

**MINUTES**  
**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**THURSDAY, MARCH 20, 2014 - 7:30 AM**  
**JORDAN ROOM, MATTHEWS TOWN HALL**

**PRESENT:** Chairman Paul Jamison, Vice Chairman Tim Jones; Tim Chevront, Russ Gill, Commissioner John Higdon (appointed member), Greg Klein, Bev Martin, Roger Martin, Steve Thomson\*, Chamber Executive Director Tina Whitley (ex-Officio); John Urban (ex-Officio); Assistant Town Manager Jamie Justice; Town Clerk Lori Canapinno

**ABSENT:** Paul Babinski, Mark Harrison

**CALL TO ORDER**

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

**INVOCATION**

Mr. Martin rendered an invocation.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Motion by Ms. Martin to approve the minutes of the January 16, 2014 regular meeting and February 20, 2014 special meeting. Seconded by Mr. Martin and unanimously approved.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**CHAMBER EXPO**

The Expo is scheduled for April 1. The Town will be there to discuss economic development and answer questions. Mr. Justice and Town Manager Hazen Blodgett will man the booth. Vice Chairman Jones, Mr. Martin and Chairman Jamison volunteered hours as well.

\*Mr. Thomson arrived.

**DOWNTOWN ORGANIZATION UPDATE**

Mr. Justice reported this was discussed by the Board of Commissioners in detail at the recent Planning Conference. The Board agreed to move forward with the proposal but had questions about specifics, particularly funding options. The Board approved the use of \$7,000 from the current fiscal year's Economic Development budget and \$2,500 from next fiscal year's budget. This will cover some general startup costs including the facilitation of strategic plan development by Liz Parham of the Department of Commerce. That one day planning retreat is targeted for late April. The intent is to return to the Board of Commissioners this fall with a substantive plan of action.

Mr. Higdon said the Board of Commissioners will be looking for real interest from the downtown representatives – proof that it's not the Town driving the organization.

#### **FOUR TOWN ALLIANCE UPDATE**

Mr. Urban reported that the group met last week for the first high-level discussion. The bylaws are still being worked out but everyone is excited about the possibilities and there will be monthly meetings going forward. The group applied for a grant for \$25,000 worth of consultancy on strategic planning and there should be information on the status of that application at the end of this month. If the grant isn't awarded then staff from each of the four towns will do the work in-house.

#### **SPORTSPLEX/FAMILY ENTERTAINMENT AREA UPDATE**

Mr. Justice gave an overview of the sportsplex construction to date and explained the status of the associated Family Entertainment Area. Phase I of the Sportsplex, which includes the first five fields, has been completed. Phase II, with amenities including play facilities, parking, walking trails and the remaining fields and stadium has been funded and is in the design stage now. Construction should start sometime this summer and should take approximately 18 months.

#### **BUSINESS SUMMIT PLANNING**

The next business summit will be held from 11:30 to 1:00 on May 9<sup>th</sup>. Commerce Secretary Sharon Decker and Charlotte Regional Visitors Authority Chief Executive Officer Tom Murray are the speakers and the intent is to have a good discussion focused specifically on this area. Marketing will be pushed early and a good turnout is expected.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **NEW PROJECTS UPDATE**

Mr. Justice explained the vote on the ACTS zoning application (2013-608) was deferred until April 14 so the applicants could finalize some issues related to the sewer agreement and greenway connection. The Charlotte Metro Credit Union application (2013-607) had its public hearing and there was a lot of discussion about the higher density/multistory concept for downtown. The applicants just submitted revised plans that include a two story building. The Monroe Road Small Area Plan points to the area as a prime corridor for redevelopment and proposes several new employment centers. That public hearing is set for April 14. The Eden Hall townhome community application (2014-612) requests approval for up to 100 units off Fullwood Lane near Marion Drive. That public hearing is scheduled for May 12. The Erickson development is seeing action again. They've received an Administrative Amendment to make some changes to the already approved plan, including reducing the living units by 200 and other minor site changes. As of this time the other zoning conditions are in place although they could request a rezoning to change them.

## **STAFF REPORT**

Revised Façade Grant flyer: The changes were approved by the Board of Commissioners. There is enough money left in the current fiscal year's budget for one more grant.

Urban3 tax revenue analysis: The Board of Commissioners discussed this at the Planning Conference and agreed that this analysis should be performed for each zoning application to be used as an additional data point in their decisions. It will be easy for staff to perform the analysis for residential rezoning but commercial rezonings will take a little more work.

Other: The roundabout project at Highway 51 and Idlewild Road has been delayed for a year and should start in the summer of 2015. This is an NCDOT project and they will be announcing a public meeting later this year.

## **MISCELLANEOUS**

Ms. Whitley announced upcoming grand openings and ribbon cutting ceremonies.

Mr. Thomson discussed a recent article on economic mobility – the ability of individuals to move up economically. Charlotte ranked poorly - last among the country's fifty largest metro areas. Mr. Thomson discussed his recent visit to a Washington, DC open air market at which a lot of economic development could be seen. Open air markets are a main driver of entrepreneurship and economic mobility. The Matthews Farmers' Market is very strict about allowing local farmers only with no crafts or other items, and he thinks that may be why there's not a lot of traffic there. He suggested trying a public open air market – not to compete with the Farmers' Market but to see if there would be interest in such a thing.

Mr. Urban said that would be a perfect project for the downtown organization. A market alley concept is already included in the Town's Land Use Plan. Ms. Whitley said the vacant land behind Domenico's could be used for this.

Chairman Jamison said another good downtown organization project would be the development plan for the Crestdale area initiated a few years ago by architect Louis Smith.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

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

Respectfully submitted,

Lori Canapinno  
Town Clerk