

MINUTES
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2012
7:00 AM
JORDAN ROOM, MATTHEWS TOWN HALL

PRESENT: Chairman Paul Jamison, Vice Chairman Tim Jones; Members Paul Babinski*, Greg Klein, Roger Martin, Bev Martin, Jerry McGuire, Mike Simons, Steve Thomson, Tina Whitley*; Assistant Town Manager Jamie Justice; Deputy Town Clerk Lori Canapinno

ABSENT: Members Rachel Garcia and John Urban

CALL TO ORDER

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

INVOCATION

Mr. Martin rendered the invocation.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Babinski made a motion to approve the minutes of the May 17, 2012 minutes. Mr. Martin seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Business Summit

Mr. McGuire noted the committee consisting of him, Mr. Martin, Ms. Martin, Ms. Whitley and Chairman Jamison have met to discuss ideas for the upcoming summit. Based on feedback from previous summits, the consensus was that people want to know more about Matthews specifically and that it would be a good idea to drill a little deeper into some subjects.

*Ms. Whitley arrived

Feedback regarding Frank Warren was great and he probably should have been given more time to speak at the previous summit. Perhaps he could be invited back for a more detailed look at Matthews. Mr. Justice said it might be possible to have him do that and noted there would likely be a fee. An in-depth analysis with detail will require time and money. Mr. Klein wondered if it was too soon to have Mr. Warren speak again if he is going to be working on the economic development (ED) plan update as well. Mr. Justice said the timing might not be right for Mr. Warren to perform a full ED update so maybe having him speak at the summit would be good. Mr. McGuire said he'd like to have Mr. Warren speak and give him a large block of time – perhaps 45 minutes or an hour.

Mr. Thomson noted that many ED goals have been met and suggested showcasing them while asking for input from the community as to what ED goals should be set next. Maybe a discussion of the incubator as a possibility or a discussion of what resources are available in town if one wishes to start a business. Ms. Whitley agreed that the audience should be engaged and asked what they want the town to do and what they want to see in terms of economic development. Vice Chairman Jones said one session could be devoted to that type of inquiry. Several members said that Mr. Warren could be asked to be involved in this as well.

Chairman Jamison suggested breaking attendees up into groups and conducting a working conference, perhaps under the leadership of Mr. Warren. Ms. Whitley noted that Planner Jay Camp is good at that and suggested that he be asked to run a charrette-style session.

Mr. McGuire will contact Mr. Warren to gauge his interest and availability. He noted that other ideas for summit activities included engaging the non-profit community and said that could work for this or future sessions. Perhaps an invitation could be made to someone from the Human Services Council, which represents multiple non-profit groups in town.

Vice Chairman Jones said information on transportation issues would be well-received. Mr. Justice said a Department of Transportation (DOT) representative would be needed to address state issues, but the regional position is currently in flux. The general consensus was that a discussion of transportation issues would be well-received.

Strengthen Relationship with Real Estate Community

Chairman Jamison explained that he will work on a meeting of the commercial and residential real estate communities as a way to network and provide information to them. This would be a way to educate them on Town issues relating to development and services. It is tentatively scheduled for the first part of 2013. Chairman Jamison, Ms. Martin, Mr. Martin and Ms. Whitley will be working on this.

Mr. Justice requested that this meeting be held in January so the results could be discussed during the Board of Commissioners' February 2013 Planning Conference.

NEW BUSINESS

Four Towns Meeting Regarding Joint Economic Development and ED Plan Update

Mr. Justice explained that the Town Managers of Matthews, Mint Hill, Stallings and Indian Trail have met regarding economic development and came to the conclusion that each town has similar aspirations for ED. There may be a way to pool resources, similar to what Huntersville, Cornelius and Davidson have done. The Mayors have agreed the idea should be pursued and now the elected officials will hear more information and offer feedback. The meeting is scheduled for October 3 at CPCC-Levine. Mr. Justice explained that ideally the four towns will decide to explore options. Some money would have to be spent to determine how it would all work.

Ms. Whitley thought the idea was a good one but wondered how things would work since two counties are involved. She also questioned why Stallings and Indian Trail weren't working with Union County on ED issues. Mr. Justice noted that the Union County ED organization has been in turmoil. The county has decided to hire Monroe's economic developer to work for the whole county, and not all towns are in support of that.

There was some concern regarding the issue of two counties' involvement. Ms. Martin asked if there are any models in the country with best practices for similar county partnerships. Mr. Babinski suggested researching projects in Atlanta. Mr. Justice noted that the towns could simply join forces for marketing purposes or could become involved in a joint development that would require a major investment from each town. Vice Chairman Jones said it might be better to hire an economic director first. Mr. Thomson said it might be a good idea to get ED plans done for each community before joining together to work on such a major shared plan.

