

**MINUTES  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
THURSDAY, JANUARY 19, 2017 – 7:00 AM  
JORDAN ROOM, MATTHEWS TOWN HALL**

**PRESENT:** Chairman Paul Jamison; Vice Chairman Tim Jones; Members Adam Brooks\*, Bev Martin, Greg Klein, Russ Gill, Steve Thomson\*, Commissioner John Higdon (appointed member); Assistant Town Manager Becky Hawke, Town Clerk Lori Canapinno

**ABSENT:** Chamber Executive Director Kelly Barnhardt (ex-officio)

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Jamison called the meeting to order at 7:04 am.

**INVOCATION**

Mr. Jamison rendered an invocation.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Motion by Ms. Martin to approve the minutes of the November 17, 2016 regular meeting and January 6, 2017 special meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Klein and unanimously approved.

**ELECT EDAC CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR**

\*Steve Thomson arrived

Motion by Mr. Higdon to elect Paul Jamison as Chair and Tim Jones as Vice Chair. The motion was seconded by Mr. Klein and unanimously approved.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

***MATTHEWS RISING PROGRAM – FEBRUARY 10, 2017***

Mr. Gill summarized the planned program. Liz Parham, Director of the Commerce Department's Main Street program will talk about the economic power of authenticity and describe what other communities are doing to revitalize their downtowns. Rob Jacik, owner of Carolina Beer Temple and Xan Hood, owner of Buffalo Jackson will talk about what brought them to Matthews and why Matthews is a viable location for startups. John Urban will moderate the discussion. The takeaways will be to hear what other towns are doing, hear from successful local business owners about why they chose to start their businesses in Matthews and what Matthews is doing to help businesses succeed. Ms. Canapinno will handle the invitations, press release and advertising on the town's website and social media. By consensus the group agreed to move forward with this event with these details.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**APPROVED 3/8/2017**

## **CHAMBER BUSINESS EXPO**

EDAC will have a table at the Expo on March 20<sup>th</sup>. Tim Jones, Paul Jamison and Steve Thomson agreed to attend and cover the table. Greg Klein and John Higdon said they may also be available for some time that day. The Town will provide a laptop and flyer to promote the Xceligent software program that is used to search for available commercial properties as well as general information about EDAC and the town.

## **STAFF REPORT**

Ms. Hawke gave an update on recent development activity. A restaurant is in discussions to locate at the former Dilworth Coffee location and the landlord will be adding a pavilion to that corner. It will be a very pedestrian-friendly addition. The improvements to the railroad parking lot continue. Lighting has been added and the staircase has to be reconstructed after underground gas line work required it to be dug up. The Board is expected to make a final decision on the Taft apartment project in February.

\*Adam Brooks arrived

Ms. Hawke gave an update on Chamber events, explaining that the Chamber will be part of the upcoming joint economic development discussion to see how EDAC, the Quad, the Red Brick Partnership and the Town all fit together. The Chamber will also be working on their mission and discussing programming and events that provide value to the members. Mr. Thomson discussed the possibility of the Chamber opening up some events to the public and the potential to shift focus toward helping startups and small businesses.

Discussion on the upcoming joint economic development meeting ensued. Ms. Hawke explained the goal to discuss the overlaps and gaps between the work each organization provides as well as the chance to see how the groups can work jointly. Mr. Jamison and Mr. Jones will provide a report after the joint meeting.

Mr. Brooks noted that the Chamber worked for Matthews area businesses, the Quad is for all three member towns and the Red Brick Partnership is for downtown Matthews. EDAC should think about Matthews 20-30 years in the future and figure out what types of business will take precedence and what the economic drivers will be and how to steer towards them. Mr. Jamison noted that 87 people are moving into Mecklenburg County per day. Mr. Klein noted that there is a lot of focus on downtown businesses, but there are many more businesses outside of that area that are significant. Mr. Thomson said the businesses in areas like Industrial Drive and Independence Boulevard need support too but are being ignored.

Discussion ensued on ways to get business owners talking and involved. Mr. Jamison noted that there are plenty of local small business owners in the small business centers. Ms. Hawke suggested getting their attention by asking for information and feedback. They could be asked if there are things the town could be doing to make them feel more supported. Mr. Thomson and Mr. Jamison volunteered to go door to door. Mr. Gill suggested making a list of the town services that are available. Ms. Hawke suggested gathering pieces of information and feedback and leaving a flyer/handout with information the business owner could read later. Mr. Jamison noted this type of grassroots effort help create positive communication channels that could bring other businesses to town. Mr. Thomson volunteered to head this subcommittee to write questions, plan personal visits and figure out what to do with that information afterwards.

Mr. Brooks noted that other cities know what business sectors they're seeking. Matthews needs to determine its vision and identify the brand of the Matthews economy and the types of desired businesses. Mr. Gill suggested seeking creative businesses – inventors, producers, etc. Small business- and creative business-friendly communities attract young people, and there are many different types of businesses that fall under the creative category. There are 42 such creative businesses in town already – maybe that niche should be cultivated. Mr.

Brooks said it would be good to better understand the County's economic development arm. He suggested starting consistent communication with them and seeing if Matthews aligns with any of their sectors. It might be good to invite them to an EDAC meeting.

### **MISCELLANEOUS**

Ms. Hawke noted the potential opportunity to add economic development-related questions to the upcoming citizen survey.

Mr. Jones discussed the possibility for EDAC members to attend other committee meetings so hear what's going on firsthand and potentially express an official EDAC opinion.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by Mr. Higdon to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Mr. Thomson and unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned at 8:27 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori Canapinno  
Town Clerk