

MINUTES
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
THURSDAY, JANUARY 15, 2015 – 7:00 AM
JORDAN ROOM, MATTHEWS TOWN HALL

PRESENT: Chairman Paul Jamison, Vice Chairman Tim Jones*, Members Adam Brooks, Russ Gill, Greg Klein, Bev Martin, Commissioner Kress Query (alternate appointed member); Emory Simmons, John Urban, Chamber Executive Director Tina Whitley (ex-Officio), Assistant Town Manager Jamie Justice, Town Clerk Lori Canapinno

ABSENT: Members Roger Martin and Steve Thomson

ALSO PRESENT: Commissioner Joe Pata

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Jamison called the meeting to order at 7:00 am.

INVOCATION

Mr. Jamison rendered an invocation.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Ms. Martin to approve the minutes of the November 13, 2014 special and November 20, 2014 regular meetings. Seconded by Mr. Klein and unanimously approved.

ELECTION OF 2015 CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

Motion by Mr. Urban to nominate Paul Jamison as Chair and Tim Jones as Vice Chair. The motion was seconded by Mr. Klein and unanimously approved. Mr. Jamison and Mr. Jones will repeat their roles for calendar year 2015.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

RED BRICK PARTNERSHIP UPDATE

Mr. Justice noted that EDAC recommended approval and the Red Brick Partnership (RBP) Board of Directors has met and formalized a plan for the future and initial action plan. This is contingent on approval by the Matthews Board of Commissioners. Downtown stakeholders will be invited to a public meeting on February 3rd.

The first three action items involve banners, a website and mobile app and a coaster program. Private stakeholders have pledged \$10,600 for these three items. It's a great victory and will help initialize the program tremendously. There will be a special meeting on February 9th with the Board of Commissioners to give them details on the RBP. The Board will also be asked that night to approve funding for phase two of the Wayfinding

Program. There will also be a request for some Town appropriation starting in the budget for the next fiscal year. \$20,000 has been suggested, but that number could change. This would be a request for continual funding since that continuity will be needed to ensure year-to-year success for the RBP.

FOUR TOWN ALLIANCE UPDATE

Mr. Urban explained that the grant for work performed by the Creative Economic Development Consulting group has completed. CEO Crystal Morphis did a great job and helped the alliance draft a strategic plan and bylaws. The bylaws are being finalized now and it will be up to the four towns and executive directorship to move forward. There was a joint meeting of all four member towns held in November during which discussion of possible projects and plans took place. Staff from each town have been tasked with projects such as factfinding and taking inventory. It will be important to examine connectivity pieces between the towns' Planning Boards. They also discussed marketing the area with some sort of regional brand. Mr. Justice explained an example of how three counties near Wilmington leverage their resources.

NEW BUSINESS

MATTHEWS CHAMBER BUSINESS EXPO

The next Business Expo will take place at Carmel Baptist Church on March 24th. By consensus EDAC agreed to place a booth. The Town will have a spot that can be shared with EDAC. Information for the Red Brick Partnership will also be shared.

TOWN BOARD AND ADVISORY COMMITTEES MEETING UPDATE

Mr. Jamison said this meeting of all the town's advisory boards and committees was a great success. Everyone got to learn what each committee was involved with. It was mentioned that more collaborative discussion time would be helpful in the future. The goal is to hold similar joint meetings twice per year and also have committee chairs/vice chairs attend Board of Commissioner meetings on a rotating basis to give committee reports in person.

Mr. Klein suggested having each committee prepare a one page bulleted report with information that could be easily dispersed. Mr. Justice noted that many committees' bylaws require an annual report, which could be the base of a summary document. Mr. Brooks suggested posting all of the agendas and minutes on the town's website for easy access.

STAFF REPORT

Mr. Justice gave a development project update. The Hylton-Martin and Karas property requests were deferred to February. New applications include one for Woodie's Automotive Shop at the corner of Sam Newell Road and Independence Pointe Parkway. The Board is also working on policies for the Family Entertainment Area next to the Sportsplex.

The Sportsplex road is under construction now but won't be publicly accessible for 15-18 months. The new parking is also about 15-18 months away. The County decided on 2,700 seats for the stadium with 1,500 additional temporary seats on the berm. The Town would like more but it costs money.

Mr. Justice welcomed new members Adam Brooks and Emory Simmons. He explained that John Urban moved from an appointed seat associated with the Four Town Alliance to a regular seat. He also noted the Kress Query is the Board of Commissioners-appointed alternate to EDAC.

The Weaver, Bennett and Bland façade grant work has not yet been completed. The documents call for completion by the middle of February but they can apply for an extension if necessary.

The South Trade Street groundbreaking will take place on January 16th. The contracted project completion date is March 19, 2016. NCDOT ranked the culvert project very high. If it gets funded it'll be in July 2016. The intent is to do the culvert and the second portion down to Weddington Road at the same time. This is all dependent upon funding.

MISCELLANEOUS

There was some discussion of a dog park in the vacant parcel at Weddington Road and Pleasant Plains Road. Mr. Pata explained that Mecklenburg County Parks and Rec is evaluating the purchase of the property but no additional information is available.

Mr. Brooks asked about business incubators, mentioning their success in Charlotte. Mr. Justice explained some of EDAC's history researching the issue and debating effectiveness, coming to the ultimate conclusion that it would not be viable at that time. Mr. Urban explained it's an issue of critical mass and also an issue of an appropriate location. In addition, it is uncertain if the Town Board would want to get into that kind of business. Mr. Brooks suggested revisiting the issue, perhaps with the help of the Red Brick Partnership and Four Town Alliance.

*Mr. Jones arrived.

Mr. Simmons, the 2015 Matthews Chamber President, explained the Chamber's 2015 goals, which included working to inspire business growth, putting together programs and speakers, networking and continuing to do good things. This year may be more of a planning year for program changes to take effect in 2016. The best way to leverage the value of Chamber membership is to jump in, get involved and build relationships.

Mr. Gill noted the Charlotte Observer's recent article on Belmont, NC, saying the community is a good benchmark example for Matthews and suggesting that EDAC take a road trip in the future to witness their programming firsthand.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Mr. Urban to adjourn. Seconded by Ms. Martin and unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned at 8:08 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori Canapinno
Town Clerk