

**MINUTES**  
**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2011**  
**7:00 AM**  
**JORDAN ROOM, MATTHEWS TOWN HALL**

**PRESENT:** Chairman Paul Jamison; Vice Chairman Tim Jones; Members Rachel Garcia\*, Greg Klein, Bev Martin, Roger Martin, Jerry McGuire, Mike Simons, Bill Rhyne John Urban, Tina Whitley; Assistant Town Manager Jamie Justice; Deputy Town Clerk Lori Canapinno

**ALSO PRESENT:** Communications Director/Assistant to the Manager Annette Privette-Keller

**ABSENT:** Member Paul Babinski

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Jamison called the meeting to order at 7:04 am and declared a quorum.

**INVOCATION**

Mr. Martin rendered the invocation.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

Ms. Martin motioned to approve the minutes of the September 15, 2011 meeting. Mr. Simons seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**Business Summit**

Mr. McGuire led the discussion of the following day's Business Summit. He thanked Ms. Whitley, Mr. Klein, Mr. Jamison and Mr. Justice for their work leading up to the event and explained what will take place. Panelists will make their presentation and then ask for audience questions. Topics were generated from feedback received from previous summits – business health was a recurring theme. After this summit, all summit attendees, past and present, will be emailed to ask their opinion on the contents and frequency of future summits.

**Business Incubator**

Mr. Justice explained the taskforce has not met yet. The Small Business and Technology Development Center supplied the spreadsheets that lay out the possible different scenarios for an incubator. There are a couple scenarios associated with the building at 196 South Trade Street and one referred to as the "Wingate scenario," which involves Wingate University or simply a different location in a larger building, even a 15,000 square foot

empty big-box location. There are many blank spaces that still need to be filled in on that spreadsheet – some educated guesses will need to be made. The taskforce will get together and see what the numbers look like for 196 South Trade and then try to make some calculations from there. Hiring a full-time position and getting revenue to offset that cost may be challenging. There may be partnerships to be made or private foundations that could offer assistance. Mr. Justice will meet with the incubator team, flesh out some numbers and eventually bring that information to EDAC/Town Board.

Mr. Justice said he and Mr. Jones recently attended an Entrepreneur summit in Charlotte and met a representative from SCORE, the nonprofit group that offers mentorship and counseling to small businesses. They discussed the potential incubator and determined that SCORE would not be the most financially effective business partner to operate the Town's incubator. They could provide assistance once the incubator is set up but they would not be able to manage it.

\*Ms. Garcia arrived.

### **Downtown Wi-Fi**

Mr. Justice explained that Jim Johnson has been working on this idea. There are some challenges involved, including zoning issues and public perception. Mr. Justice had asked Mr. Johnson what he thought the Town's role would be in the model he is contemplating, and Mr. Johnson suggested the Town would be involved with advertising and possibly working to secure locations for the necessary hardware. Mr. Justice will get an update from Mr. Johnson as soon as possible.

Mr. Urban suggested contacting the downtown merchants to gauge their interest in such a project. There was additional discussion of possible locations for hardware. Chairman Jamison opened discussion on the future of this type of technology, asking if it was possible that advances in cellular wireless connections would render Wi-Fi obsolete in the next near future. There was discussion if a large investment should be made when the technology has the potential to change so rapidly. Mr. Justice said all that will be discussed with Mr. Johnson. He also reminded the group that this proposed project is not intended to eliminate hardwired connections within the various buildings in downtown but rather offer additional services in a relatively small area outside of buildings.

Mr. Martin suggested inviting a representative in from Windstream Communications to educate the group on various technologies available. There was general agreement that learning more about the technology would be very helpful.

Mr. Rhyne noted that a successful Wi-Fi venture would be a feather in the cap for the Town and might attract more investment in the downtown area. It could also serve as a recruiting tool for technology-based businesses to come to Matthews.

There was some discussion of some type of small informational kiosks that offer information on the Town and possible some type of interactive advertising.

