



**Leesburg Economic Development Commission
MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES
Town Hall – Lower-Level Conference Room 2
September 4, 2024**

Commission Members Present: Robert Cunningham, Robert Cusack, Linda McCray, Monica Pindell, Tony Tallent

Commission Members Absent: Jason Miller, Angel Miranda

Staff Liaisons Present: None

Staff Present: Russell Seymour, Director, Economic Development
Melanie Scoggins, Assistant Director, Economic Development

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00p.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 Commissioner Tallent, seconded by Vice Chair McCray, the agenda was adopted.

4. Approval of Minutes

On a motion by Commissioner Tallent, seconded by Commissioner Pindell, the minutes of August 7, 2024, were adopted.

On a motion by Commissioner Cusack, seconded by Commissioner Tallent, the revised minutes of June 5, 2024, were adopted.

5. Petitioners

None.

6. Liaison Comments

None.

7. Liaisons to Other Commissions and Committees

Chair Cunningham mentioned that the Board of Zoning Appeals meeting is scheduled for September 17, 2024.

8. Staff Report

Compass Creek Annexation

Director Seymour provided an overview of the Compass Creek annexation in Leesburg, which is a voluntary settlement between the Town and Loudoun County to incorporate the 403-acre Compass Creek area into the Town's limits. The county and town have been working since 2019 to reach agreement on boundary line issues related to Compass Creek, which is south of the existing town limits, east of the Dulles Greenway, north of Shreve Mill Road and adjacent to Leesburg Executive Airport. The development includes retail business and multiple data centers. Discussions ensued.

Downtown Improvement Update

Director Seymour discussed business statistics obtained from the CoStar commercial real estate database and indicated that the vacancy rate in Town remains very low. He emphasized the importance for a push for non-retail commercial development in the Town. Discussions ensued.

Director Seymour mentioned information that is communicated to new businesses as they come into the Town. As part of the business license application process, a letter is sent which includes comprehensive information on the Economic Development website to enable businesses to engage with more than just the finance department. Assistant Director Scoggins indicated that the number of new business licenses issued (approximately 400 per year) and indicated that there are approximately 2,500-3,000 businesses in the Town. Director Seymour reviewed the Business Assistance Team (BAT) and the marketing services that are provided. Discussions ensued.

9. Old Business

Technology and Tourism Zones

Director Seymour provided general Code of Virginia information regarding Technology and Tourism Zones and incentives that are provided by various localities. Examples of incentives provided include BPOL, real estate tax, sales tax, rebates, development fees, meals and lodging, water and sewer fees, machinery tool tax, and expedited review. Discussions ensued.

On a motion by Commissioner Cusack, seconded by Vice Chair McCray, a Letter of Support from the EDC to the Leesburg Town Council regarding the development of both a Tourism Zone and a Technology Zone within the Town was adopted.

10. New Business

Director Seymour mentioned recent comments made to Council regarding the appearance of Downtown Leesburg. This includes alley ways, trash receptacles, debris, vacant buildings, and projects that have been approved but never developed. Director Seymour indicated that it is the intent of a group to begin working on these issues. Discussions ensued.

Vice Chair McCray mentioned a recent visit to the Village at Leesburg where she provided Economic Development contact information on ribbon cuttings and emphasized the importance of businesses being aware of this service. Vice Chair McCray desires to make businesses feel welcome and is happy to link businesses with the department for ribbon cuttings.

Assistant Director Scoggins indicated that she is on the agenda of the Village at Leesburg Merchant's Meeting on September 12th to speak about and promote the Town's ribbon cutting celebration package.

Vice Chair McCray mentioned that, when visiting businesses to introduce herself and mentions ribbon cuttings, it is comforting for them. Director Seymour expressed his thanks to Vice Chair McCray and suggested that commissioners advise staff about such visits so that a follow-up can be made.

11. Commissioner's Comments

Commissioner Pindell mentioned that an important door has been opened going forward in working out the zoning process, and emphasized the importance for the EDC to be advocates for businesses. The improvement of the trash situation is going to be great for business.

Commissioner Tallent is pleased with where the QR code took us and mentioned how clean the website was. He indicated he was able to follow three tasks easily which made sense (the more user friendly the better). He is in favor of making ribbon cutting ceremonies easy for businesses to do. He likes the personal approach of visiting businesses, as businesses are often leery of what is being proposed.

Commissioner Cusack agrees with Commissioner Tallent. He is pleased that the technology and tourism zones bring businesses to work together to talk about AI and mentioned the importance of the HUBZone meetings. He indicated this is a way of letting the federal government know we are working together to come up with solutions in the Town of Leesburg. Great meeting; a lot of positive stuff.

Vice Chair McCray mentioned the great work being done and is pleased for the opportunity to promote businesses to thrive. She is happy about where the commission is going on this.

At the suggestion of Chair Cunningham, Director Seymour indicated that business cards will be ordered for EDC members.

12. Chairman's Comments

Chair Cunningham indicated that he is thankful for the work staff has done in terms of promotional support to the businesses throughout Leesburg. He mentioned that earlier this year he had hoped to accomplish two goals; a signature event different from those already successfully in place and an approach to help businesses get started or to shorten the time to expand operating capacity. The goal being to help bring new revenue streams in for these businesses and, therefore, the town. Not doing so would create lost opportunities for businesses to take full advantage of what they are capable of achieving and making money. He expressed his excitement with this first step toward an expedited review process. This could be a big win for us going forward.

13. Adjournment

On a motion by Vice Chair McCray, seconded by Commissioner Tallent, the meeting was adjourned at 9:00p.m.