

MINUTES
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2013 - 7:00 AM
JORDAN ROOM, MATTHEWS TOWN HALL

PRESENT: Chairman Paul Jamison; Vice Chairman Tim Jones; Members Greg Klein*, Roger Martin, Bev Martin, Commissioner John Urban (appointed member) Chamber Executive Director Tina Whitley (ex-Officio)*; Assistant Town Manager Jamie Justice; Town Clerk Lori Canapinno

ABSENT: Members Paul Babinski, Mark Harrison, Jerry McGuire, Crystal Provance and Steve Thomson

CALL TO ORDER

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

INVOCATION

Mr. Martin rendered an invocation.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Vice Chairman Jones to approve the minutes of the September 19, 2013 regular meeting and October 24, 2013 special meeting. Seconded by Ms. Martin and unanimously approved.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

DOWNTOWN ORGANIZATION UPDATE

Mr. Justice explained that the downtown organization steering group has had multiple meetings and visited the Town of Davidson to review that town's organization. The next step is to hold the public meeting which will be held at the Town Hall from 6:30 – 7:30 pm on December 4th. After that the steering group will meet with EDAC to discuss the final proposal, which will be brought to the Board of Commissioners before their Planning Conference at the end of February 2014. The organization would initially be funded with Town money but eventually would work towards other sources of funding. The expectation is that only Town funds would be used for the first few years.

BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT AWARDS

Ms. Martin explained that members met on this but think that since Matthews is not a blighted community it's not an issue that needs to be addressed by EDAC. The town does have an active Appearance & Tree Committee (A&TC) that might be more suited to overseeing this type of program. Ms. Whitley agreed. Mr. Urban said it is a matter of economic development similar to how the wayfinding program affects economic development, but agreed that such a program probably should fall within the purview of the A&TC. He suggested speaking to Committee Chair Brian Allio about it. Chairman Jamison suggested including the Planning department so staff could work on building connections within the community. Ms. Whitley suggested issuing an overall town award.

Mr. Martin said he sees appearance as a significant part of EDAC. If new businesses come to visit Matthews and see unattractive or unkempt buildings then they probably wouldn't want to move the business to town. It's very important to economic development. Appearance should definitely be a focus, either with A&TC or splintered off into a new group. The John Street corridor is especially bad. If Matthews is serious about growing its employment base then it needs to address what young businesspeople want – access to water, other young people and a vibrant community. Ms. Whitley said the Town should focus on the basics before issuing awards to others. Chairman Jamison said it wouldn't hurt to do both.

Mr. Urban noted the Commissioners and all boards and committees met together once in recent years in an effort to inform everyone what each group was doing and see how each could work together. He suggested that could be a regular event, perhaps annually.

BUSINESS SUMMIT DEBRIEF

Vice Chairman Jones explained it was a fantastic summit with great exposure since Secretary Tata attracted a lot of press. About 80 people attended and the evaluation results were very complimentary.

EDAC RECOMMENDATION ON URBAN3 TAX REVENUE ANALYSIS

Mr. Justice said EDAC should make an official recommendation to the Town Board regarding the tax revenue analysis to ensure that these issues are remembered during every rezoning case. Mr. Urban agreed, saying this needs to be pushed at every opportunity. Every zoning application should be analyzed for information regarding costs and benefits.

There was some discussion of using certain software to analyze zoning applications. Staff performed the recent analysis on the Standard Pacific rezoning application in-house using methods shared by the Town of Cornelius. Vice Chairman Jones commented on the ISIS software and suggested contacting the UNCC Urban Institute for information. Chairman Jamison suggested inviting his friend, who works for a company that provides similar software, to the next meeting to discuss options.

Motion by Vice Chairman Jones to recommend EDAC's support to the Board of Commissioners of items one through four from Mr. Justice's November 15th memo:

- 1) Encourage the new Town Board to discuss the results of the Tax Revenue Analysis.
- 2) Look at going more vertical with multiple stories in the downtown overlay district and other areas Planning staff deems appropriate.
- 3) For new development projects/zoning petitions, perform a cost/benefit analysis for each project that encompasses the tax revenue analysis component from Urban3.
- 4) Pursue discussion of the possible tax assessment methodology disparities with the County Assessor's Office and consider utilizing Joe Minicozzi's assistance.