Consensus was that the Committee should be educated on the available and upcoming technologies and options for their delivery. Mr. Justice will arrange for that to occur at the next EDAC meeting.

\*Ms. Privette-Keller arrived

There was some discussion regarding the posting of available jobs on the Town's website. Chairman Jamison pointed out that it would be great for local residents to be able to access a website where local jobs are listed. Ms.

Whitley asked about the possibility of listing all available jobs on the Town website. Mr. Justice explained that site listed only those jobs offered by the Town itself. Ms. Whitley suggested it would be good to have resources for non-Town sponsored jobs too. Mr. Justice said he would have to look into it.

### **Façade Grant - 189 North Trade Street**

Mr. Justice explained the first grant applicant will need an extension because he is waiting to get the needed materials delivered in January. Mr. Urban explained that the mullions for the building's upper windows have been delayed due to flooding at the manufacturer's location. Ms. Martin motioned to grant a 60 day extension to the façade grant completion period. Mr. Martin seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

There was some discussion of the reception of the façade grant program by downtown merchants. Very few have expressed interest and so far only one has gone through the application process. Mr. Justice said the program is being promoted but the plan is to do more marketing can be done with a bigger push to advertise the first success once it's complete.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Member terms expiring**

Bev Martin, Jerry McGuire, Bill Rhyne, Paul Jamison and John Urban's two year terms are set to expire in January. The Chamber President seat, currently held by Mike Simons, is a one year term and that will also expire. Mr. Justice asked those individuals to advise him if they wished to be reappointed. The Town Board will make appointments and reappointments as necessary in January.

Mr. Urban asked if the Committee should encourage turnover – the more people through the system the better expansion there will be. Mr. Justice said the Committee could instill term limits, although that may be a policy question for the Town Board. Mr. Urban said that policy question should be for EDAC members rather than the Town Board. Vice Chairman Jones said the Committee should encourage turnover because new blood is good. Mr. Justice suggested there has been enough natural turnover that official limits may be unnecessary. Mr. Urban agreed that may be enough. Mr. McGuire said instilling term limits would guarantee that. Mr. Justice said this topic can be continued at the January meeting to allow more time for discussion.

### **Joint Meeting with Town Board**

Mr. Justice said economic development incentives will be discussed at a future joint meeting with EDAC and the Town Board. Speakers will be invited to address the group. Tentative dates include January 9 and 23 and February 13 or 27. Mr. Justice will contact the Committee when the date has been finalized.

### **Wayfinding Project**

Ms. Privette-Keller explained the wayfinding project as the next phase of the Town's branding initiative. This includes those details that are visible to the public, such as signage, public art, landscaping and other things of that nature. The Town has hired a consultant to work with the staff committee. A member of the Tree and Appearance Board is also involved. Designs are scheduled to be made available to the public in January or February.

Vice Chairman Jones said he has heard many positive comments about the Town's appearance. Ms. Privette-Keller said aesthetic issues will be improved. She hopes to have something in place before the Democratic Nation Convention takes place in Charlotte in September 2012. Ms. Whitley suggested painting the Depot building and caboose and said the Depot is in need of some repair.

### **Crestdale Project**

Mr. Justice said the final report on the Community Planning Assistance Team's visit to the Crestdale community is now available. The executive summary includes a number of recommendations – the theme is that the community needs to organize and then seek partnerships, including with the Town. This needs to be a community/grass-roots driven effort.

## **SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Downtown**

*Downtown Master Plan update & downtown steering group:* Mr. Urban said there was tepid response to the Downtown Master Plan Steering Committee meeting. Mr. Justice explained the Steering Committee is working on the draft before it goes out to the larger group. Planner Jay Camp is working on the actual plan draft and he can work on communication with the larger group. Mr. Urban suggested letting the Downtown Merchant Group know what's going on at some point. Ms. Whitley suggested that could be a job for the EDAC subcommittee. She also noted the contact information for the Downtown Merchants Group members needs to be updated, and volunteered to get those emails.

Mr. Urban said there needs to be a specific definition of who the downtown merchants are, and look at bringing in new members who can add enthusiasm to the group.

