

**MINUTES  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 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, Bev Martin, Jerry McGuire, Bill Rhyne, John Urban, Tina Whitley; Assistant Town Manager Jamie Justice

**ABSENT:** Greg Klein

**ALSO PRESENT:** Communications Director Annette Privette-Keller

**CALL TO ORDER & DECLARE QUORUM:** Chairman Jamison called the meeting to order at 7:03 am. Mr. Babinski rendered the invocation.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES:** Ms. Whitley motioned to approve the minutes of the September 16, 2010 meeting. Mr. Babinski seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

### **Business Summit**

The summit takes place tomorrow. Mr. McGuire will facilitate. He gave an overview of how the summit will proceed. Mr. McGuire has devised an evaluation form for all attendees to answer and he will review them and extrapolate the information after the summit.

### **Business Incubator – site visit**

Chairman Jamison said his takeaway was that the focus of the incubator is not about the building, but more about the program itself - different businesses within the incubator collaborate. Mr. Rhyne noted that they focused on structure, intent and collaboration. The building is secondary. Mr. Jones said he understood that they're in the process of changing the theme – they're planning on becoming an incubator of incubators. Matthews could use them as a template.

Chairman Jamison noted that they have partnered with UNCC. Perhaps Matthews could partner with CPCC and/or Wingate – that would be better than Matthews attempting to start the program alone. Ms. Whitley noted CPCC's Entrepreneurship Program already in place and said that would be a good way to get started. Chairman Jamison suggested inviting the CPCC Entrepreneurship group to make a presentation to EDAC to inform its members about the program. The group agreed with that suggestion. Mr. Justice said Renee Hode is the person to contact.

Mr. Justice asked the group if they felt the town should abandon the traditional brick and mortar incubator concept and instead seek the involvement of the Ben Craig Center to institute a satellite incubator here in town. Ms. Whitley said the two ideas would probably mesh but would require the leadership of the UNCC group. Mr. Jones said the two ideas are not mutually exclusive. Chairman Jamison said he doesn't believe it necessary to abandon the brick and mortar plan. A natural progression would be to start with UNCC or CPCC, even if it's in a satellite or cyber capacity. The partnership is the critical piece.

Mr. Justice said an alternate plan could involve the town providing some services as a community without actually having an incubator set up, such as bringing some mentoring or other resources to town. The group agreed that was a viable option.

Chairman Jamison suggested sending a letter from EDAC to the Ben Craig Center thanking them for the information and asking for a chance to learn about a satellite arrangement. Mr. Justice will handle that.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Expiring Terms**

Mr. Justice explained that several members of the committee are up for reappointment in January 2011: Paul Babinski, Rachel Garcia, Jennefer Garrity, Jim Johnson, Tim Jones and Greg Klein. Those who are interested in serving another term should advise Mr. Justice as soon as possible.

Mr. Justice pointed out that Ms. Garrity is the 2010 Matthews Chamber President and will be succeeded by Mr. Jamison, who already holds a seat on EDAC. He suggested amending the EDAC bylaws to allow the Chamber president to either take the seat on EDAC or nominate a replacement from the Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, who would then be approved by the Town Board. The group agreed by consensus. Mr. Justice will draft the bylaw amendment for review.

### **Code of Ethics**

Mr. Justice explained that the state legislature has mandated that elected and appointed officials must adopt a code of ethics. The committee's bylaws already include an ethics section but this new code will work in conjunction with that. A final version will be provided to EDAC soon.

## **REPORTS FROM SUBCOMMITTEES**

### **Downtown: Façade Enhancement Grant**

Vice Chairman Johnson noted that work on the program proceeds. Planner Jay Camp and an intern have been working on the details and sent him a preliminary document this week. Vice Chairman Johnson would like to review the document via email with the Downtown subcommittee members in the next two weeks, review via email with the remaining EDAC members, and bring the draft document to the Town Board at the December 13<sup>th</sup> meeting.

There was some discussion regarding the timing of the applicants and grants. That is something that needs to be further investigated – there are pros and cons to each method.

### **Business Development: Mayor's Breakfast**

Mr. Jones reported that the subcommittee is continuing to work on this program. The intent is to hold them quarterly but that is still being worked out with the Mayor.

Mr. Justice noted that it would be good to hold the first breakfast in February so it would coincide with the next Economic Development newsletter. Mr. Jones explained the plan is to get in touch with the business community multiple times throughout the year between summits.

### **Development Process/Planning Advisory: UDO**

Mr. Urban explained that work on the UDO proceeds. Stakeholders met on the last section this week and Commissioners have been reviewing chapters on an ongoing basis. All chapters are now back in the hands of the consultant. There may be a comprehensive draft in January or February.

