

MINUTES
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
THURSDAY, MAY 19, 2016 – 7:00 AM
JORDAN ROOM, MATTHEWS TOWN HALL

PRESENT: Chairman Paul Jamison; Vice Chairman Tim Jones; Members Russ Gill, Bev Martin, Roger Martin, Steve Thomson, Commissioner John Urban (alternate appointed member); Chamber Executive Director Kelly Barnhardt (ex-officio); Town Manager Hazen Blodgett, Assistant Town Manager Becky Hawke, Town Clerk Lori Canapinno

ABSENT: Members Adam Brooks, Amy Carr and Greg Klein

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Jamison called the meeting to order at 7:04 am.

INVOCATION

Mr. Martin rendered an invocation.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Mr. Thomson to approve the minutes of the November 19, 2015 meeting. Seconded by Mr. Martin and unanimously approved.

Mr. Jamison introduced two new members of the committee: Matthews Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Kelly Barnhardt and Matthews Assistant Town Manager Becky Hawke.

ELECT 2016 CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

Mr. Jones nominated Paul Jamison for chair. Mr. Jamison nominated Tim Jones for Vice Chair. Motion by Jones to approve the Chair and Vice Chair as nominated. The motion was seconded by Mr. Thomson and unanimously approved. Mr. Jamison and Mr. Jones will act as the Chair and Vice Chair, respectively, until January 2017.

NEW BUSINESS

REVIEW EDAC'S MISSION

Mr. Jones reviewed the Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC)'s stated mission and opened discussion on the future of the group. He noted that there are several groups that work in the same sphere as EDAC: the Red Brick Partnership (RBP), which focuses on downtown Matthews; the Matthews Chamber of Commerce, which focuses on member businesses throughout town and the general area; and The Quad, the alliance comprised of the towns of Matthews and Mint Hill in Mecklenburg County and Stallings in Union County, which is a new group formed to work together on multi-jurisdictional projects.

APPROVED 7/21/2016

Discussion ensued regarding the potential overlap and interactivity of these groups. Mr. Jamison said he would like EDAC to explore more ways to help existing businesses in the community. Ms. Barnhardt suggested inviting a representative from Central Piedmont Community College to serve on EDAC as an ex-officio member to work on workforce development. Mr. Blodgett explained that The Quad is still new and is currently working on itself. At this time it's more community development rather than an economic development program. Mr. Thomson said EDAC needs to focus on non-downtown businesses and properties.

This issue will be discussed again at the next meeting in July.

CHAMBER UPDATE

Ms. Barnhardt gave an update on Chamber activities, including the gold tournament next Tuesday, the auto reunion on September 5th and ArtFest on October 1st and 2nd. She also discussed a new program coming this year: the Chamber FallFest. It's a chili cook off/craft brew/cornhole tournament that will take place on October 22nd at the Harley dealership.

CRVA UPDATE

Mr. Jamison reported on recent information from the Charlotte Regional Visitor Authority (CRVA). HB2 has had a significant impact on the area – down about \$100 million to date. The CRVA is focusing on the region's sense of openness and acceptance with a new campaign called "Always Welcome." Matthews and other communities can get materials branded "Always Welcome Matthews" if desired. There are other tools and messaging information on the CRVA website at crva.com. The economic repercussions of HB2 are still ongoing.

Mr. Jamison also noted that the Bojangles Coliseum was recently renovated and additional renovations will connect Ovens Auditorium and the Coliseum via an atrium.

2016 INITIATIVES

BUSINESS SUMMIT

By consensus it was determined that a summit will be held in the fall. The committee discussed focusing on The Quad to gain exposure and educate attendees on its possibilities. Mr. Urban suggested inviting the participating towns' Boards and economic development committees as well. Ms. Barnhardt suggested contacting commercial developers and real estate agents too.

Other potential topics include road projects and the Town's Strategic Economic Development Plan. Ms. Barnhardt suggested bringing in consultant Crystal Morphus to review the plan. Mr. Urban noted that the original author - Frank Warren - is no longer with the original company but has an associate that still does this type of work. Mr. Blodgett suggested getting some members of EDAC, The Quad and the Red Brick Partnership together to review the document and determine if they could update it themselves rather than bringing in a consultant. Mr. Thomson noted some issues that EDAC hasn't talked about much: reviewing development projects by tax revenue by square foot (the Minicozzi approach) and the Silver Line and Highway 74 corridor projects. Mr. Gill agreed on the importance of sharing the Minicozzi information and also suggested a topic on the future of retail with a focus on how to market to millennials.

Mr. Jamison proposed putting together a committee to meet before the next meeting so recommendations could be made at the July 21 meeting.

BREAKFAST WITH THE MAYOR

Mr. Jones noted that he has run this event since its inception. If anyone else would like the opportunity to do so they should let him know.

The Committee discussed the benefits of holding the next Breakfast in the spring of 2017 so as not to conflict with the Fall 2016 business summit versus holding one in 2016 and in 2017. Potential ideas include focusing on specific types of businesses and having the spring 2017 event focus discussion on the Sportsplex with invitations targeted to the hospitality industry.

This will be discussed in more detail at the July 21 meeting.

FAÇADE GRANT PROGRAM

The Committee discussed the program, noting that few businesses are interested in pursuing a grant. Six grants have been approved since the program's inception in 2011 and five have been accepted and completed. Mr. Urban suggested an expansion of the program to incorporate designer Buzz Bizzell's recommendation to offer design work for signage/façade improvements. Money could be put toward the educational process to encourage business owners to refresh their sites. Ms. Barnhardt suggested asking one of the grant recipients give a testimonial about the process. The dance studio would be a good example of a great success. Mr. Jamison requested that all Committee members keep the program in mind, educate others on it and encourage eligible businesses to apply.

STAFF REPORT

Update on Red Brick Partnership: Mr. Urban explained that the RBP's activities are going well. There is some work to be done with some businesses – there's not a lot of active participation from some of them. One-on-one talks have been productive – for example, the manager of Dilworth agreed to stay open later Friday through Sunday.

The RBP is seeking \$20,000 in funding from the Town and \$10,000 from the founders. RBP is working on a plan for businesses to financially participate in 2017. That could be through sponsorships, pay options or other methods. One goal is to hire a part time staffer to work 10-15 hours a week to serve as the point of contact and plan events.

Update on downtown signage: Mr. Blodgett reported that the wayfinding program is continuing with gateway signs in several locations. Designer Buzz Bizzell is currently revising the gateway monument design and will bring it to the Board for consideration in the near future.

MISCELLANEOUS

Mr. Gill discussed the concept of "walk the community" signage. These are small signs that are placed at pedestrian level to give information and encourage people to walk to nearby locations. An example would be a sign indicating people can walk to X amenity in Y minutes. Mr. Blodgett noted a concern about sign pollution. Mr.

Gill suggested an informational kiosk or digital application as an alternative and Mr. Urban suggested using the future downtown directory kiosk as a location on which a sign could be attached.

Mr. Blodgett will have Town staff look into this suggestion so it can be discussed in detail at a future meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Mr. Thomson to adjourn. Seconded by Mr. Jones and unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned at 8:30 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori Canapinno
Town Clerk