### **Development Process/Planning Advisory**

*UDO:* Mr. Urban said work on the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) continues. There are a lot of details still to be resolved, but the Town Board is down to the last one and a half chapters. It could take until January or February to flesh out the entire UDO, and then they need to go back over the hot spots. It's possible that the Board could concentrate on it during the February Planning Conference.

*Development Process Review:* Mr. Justice said the Development Process review is underway. The consultant has met with the Town Board. The next step is to compile data and then sit down with Town staff to discuss proposed changes. This could be finished by January or February.

### **Business Development**

*Letter to New Businesses:* Vice Chairman Jones, with the assistance of Mr. Justice and Ms. Privette-Keller, is working on the letter to new businesses. This will be a letter from the Mayor to those seeking privilege licenses.

*Entrepreneurs Summit:* Vice Chairman Jones spoke of the recent Entrepreneur's Summit in Charlotte. He said it seems like they're trying to do what Matthews has already done. Mr. Justice said the same issues exist everywhere, and that different locations can learn a lot on how to help entrepreneurs in their locales.

*Next Breakfast with the Mayor:* Vice Chairman Jones said the tentative date for the next Mayor's Breakfast is scheduled for February 17, 2012. Last time several people didn't come, so he suggested sending out reminders to all scheduled attendees.

There was some discussion regarding whether or not to continue holding these events. Consensus was to move forward with the February event and see how it is received.

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

Mr. Justice explained that the Sportsplex project is in progress. Phase 1 construction is now in the County's hands and may be out to bid in late winter or early spring. The Squirrel Lake Park renovations are not completely finished but will be soon. The Ag Building and 196 South Trade Street building are almost ready to go out to bid. Program detail changes to the Façade Grant program are on Mr. Justice's to-do list.

There was some discussion of town-related Google search results. There was discussion in a previous meeting that Matthews' business results were not high in search results. Mr. Justice has determined that businesses need to spend thousands of dollars to get to the top of the list and that is not feasible at this time.

Ms. Privette-Keller said the Town is in the process of setting up a .gov URL instead of its current .com address. Website user numbers are high.

Chairman Jamison noted that the Town has not reached out to businesses to cross-link with the Town website and suggested that would benefit both parties. Ms. Privette-Keller explained the Town policy is to avoid listing specific businesses. Chairman Jamison suggested addressing the Town Board to ask for a business directory to be placed within the Town website. He asked why license-paying businesses shouldn't be listed there. Ms. Privette-Keller said it is easier to avoid potential problems, since none can be excluded if any are allowed. She said this is a policy question that has come up in all municipalities. Chairman Jamison suggested as a minimum that businesses should cross-link with the Chamber of Commerce.

## **MISCELLANEOUS**

Chairman Jamison suggested the idea of a job fair, possibly tied in with CPCC or Wingate. It could promote Matthews employers and include resume-writing seminars, instructions on how to behave during interviews and other resources to leverage. There was much discussion of various possibilities involved with such a project. Mr. Klein cautioned the Committee that recent job fairs are inundated with hundreds of job seekers at every event. His HR department is overwhelmed. He suggested not holding a job fair when there are only a few jobs available. Mr. McGuire agreed that it would be necessary to have known employers with available jobs, and it seems like most aren't currently hiring anyone. Mr. Jones said it sounded like a valid idea but it could easily get out of hand.

Ms. Garcia announced that construction is ongoing for the new driveway at Windsor Square. If construction remains on schedule then it will open during the second week of December, with the roundabout in the area of the former Burlington Coat Factory. Office Depot will move down and JC Penney will open about this time next year.

Mr. Klein announced that Presbyterian Hospital's parking lot expansion should be ready by the end of the year and the floor expansion is in the final design stage.

Mr. Rhyne announced that Harris Teeter is expanding – their first store in Baltimore will be opening soon.

The next meeting is scheduled for January 19, 2012.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Martin motioned to adjourn. Mr. Klein seconded and the motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:30 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori Canapinno  
Deputy Town Clerk