There are no big surprises or major changes. There are some new zoning categories and lots of procedural changes. The Downtown Master Plan and Land Use Plan are also being revised and all of these documents will dovetail together to make the development process much easier and more understandable for everyone involved.

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

#### **Sportsplex**

Mr. Justice explained that the former plan, which involved Mecklenburg County, will not work. The current plan is to engage in a public-private partnership with a developer. James Shipley with National Amateur Sports has been involved with discussions and has recently brought in the Keith Corporation to the table. This corporation was involved with the development of the sportsplex five years ago and had some interest in the project at the time. They have now partnered up with James Shipley and have made a proposal. They propose to build the sportsplex and allow the town to lease space for public use. They could take that lease to the bank and get the financing necessary to build the sportsplex. Mr. Justice explained that this would cause a couple of different problems: this is not the method the town would like to use and any developers involved would have difficulty getting financing for family entertainment uses on the private side. The town would prefer to see the TIF model used with both the sportsplex and some of the private sector development so those taxes can go towards paying the debt from building the sportsplex. The developer is saying that nothing can be built on the private side before the sportsplex is built.

Mr. Justice said the question now before the town is whether to build the sportsplex first and the private side will be a secondary consideration or does the town continue to not abandon that private development aspect and continue to look for another developer that could make it all happen. Staff will make a presentation at the next Town Board meeting to discuss the potential RFP process to find another developer.

Mr. Urban noted that the bigger question is this - how much does the town want to get involved with private development? He said he believes the town should govern and set up infrastructure. The onus of development should fall on developers and not the town. Mr. Justice said the scenario could involve the town putting in major roadway connections to unlock development potential. The town has to figure out how much risk it is willing to take.

Ms. Whitley said the town needs some sort of anchor – a commitment from something, like a sportsplex or convention center – before developers will bite.

Mr. Justice noted that the project is not dead, it will just require more work before we see any action.

### **MISCELLANEOUS**

Ms. Whitley asked about the post office property on East John Street. Downtown merchants have said they would like to see that used as a parking lot. Mr. Justice said no decision has been made on that. An appraisal would need to be done before any further discussion takes place.

Mr. Rhyne asked about the former PCA and Erickson properties. Mr. Justice explained that the Erickson property reverted back to the bank. Some interested parties have made inquiries about residential development but no details are available. The PCA property is available. The town would like to help the property owner move it along.

Ms. Privette-Keller explained that the first Economic Development newsletter has been mailed out. The next one will go out in February in with the privilege license mailer. An Economic Development brochure is next in line. The town will soon be sending out an RFP for the first phase of a town-wide wayfinding system – a series of directional and informational signs with the town's branding.

There was some discussion about the newsletter that had been mailed – the charts were too small to be legible and some of the newsletters had been crunched up and torn. There was also a consensus to try to use Matthews businesses for printing and mailing whenever possible. Mr. Justice noted that state statutes require the town to use the lowest bidder.

Mr. Urban has had some discussions with Matthews resident and CPCC Communications Director Adam Brooks regarding the installation of Wi-Fi in the downtown area. This is a relatively simple gesture that would be very attractive to people. It would be great for customers to be able to access Wi-Fi while they're at one of the restaurants or sitting in the park. Mr. Urban does not have any numbers yet but he suggested sharing costs with a partner like Windstream. There is some money available in the Economic Development budget and the town could look into developing sponsorships with local businesses.

Mr. Justice said the town investigated this in the recent past. Windstream quoted a price of \$10,000 for just a small portion of the downtown area – only Matthews Station Street and a portion of Trade Street.

Vice Chairman Johnson said he has investigated this because of his business. There are two standards for wireless connectivity: the standard 802.11, and the emerging contender WiMAX. The best method is to use a mesh with multiple access points. Each access point talks to the other and feed back into a central connection. Powered transmitters are needed to make it work. Property owners would have to agree to allow that. The town could help with the facilitation of that, probably through the Downtown Merchants Group.

Vice Chairman Johnson suggested limiting the free access to a set time, perhaps an hour or two. Access past that time could be purchased by the visitor.

Mr. Urban said the town could encourage the installation of these access points with any new development.

Mr. Urban said the discussion can be moved forward. Mr. Urban will speak with Mr. Justice regarding the information obtained from those old discussions with Windstream and Wildfire. Chairman Jamison would like to be part of those discussions.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Mr. Babinski motioned to adjourn. Ms. Garcia seconded and the motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:12 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori Canapinno  
Deputy Town Clerk

APPROVED 1/20/2011