers

Commission Members Absent:

Staff Liaison Present: None

Staff Present: Russell Seymour, Director, Economic Development
Allison Wood, Small Business Development & Tourism Specialist

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. Motion by Chair Byrd to approve remote participation in the meeting of Commissioner Edwards; seconded by Commissioner McCray. Motion carried.
3. **Adoption of the Agenda**
Motion by Commissioner McCray to adopt the agenda; seconded by Commissioner Cusack. Motion carried.
4. **Approval of Minutes**
Motion by Commissioner Cusack to adopt the meeting minutes of November 2, 2022; seconded by Commissioner Miller.
5. **Petitioners**
None.
6. **Liaison Comments**
None.
7. **Staff Report – Director Seymour**
ED Strategic Plan
Director Seymour mentioned that a firm has been selected.

DED Website
Director Seymour indicated a completion timeline of Spring 2023 is expected.

Main Street Program RFP
Director Seymour indicated a Community Vitality Grant of \$7,000 was received from the State of Virginia. Allison Wood will spearhead the development of a steering committee of businesses and residents, which presently consists of five members: Jason Miller (The Wine Kitchen); Deb Matthews (Dog Day Afternoon); Deborah Morbeto (A Delightfully Different Gallery); John Papp (Resident); and Monica Pindell (Mocatinas).

Tourism

DED staff hosted a booth at the Village at Leesburg tree lighting ceremony and spoke to visitors about tourism and events in area.

Job for a Day

Melanie Scoggins hosted two high school students who shadowed the Town staff for the day. Focus was placed on ED Tourism and the understanding of Town government. Great responses were received from the students and teachers.

Church and Market Project

A groundbreaking ceremony was held for the mixed-use project which will include condos, apartments, retail, and office space. Work is scheduled to begin by the end of December.

Recent Ribbon Cuttings included the Very Virginia Shop, Uncle Dave's Kettle Korn, Birch Tree Books, Virginia Village Private Property Mural, and the Elite Brow Studio.

Harry Potter Selfie Stations

The selfie stations, which tie into the Harry Potter Forbidden Forest Experience at Morven Park, have been a success. An economic impact report from Morven Park is expected in February.

8. Liaisons for Other Commissions

None.

9. Old Business

Tourism/Technology Zone Presentation – Director Seymour

Topics of discussion included:

- What are Tourism and Technology Zones
- Current and Existing Tourism Zones in Virginia
- Current and Existing Technology Zones in Virginia
- Current Program Eligibility Requirements
- Current Program Local Incentives
- Key Business Sectors
- Next Steps

Director Seymour elaborated on requirements from the businesses, the criteria for the zones, designated areas, overlap of zones, criteria for a BPOL grant (percentage or fixed), tax grants (climbing scale), and capital investment (a capital object). Director Seymour indicated that this any incentives would not be from tax money coming out of the Town, but from new money coming into the Town. Commissioner Cusack mentioned the importance of technology/tourism and making businesses aware of what the EDC is doing. Discussions ensued.

10. New Business

Small Business Awards – May 2023

Director Seymour mentioned the selection of a location is forthcoming. Director Seymour seeks to bring back to the EDC the nominating/evaluating process with the previous years' categories and suggests that a nominating/scoring committee be established. Vice Chair Youkers strongly encourages EDC attendance of the event to show support.

Compass Creek Self Storage Project

A plan has been submitted for a self-storage facility on this site; the Town, along with the EDC, is in favor of other uses for that area. Presently no submissions have been presented to the Planning Commission. The US Tennis Association (USTA) expressed its preference for a hotel or similar facility to make use of the benefits of ION. Director Seymour mentioned the multiple steps of the decision such as zoning classifications and special use permits.

EDC Budget

Director Seymour requested the EDC review the budget (presently \$1,200) and provide ideas on the utilization of the funds. Chair Byrd suggested that the costs of the upkeep of the signage maps be included in the DED budget. Chair Byrd recommended that the funds remain in the EDC budget and be used to host a Main Street event.

EDC suggestions included:

- Maps printed in Spanish.
- The inclusion of Small Business Awards expenses.
- The inclusion of Main Street Program and Tourism expenses.
- A more detailed breakout of expenses be provided to the EDC.
- The hosting of several in-person business forums.

- The hosting of a small event with branded notebooks, calendars, etc.
- Costs for a speaker with a specific topic to present to the EDC.
- A calendar function on the new website or an on-line tool such as a handout.
- An on-line newsletter.
- Revisit with businesses and include a business giveaway (calendar).

Proclamations to Council

Motion by Chair Byrd that Commissioner Edwards take point, create, see the process through, and present to Council Member Bagdasarian to sponsor proclamations for Donald Chapman and Paul Reimers; seconded by Commissioner Cusack.

Motion by Commissioner Miller that the EDC sponsor Proclamations for Donald Chapman and Paul Reimers; seconded by Commissioner Cusack.

11. Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Edwards enjoyed working with the EDC this past year, and suggested commissioners convene in December to congratulate each other on its work, and thanked Chair Byrd for the tremendous job on the annual report. Commissioner Miller thanked the EDC and expressed his excitement at the upcoming Town of Leesburg parade. Commissioner Neel thanked the EDC and was pleased to meet with the businesses this past year and commended the EDC on how it cares about the Town. Commissioner McCray expressed her thanks to the EDC for a good job. Commissioner Cusack thanked Director Seymour for his presentation and looks forward to continuing his work with the EDC.

Vice Chair Youkers will be stepping back from the EDC and mentioned that it has been a fantastic four years. She expressed pride in the EDC's great voice for policy recommendations and weighing in on redevelopment opportunities, and provided parting suggestions:

- Look at and memorize the charter.
- Continue to support small business awards and forums.
- Attend the large commission meeting where everyone gets together.
- Be more strategic regarding redevelopment; keep up to date.
- Plan a retreat and develop a rapport.

Vice Chair Youkers will provide training on the redevelopment template and apply lessons learned over the past years.

12. Chairman's Comments

Chair Byrd indicated it has been a gratifying journey to watch the EDC mature and mentioned the fantastic job the EDC has done on getting on track and moving forward. He appreciated the opportunity to prepare the annual report. Chair Byrd mentioned he is happy to share his thought processes any time, and his parting recommendations were:

- Think and work as a team.
- Maintain a unified focus on the job at hand and what must be done.
- Utilize the redevelopment templates (large area of focus/primary activity).
- Continue rising above the political environment whatever that must be.
- Ask questions even if they seem insignificant or obvious.
- Think holistically about the Town and businesses (easy to get overly focused on small areas of certain industries).
- Consider that it is not just one thing, one group, or one industry that promotes a healthy industry in the Town.

13. Adjournment

Motion by Commissioner McCray to adjourn the meeting at 9:04pm, seconded by Commissioner Neel. Motion carried.