



CITY OF FAIRFAX ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, September 6th, 2023 6:00 pm
In Person at Economic Development Offices

10300 Eaton Place, Small Conference Room, VA 22030

Commissioners Present:

Chair Beth Young
Vice Chair Kathleen Paley
Treasurer Dawn McGruder
Secretary Tom Ross
Commissioner Fred Cornett
Commissioner Mitchell Cho

Others Present:

Nicole Toulouse, *Senior Vice President*, Economic Development Office
Matthew Easley, *Vice President*, Economic Development Office
Tara Borwey, *Programs Manager*, Economic Development Office
Andrew Wilson, *Project Manager*, Economic Development Office
Joey Peppersack, *EDA Associate*, Economic Development Office

1. Call to Order *Chair Young*
 - a. Call to Order by Chair Young at 6:05pm
2. Consideration of Approval for Electronic Participation for Vice Chair Paley [VOTE] *Chair Young*
 - a. Passes Unanimously
 - b. Commissioner Cho informs those in participation that he is unable to be present for the entire meeting.
3. Adoption of August Meeting Minutes [VOTE] *Chair Young*
 - a. Secretary Ross moves.
 - b. Beth Young seconds.
 - c. Passes Unanimously.
4. Adoption of September Meeting Agenda [VOTE] *Chair Young*
 - a. Passes Unanimously.
5. Mason Enterprise Center – Fairfax (15 Mins w/ Q&A) *Center Director Hill*
 - a. September Update
 - i. Center Director Hill provides an update to client list which includes losses of 4 offices and 3 wet labs.
 - ii. There are new tenants, notably Coastal Cloud from Florida.
 - iii. Treasurer McGruder asks clarification on the occupancy rate. *Center Director Hill* confirms that is 55% which is a decrease of 7%.
 - iv. Commissioner Cho asks how many of the current tenants are long-term.
 1. Center Director Hill states that they are retaining 75% of tenants.

- v. Secretary Ross reiterates goals from previous meetings of having an occupancy rate upwards of 80%. Asks Center Director Hill if there is anything that can be done to break the current trend.
 - 1. Center Director Hill states that the MEC marketing budget has increased 80% to fix this issue.
 - vi. Secretary Ross asks if there is any outreach being done on behalf of the MEC.
 - 1. Center Director Hill reiterates this point and asks if the EDA will advocate for the MEC and refer potential clients to them.
 - vii. Secretary Ross asks if the MEC is collaborating with key personnel at city hall to get an article on the “City Scene” or a newsletter.
 - 1. Center Director Hill states he has not done this yet, but it will be done during the fall.
 - 2. Treasurer McGruder says this process will take some time.
 - 3. Senior Vice President Toulouse asks if the MEC can provide something to put back on the back of the EDA’s buses to increase information flowing through George Mason and Fairfax City.
 - 4. Senior Vice President Toulouse informs that there are some businesses from Toronto that would be good leads for potential virtual clients for the MEC.
 - viii. Center Director Hill states that the MEC has a new potential soft-landing client.
 - ix. Center Director Hill directs the attention of the Commissioners to a newly formatted budget page which he states is for July/August.
 - 1. Treasurer McGruder asks for clarification for the dates of this budget.
 - a. Center Director Hill clarifies that the budget is for July, not August.
 - b. Commissioner Cornett offers advice on the new format to make it clearer.
 - x. Chair Young offers words regarding the performance of the MEC and how there should be other qualitative metrics used to measure the performance of the MEC.
 - xi. Commissioner Cho states that during his tenure at the MEC, he found the classes offered to businesses very helpful and should be used to attract new tenants.

Recommends more outreach in the form of training.
6. Consideration of Resolution Disclosing the McGruder Group for Limited Financial Support and Cost of Services **[VOTE]** *Vice President Easley*
- a. Vice President Easley offers a word of gratitude to Treasurer McGruder for her offer to assist the EDA with The McGruder Group’s services.
 - b. No discussion ensues prior to the vote.

- i. Treasurer McGruder abstains
- ii. Kathleen Paley votes in favor.
- iii. Commissioner Cho votes in favor
- iv. Jeffrey Hermann is absent
- v. Beth Young votes in favor
- vi. Commissioner Cornett votes in favor
- vii. Secretary Ross votes in favor.

c. Resolution passes.

7. Consideration of A Resolution in Support of Increasing the Small Purchase / Sole Source Limit for Purchases

Made by the EDA. **[VOTE]**

Vice President Easley

- a. Chair Young provides a brief overview of the small purchase policy increase to 50,000 from 25,000.
 - i. Chair Young states she is not opposed to this. However, wishes that when purchases are made that women-owned and minority-owned businesses are prioritized.
 - ii. Commissioner Cornett asks for clarification regarding the definition of transportation related construction.
 1. Vice President Easley says that this information will be provided to Commissioners at a later time.
 2. Chair Young asks why this increase is occurring 8 months after the limit was already increased.
 - a. Senior Vice President Toulouse informs that the services needed are not necessarily rendered to over 25,000. Provides an example of advertisement space for multiple programs which could amount to a larger number of 20,000. Reaffirms that this change would make the process easier.
 - b. Vice President Easley and Senior Vice President Toulouse clarify that according to EDA policy, any purchase over 10,000 would still require a staff report and be presented to the Commissioners for a vote of confidence.
 - c. Chair Young asks for clarification to the policy that includes the EDA policy that requires any purchase over 10,000 to be presented to the Commissioners.
 - d. Chair Young also requests an amendment to the policy that enforces a prioritization for city businesses.
 - iii. Vice President Easley informs commissioners that this increase is to help increase the autonomy of the EDA.
- b. The resolution to increase the small purchase amount is tabled.