Seconded by Mr. Urban.

Mr. Martin suggested a change to item two (look at going more vertical with multiple stories in the downtown overlay district and other areas Planning staff deems appropriate), suggesting instead, "look at going more vertical with multiple stories where Planning staff deems appropriate." Mr. Urban suggested "look at going more vertical with multiple stories as per the Land Use Plan and Unified Development Ordinance" since staff will be using those documents to form their recommendations.

Vice Chairman Jones amended his motion to include the changes to item two, which now reads as, “look at going more vertical with multiple stories as per the Land Use Plan and Unified Development Ordinance.” Seconded by Mr. Klein and unanimously approved.

FOUR TOWNS ALLIANCE UPDATE

Mr. Urban reported that meetings continue. The intent is to coalesce the four towns. This could range from branding the region all the way up to a combined business center. The goal is to get buy in from the four towns and then research the various opportunities. A small investment of \$4,000 is being requested from each town to get started.

Mr. Justice mentioned the need to have a formal connection between EDAC and the alliance. This will be discussed at the January EDAC meeting.

* Mr. Klein and Ms. Whitley departed. The meeting continued with no quorum.

NEW BUSINESS

FAÇADE GRANT PROGRAM CHANGES

Mr. Justice drafted changes to the façade grant requirements as discussed at the October special meeting. These changes refer to façade grant eligibility if the applicant/location previously received Town funding within a certain time span. Mr. Justice suggested implementing a three year time span. Chairman Jamison prefers five years and would also like to include the phrase “or are eligible to receive town funds.” Mr. Justice thought that would be too prohibitive and it would be easier to track if the issue was just if the applicant actually received funds within the time span. Mr. Urban agreed that five years was a good number.

Due to the lack of quorum this issue must be tabled until the January meeting.

BRAINSTORMING AND PRIORITIZATION FOR 2014

Mr. Martin said it’s difficult to hold two great summits per year and suggested reducing them to once a year. Mr. Justice noted the spring summit has already been set for May 9, 2014, but that could be the only summit next year. It was suggested to reduce the number of Breakfast with the Mayor events too and scheduling one summit and one breakfast every year with one in the spring and one in the fall.

Ms. Martin noted Darlington, South Carolina’s practice of holding small weekly summits with targeted topics every October. Chairman Jamison said that might compete with the Chamber’s similar events. He suggested EDAC could get involved by offering assistance with Chamber events.

Vice Chairman Jones referred to Mr. Martin’s earlier discussion on overall beautification for all businesses. Ms. Martin described the “Entrepreneurial County” signs on Highway 40 towards Black Mountain – perhaps a similar designation could be instituted here.

Mr. Martin described Charlotte’s “Southpark District” signs as being small and well designed. Matthews’ new North End signage is similarly attractive and he is thinking about designing a similar sign for the West Charles district. He questioned if EDAC should explore further identification for other areas of Matthews.

Vice Chairman Jones suggested combining EDAC and Chamber efforts and going out on personal visits to businesses in town. EDAC members could bring questions and hear feedback. It's probably easier for businesspeople to talk in their own business environment versus venturing out to Town Hall for meetings.

These topics will be discussed further at the next meeting with a quorum in place.

STAFF REPORT/ACTION PLAN UPDATE

2014 meeting dates – these dates have been dispersed with the agenda packet.

Status of EDAC vacancy - applicants will be interviewed and a recommendation will be made to the Town Board at their December 9th meeting.

Spring Business Summit – the summit is set for May 9, 2014. The speaker will be North Carolina Secretary of Commerce Sharon Decker.

Mecklenburg County Economic Development Subcommittee – Mr. Justice attended with Town Manager Hazen Blodgett to discuss what everyone in the county is doing for economic development. Matthews received very positive comments.

Sportsplex Stadium Market Analysis- the results were presented to the Town Board at the November 11th meeting. The consultants' view was that the stadium as currently planned will be overbuilt unless the town wants to try to attract a big anchor tenant. The recommendation is to build a higher quality stadium even if that reduces the number of seats. That will help with any possible expansion efforts in the future. The Charlotte Regional Visitors Authority partnered with the town and split the cost of the study.

MISCELLANEOUS

The January agenda will include a discussion on changing the EDAC meeting time from 7 am to 7:30 am.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori Canapinno
Town Clerk