



**Leesburg Economic Development Commission
RESCHEDULED MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES
Town Hall – Lower Level Conference Room 2
July 2, 2024**

Commission Members Present: Robert Cunningham, Robert Cusack, Linda McCray, Jason Miller, Angel Miranda, Monica Pindell, Tony Tallent

Commission Members Absent: None

Staff Liaisons Present: None

Staff Present: Russell Seymour, Director, Economic Development
Melanie Scoggins, Assistant Director, Economic Development
Elaine Turney, Administrative Associate

1. **Call to Order**
The meeting was called to order at 5:01p.m. by Chair Cunningham.
2. **Roll Call**
Director Seymour conducted the Calling of the Roll and stated that a quorum was present.
3. **Adoption of the Agenda**
On a motion by Vice Chair McCray, seconded by Commissioner Tallent, the agenda was adopted.
4. **Approval of Minutes**
On a motion by Commissioner Miranda, seconded by Commissioner Pindell, the minutes of June 5, 2024 were adopted.
5. **Petitioners**
None.
6. **Liaison Comments**
None.
7. **Liaisons to Other Commissions and Committees**
Nothing to report.
8. **Staff Report**
Director Seymour initiated discussions regarding various topics in the staff report.

Ribbon Cuttings

- Upcoming new procedure/process for ribbon cuttings
- Verification process
- Saturday ribbon cutting events will be limited
- Loudoun Chamber of Commerce recently instituted a fee for the event

- Mayor Burk wishes to ensure that dual ribbon cuttings with the Chamber are not planned
- To be considered is the renaming of the event to something other than a ribbon cutting
- Ribbon cutting events will primarily include grand openings and anniversaries
- A banner will be placed outside the business one week before the event and will remain for two weeks
- The goal is to announce the business and get information out there
- A promotional gift of an engraved candle from ECHO and social media ads will be featured
- A welcome letter will be sent to businesses opening in Leesburg which will include contact information so the businesses may reach out
- Ms. Scoggins discussed social media posts and mentioned she is presently working on a new webpage for ribbon cuttings

Commercial Revenue and Tax Revenue Statistics

Director Seymour presented statistics obtained from the Town Finance Department regarding commercial tax information and tax revenues generated. Discussions ensued.

- Tax revenue monitored was the BPOL with statistics based on restaurants
- 2019/148 restaurants; tax revenue was \$171,500; total annual commercial revenue was \$3.3 million; breakdown when looking at tax paid per restaurant was \$1,100 annually
- 2020/149 restaurants; tax revenue was \$170,000; \$3.5 million total commercial revenue; revenue dropped \$142,000 for restaurants only; \$3.3 million total commercial revenue
- 2022/153 restaurants; tax revenue was \$184,000; \$3.8 million total commercial revenue
- 2023/152 restaurants; tax revenue was \$214,000; \$4.2 million total commercial revenue
- 2019-2023 tax revenue was up approximately 25%

Locally Leesburg Map

Director Seymour mentioned the updated version of the Locally Leesburg map is extremely popular with day trippers. The maps coincide with the maps in the parking garage.

Business Assistance Team (BAT)

Director Seymour referenced the Business Assistance Team which is now headed by Ms. Scoggins. The BAT will focus on helping businesses get through the process as any local process is cumbersome. Director Seymour emphasized that this service is for businesses only, not residential, nor strip development etc.

Visitor's Guide

Director Seymour referenced the new Visitor's Guide "Discover the Charm." Ms. Scoggins mentioned that the Guide is the product of the grant from Visit Loudoun. Ms. Scoggins also referenced various things available to businesses including the Locally Leesburg Business Directory.

Chair McCray mentioned the importance of businesses both inside and outside of Downtown. Chair McCray suggested that a digital version of the Locally Leesburg garage map be considered to include a reference to each quadrant to feature not just downtown but *all* the businesses. Chair Cunningham agreed with Vice Chair McCray and added he prefers a walkable experience when visiting downtown. Discussions ensued regarding the use of a kiosk.

9. Old Business

Chair Cunningham mentioned the application for the 1758 running race was denied. Discussions ensued.

Chair McCray mentioned the grand opening of Mancha Cocina Mexicana and found it problematic that the business was not aware of registering for a ribbon cutting event.

10. New Business

Expedited Review

Chair Cunningham mentioned earlier talks regarding foot traffic/signature events be placed on hold for discussion later on. He is of the opinion that the EDC needs to have something "signature" for the Commission.

Chair Cunningham mentioned for discussion is taking a hard look at a proactive approach to zoning and code and all of the layers involved. Chair Cunningham indicated that one of the frustrations is to get a zoning application through which takes time and lost money. He added this will all lead up to a recommendation to Council.

Commissioner Cusack mentioned he inquired within the Community Development Department. Director Seymour elaborated on Expedited Review. Discussions ensued regarding:

- Technical Zones/Tourism Zones
- Virginia code allows counties to do an expedited review; in Leesburg it may be a staff issue
- Targeted industry expedited review was out there
- Expedited review process was included in the ED Strategic Plan
- What applications are considered to be expedited
- Suggest Council member Cimino-Johnson attends an EDC meeting to discuss presenting the idea of expedited review to Council (help frame the recommendation)
- Inquire from approval bodies metrics for each stage of the process
- Investigate third party reviewers

Director Seymour indicated his intention to do the following:

- Draft a tourism plan and technology zone plan; part of draft to zone areas
- Types of businesses/types of incentives/criteria
- Goal to bring a plan back to EDC no later than September
- Include the arts district and putting it as one plan
- Expedited Review Process would be part of the plan

Director Seymour referenced the joint airport meeting, the new subdivision planned for Evergreen Mill Road, as well as the USTA. Director Seymour asked the EDC to keep in mind that all traffic will enter into the Town (Route 1 and Battlefield Parkway are impacted). He mentioned the need to ensure the airport is protected.

11. Commissioner's Comments

Commissioner Tallent is in favor of proceeding on the idea of the expedited review.

Commissioner Pindell mentioned the expedited review is a great tool for new businesses, believes it needs to be more digital and clearer on how we may be better successful for our Town.

Commissioner Miranda is pleased of the progress made thus far. He added that implementing the business packets will be extremely helpful, as starting a business can be overwhelming.

Commissioner Miller mentioned the expedited process is something that will make a difference and to keep pushing the good idea. Commissioner Miller indicated that the Town is a bigger and faster boat being manned by the same crew.

Commissioner Cusack thanked the EDC staff and mentioned that this is really good work. He is looking forward to next meeting to see numbers, take apart the process, and see what may be fixed or cut down.

Chair McCray mentioned she will provide Director Seymour with the contact information of Mancha Cocina Mexicana.

12. Chairman's Comments

Chair Cunningham mentioned that Locally Leesburg is outstanding and he likes the welcoming letter to businesses. He is in favor of Chair McCray's point of the whole of Leesburg to be the EDC's mission.

13. Adjournment

On a motion by Commissioner Tallent, seconded by Commissioner Pindell, the meeting was adjourned at 7:15pm.