

**MINUTES**  
**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**THURSDAY, MAY 20, 2010**  
**7:00 AM**  
**JORDAN ROOM, MATTHEWS TOWN HALL**

**PRESENT:** Chairman Paul Jamison; Vice Chairman Jim Johnson; Members Paul Babinski, Rachel Garcia, Jennefer Garrity, Tim Jones, Greg Klein, Bev Martin, Jerry McGuire, John Urban, Tina Whitley; Assistant Town Manager Jamie Justice; Deputy Town Clerk Lori Canapinno

**ABSENT:** Bill Rhyne

**CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Jamison called the meeting to order at 7:05 am.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES:** Mr. Klein motioned to approve the minutes of the March 18, 2010 meeting. Ms. Martin seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**Business Incubator Program**

Mr. Justice explained that the next step is to hold a joint meeting with EDAC and the Town Board of Commissioners to discuss the incubator program and make a decision on whether or not to form a small focus group to further investigate the program's potential in Matthews. The meeting will take place on Monday, June 28, 2010 at 5:30 pm. The results of the survey will be available then but Mr. Justice will try to get that information out to EDAC members before the meeting.

**Economic Summit review**

Common consensus was that the summit went well - many positive comments were received. It was a good first step.

Mr. Urban suggested holding the next meeting sooner rather than later – perhaps in September. He suggested incorporating the town's concept of being "open for business." There was some concern that the audience didn't know what to expect and that more details about Matthews would be preferable over the larger viewpoints that were offered. The fall agenda should focus on the micro level and have information pertaining specifically to the town. Chairman Jamison suggested having just one or two subjects of discussion – the incubator could be one of them.

Mr. Justice said Wingate University offered to sponsor another summit. He agreed it would be good to have another summit in the fall and suggested that a few EDAC members should get together to start planning it now. Mr. Jones said there should be a decision made about the summit emphasis – is the goal to attract businesses, maintain current businesses, or something else? Mr., Justice agreed that definitive goals were necessary. He also said information included the Warren study is still valid, although it is tough to implement when the town does not have an Economic Development Director. The list of targeted businesses is still valid.

Chairman Jamison, Vice Chairman Johnson, Mr. McGuire and Mr. Jones will form a subcommittee and plan for the next summit.

Vice Chairman Johnson said there should be one topic to draw people in. He suggested roads or business development. Mr. McGuire agreed and suggested inviting someone from the NCDOT if roads was the topic of choice. Mr. Urban suggested inviting business people to a charrette to gain insight into what they'd be interested in. Vice Chairman Johnson agreed that targeting Matthews business people instead of all residents would be a good idea. Mr. Jones agreed and said that would require some direction and a facilitator.

Several people noted there was an issue with communication from and within the town. Ms. Whitley said the lack of a local newspaper is a big issue. The town stopped mass-producing a paper newsletter to save printing and postage costs. It is available in electronic format now and also is available via postal mail upon request.

Ms. Whitley suggested having the town partner with the Chamber of Commerce to produce a hard copy information source to send to every mailbox in town. It could contain business tidbits and information about the town. Mr. Urban said that was something that had been discussed by Commissioners. Ms. Whitley asked if tourism dollars could be used to pay for such an item. Mr. Justice said he would have to check with Town Attorney Charlie Buckley on the legality of that idea. Mr. Urban and Ms. Whitley agreed that this information source should be paper in people's hands rather than email. Ms. Whitley said EDAC could recommend to the Town Board a way to proceed with information disbursement. Mr. Justice suggested a quarterly newsletter. Chairman Jamison and Ms. Whitley agreed that it should be monthly at minimum. Ms. Whitley suggested including more than just business information and said people often ask for a calendar of town events.

Mr. Justice said he and Communications Director Annette Privette-Keller have discussed using the business privilege license listing to send quarterly newsletters. Ms. Whitley said they could add the chamber mailing list also and suggested sending it out from Economic Development rather than the Communications Department. Mr. Jones noted the biggest cost would be for postage. There was some discussion of alternate possibilities, including limiting the mailing to businesses only, using an electronic version for businesses, leaving a stack of printed materials in public consumer and retail locations, and mailing one or two out with a note to urge readers to sign up if they wish to continue receiving it. Ms. Whitley cautioned that differing methods of disbursement lead to confusion – one method should be chosen so as not to confuse readers with different venues for each edition.