Mr. Martin said he could see Matthews as setting the stage for whatever joint plan is decided upon. Each town is known for distinct strengths and weaknesses and Matthews is known as being very vibrant but isn't going to attract huge projects.

As a result, the ED plan update has been paused while this discussion is going on. It can continue to hold or it can be updated in part with the work being done by EDAC members in the form of an update or report. There was no consensus on this issue.

Changing Demographics Forum

The Town will host a forum on October 18 to discuss what demographic changes mean for the future of the community. Mary Newsom of the UNC Charlotte Urban Institute will facilitate discussion on needs, infrastructure, housing choices and other associated issues. The intent is to gain interactive audience involvement in advance of the Land Use Plan revision moving forward. The forum needs to be promoted and EDAC has been asked to co-host.

There was some discussion of having this be the focus of the next summit, but it was explained that this forum is more of a Planning function aimed at gaining feedback from a mixed audience while the summit is intended to be educational for business people. It was determined that data derived from this forum would be very helpful for businesses too. Maybe some information can be incorporated into the next summit.

It was agreed that EDAC will co-host and promote the forum. Duties will consist of lending EDAC's name, promotion and attendance at the event. Mr. Justice will provide an advertising flyer to Ms. Whitley for distribution as soon as one is ready.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Downtown

Mr. Justice said the Downtown Master Plan (DMP) will be approved after the Land Use Plan. A public hearing on the DMP will be held in November with a decision in December.

Business Development

Vice Chairman Jones said everything is ready for the following day's Breakfast with the Mayor. Mr. Babinski will accompany him.

Development Process/Planning Advisory Downtown

Mr. Justice noted the Development Process Report had included some recommendations on how to be more developer-friendly. The Unified Development Ordinance will deal with a lot of these procedural issues.

STAFF REPORT/ACTION PLAN UPDATE

Economic Development Incentives Mr. Justice said EDAC did a great job getting that information together. The Board of Commissioners approved it and Mr. Justice has already received several calls about it. People are interested but there have been some false expectations from small businesses that were looking for details on smaller investments. Mr. Justice explained the program thoroughly and will continue to do so to every interested party.

Downtown Façade Grant Program Some modifications were made at the May meeting and there will be another push to advertise the program. \$7,500 has been earmarked out of this year's budget. Jay Camp has been in contact with several interested parties but so far that hasn't resulted in any new applications.

WiFi/Camera in Stumptown Park The camera is up and running and can be accessed through the Town website. Windstream's Mike Urquhart said that since it took a while for them to get it running, Windstream will extend the free service/test phase through the end of December. The intent is to get usage statistics to see how it's being used. Ms. Whitley asked if the camera could be moved to Matthews Station Street and if it could rotate, since there is constant activity in that area. It could also deter vandalism. Mr. Justice said security issues would have to be handled separately, but that he would talk to Windstream about adding a second camera at the Town Hall. Mr. Thomson expressed caution regarding using recorded footage as any sort of security measure for litigation reasons. Ms. Whitley said a dummy camera would work for security purposes.

Mr. Justice explained that a Wi-Fi signal is covering Stumptown Park now. After December Windstream will ask the Town if it wishes to continue the service. Mr. Thomson suggested adding a survey to the camera's page on the website to see if users wish to continue using the services. Mr. Justice will find out if a survey is possible and will get that information back to EDAC as soon as possible.

EDAC terms expiring January 2013 Mr. Justice asked for anyone whose term is expiring to inform him by the end of October if they would like to be reappointed or not.

MISCELLANEOUS

Ms. Martin asked about the status of the discussion regarding Matthews becoming a certified retirement community. Intern Spencer Burns had researched the program but the takeaway is that it doesn't make sense to do it right now. The State couldn't articulate any specific return on their investment.

Mr. Justice noted that the first round of wayfinding signs have been installed. The second round will be installed at parks and town facilities in the next few weeks. Landscaping in medians is another aspect of the project and that is going out to bid now. There are limitations regarding the beautification of medians due to NCDOT requirements, but they may allow increased plantings in the future,

Mr. Klein asked if there were any plans to light the wayfinding signs so they could be seen at night, and Mr. Justice said no, not for the existing signs, but possibly for future signs. Mr. Thomson said that when headlights do

shine on the sign face they white out all of the information. Mr. Justice said all of the colors and lighting has to go through the DOT's strict approval process. Mr. McGuire said the colors blend in too well with the signs' surroundings and asked if the sign faces could be a little brighter in the future. Mr. Justice said he will consult with Communications Director Annette Privette Keller about that.

*Mr. Babinski departed.

Mr. Justice pointed out Matthews' new ad in the latest Charlotte Economic Development magazine.

ADJOURNMENT

Vice Chairman Jones made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Thomson seconded and the motion was unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned at 8:20 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori Canapinno
Deputy Town Clerk