8. Update on International Downtown Association Annual Conference and Top Issues Council with Mayor Read

Vice President Easley

1. Vice President Easley, Senior Vice President Toulouse, Manager Borwey, and CEO Bruno are attending the international downtown association conference in Chicago from October 4 – 6th along with Mayor Read.
2. Vice President Easley was selected to be on the council for Scalable Innovations and Placemaking of which Mayor Read was selected to be a moderator.
3. Vice President Easley will be working with key figures from Wisconsin and Alabama on how to bring placemaking to areas that would benefit from more vibrancy.
4. Vice President Easley was apart of a paper on placemaking in which he highlighted some actions that the Fairfax City EDA has made in its movement towards placemaking.
 - a. Wishes to make note that placemaking was made a priority during the COVID-19 pandemic and that the strategic workplan has recommended that the EDA partner with merchant organizations to improve placemaking.
5. Senior Vice President Toulouse reaffirms that placemaking needs to be done throughout the entire Fairfax City and not only the downtown.

9. Restaurant Week Update

Manager Borwey

- a. OTFBA have been accepted and brought into the fold for restaurant week.
 - i. Has assisted with city collaboration efforts.
- b. Officially in the 6th year of restaurant week with 33 restaurants participating.
- c. Manager Borwey provides a brief overview of the restaurant experience to the Commissioners and highlights a full dining experience.
- d. Manager Borwey states that anytime you go to a restaurant during restaurant week to post on social media and tag the EDA to increase awareness.
- e. Commissioner Cornett asks if there are any television news networks coming to Fairfax City to report on Restaurant week.
 - i. Manager Borwey confirms that on 9/7 she will be working with channel 7 to highlight restaurant week.
- f. Senior Vice President Toulouse states that the EDA is working to promote Rock the Block to George Mason Students to reinforce a college town environment.
- g. Senior Vice President Toulouse also mentions that we are working with the Fairfax County DMO to promote the Visit Fairfax City brand.
- h. Vice President Easley states that the EDA has purchased 4 new URL's to redirect back to the Fairfax City website.
- i. Commissioner Cho leaves the meeting.

10. Public Comment (5 Mins)

Public

- a. Jennifer Rose, Secretary of the CFCC

- i. Expresses gratitude to the Fairfax City EDO for helping support the Valor Awards that the CFCC is putting on in October. They are hosting a breakfast on October 27th at the Sherwood center. A few sponsors are in place; however, they are looking for more.
 - ii. Reminds the EDA that the CFCC is also a place maker.
 - iii. Attended the Virginia Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives and found some workforce development ideas.
- b. Doug Church, Chairman of the CFCC
 - i. Reminds the EDA that place making is what he enjoys the most.
 - ii. States that the support and independence of the EDO & EDA goes a long way.
 - iii. States that the relationship between the CFCC and the Fairfax City EDA is unique and means a lot to local businesses.
- c. Tess Rollins, OTFBA
 - i. Will also be in attendance of the International Downtown Association.
 - ii. Officially signed grant and lease for the retail incubation store called “Wander-In.” Citing need for more walkability.
 - 1. States collaboration with the SBDC to increase workforce development for this effort.
 - 2. Are in full-force in trying to get occupancy permits and cosmetic things in order.
 - 3. Thanks Michelle Smith of the EDO for her collaboration and help with George Mason “swag” boxes.
 - 4. In the process of branding Old Town Fairfax as a wedding destination and event destination.
 - a. 17 businesses are on board with this effort.
 - 5. OTFBA will have their quarterly happy hour on the 19th from 5-7pm at Old Dominion Pizza.

11. Convene Closed Session Meeting [VOTE]

Chair Young

- a. Secretary Ross motions to convene closed session.
- b. Resolution passes unanimously.
- c. Closed session begins 6:58pm.

12. Partnership with a Prospective Business

Senior Vice President Toulouse

- a. EDA agrees to give note of support to prospective business.

13. Reconvene Meeting [VOTE]

Chair Young

- a. Resolution to reconvene meeting passes unanimously.
- b. Meeting reconvenes at 7:45pm.

14. New Business

Commissioners

- a. Secretary Ross states he is in favor of ending printed packet distribution.

- i. Chair Young and Commissioner Cornett agree.
 - ii. Chair Young suggests that to save paper we print double sided without color.
- b. Commissioner Cornett recommends that we consider new art installations for Fairfax City for attracting visitors.
- c. Commissioner Cornett recommends placing George Mason Patriots around Fairfax City to attract visitors.
 - i. Senior Vice President Toulouse agrees.

15. Adjourn

Chair Young

- a. Adjourns at 8:00pm

*****Next Special Meeting: Wednesday September 27, 2023*****

3pm, 10300 Eaton Place Small Conference Room Fairfax, Virginia 22030

*****Next Meeting: Wednesday October 11, 2023*****

Subject to Change. Please Check fairfaxcityconnected.com for more information.