Mr. Urban noted that two different types of publications had been discussed – an informational newsletter with information from multiple town departments and then something with economic development news. He said it sounds like the town informational publication needs to include information from EDAC, Parks & Rec, Planning, etc. This information should be sent to residents, especially those who do not access information online. The promotion of economic development needs to be sent to businesses. He said the town needs to keep existing businesses here- treat them as a valued part of town, then use that as a vehicle to promote the town to other businesses outside the town. He said it's something that should be pushed up to the town council so they can find a way to fund it and allow EDAC funds to be used elsewhere, such as directional signage or parking signage and brochures. Vice Chairman Johnson agreed it would be a good idea to get the town Commissioners to pay for some/all of the informational publication and use EDAC funds for other purposes.

Mr. McGuire said the best way may be to start small by sending mailings to businesses and seeing what the response is, then go from there. He agreed that two different things have been discussed – business information and then information for residents.

Ms. Whitley said the Chamber newsletter already includes a Matthews page – either that page alone or the entire chamber newsletter could be emailed to businesses.

Mr. Justice will confer with Annette Privette-Keller about an informational newsletter and will get back to EDAC members before the next meeting.

Chairman Jamison would like to see a one page downtown parking map on a brochure to pass out to businesses for their customers.

## **STAFF REPORT/ACTION PLAN UPDATE**

### **Product inventory/website**

Mr. Justice said there are currently ninety-six properties on the website. The whole town has been covered and we are now updating information as it changes. It is already working – inquiries have come in regarding office space and Mr. Justice has been able to refer the callers to the website for additional information. The next step is to market and publicize it. Mr. Justice and Ms. Privette-Keller will meet with Chairman Jamison about that soon. Ms. Whitley said that should be included in the next Chamber newsletter. Ms. Privette-Keller will send her the information for that as soon as possible. Mr. Urban said it would be very helpful to include a blurb in the Business Journal – it's a great vehicle to access the business world. Mr. McGuire suggested calling journalists to see if they would write an article about it. Mr. Babinski asked about ways to link up with Charlotte and/or Mecklenburg County information. Chairman Jamison said the link to the town information should go to various agencies, like the Charlotte Chamber, Greater Charlotte Hospitality and Visit Charlotte sites for inclusion on their websites. Mr. Babinski asked about optimizing search results. Mr. Justice said the town results already come up in Google searches, but he will also investigate the Business Prospector service to find out the cost to use that. The long-term goal is to host the information on the Prospector site in the future.

### **UDO update**

Mr. Urban explained that the UDO process is slowly continuing. The Town Board has reviewed up to chapter three and the stakeholder group is in the middle of chapter six. He said it's good that the UDO, Downtown Master Plan and Land Use Plan are all being revised concurrently so they can all fit in together properly.

### **Town projects**

Mr. Justice described the two current Planning projects: Liberty Healthcare and the Grace Academy proposal for the former PCA building. The projects are in the rezoning process now. The Grace Academy project will not use all of the space available in the building – there may be some office space available in the future. That space could potentially be used to house the business incubator if that project moves forward.

The Sportsplex is an ongoing issue. The town and county can't add debt service to fund the project but a public/private partnership is currently being investigated. A financial analysis is being performed now and the data should be available in a few weeks to take to the developer. This type of partnership would require legislative approval and the town has submitted this as a local bill for Raleigh's short session.

The Warren study reported town development as 65% residential to 35% non-residential. County tax records indicate those values have changed – the town is now 61.5% residential and 38.5% non-residential. This is a move in the right direction.

There will be updates on the Downtown Master Plan and Land Use Plan at the next Board of Commissioners meeting. Jay Camp is gathering a steering committee for the DMP – Jim Johnson is one of its members. EDAC's downtown subcommittee should become involved in this as well.

Matthews and Stallings held a joint meeting and one presentation was about a joint industrial park. Three towns in the Lake Norman area co-invested and started the project and it has been working well for them.

Something similar could be considered for Matthews, Stallings and Indian Trail. Mr. Justice will send that information to EDAC members as soon as possible.

Ms. Whitley asked about the possibility of sharing a business incubator. Mr. Justice said that had been discussed with Mint Hill and Stallings and both towns are warm to the idea. It has to be investigated further, but each will be invited to the incubator meeting that will occur in Matthews in June. Ms. Martin suggested that an Economic Development Director could also be shared.

**Miscellaneous**

Ms. Whitley attended a recent Charlotte meeting with Economic Development staff and representatives from area businesses. The city sees the need to make it easier for small businesses to get help from the city. They are instituting a website with all necessary information and will have links from that website to the town website. That will be available in about a year.

Ms. Garcia mentioned grant programs that are now available from Mecklenburg County. She will get more information and pass it along soon. Chairman Jamison suggested that type of grant information would be valuable in the newsletter as discussed earlier.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Ms. Martin motioned to adjourn. Mr. Klein seconded and the motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:10 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori Canapinno  
Deputy Town Clerk