



CITY OF FAIRFAX ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
MEETING AGENDA

Wednesday October 2, 2024 6:00pm
In Person at Economic Development Offices

<https://bit.ly/4eOCsYT>

10300 Eaton Place, Small Conference Room, 1st Floor, Fairfax, VA 22030

Commissioners Present:

Chair Mitchell Cho
Vice Chair Jeff Hermann-
Treasurer Dawn McGruder
Secretary Patrick Soleymani
Commissioner Beth Young
Commissioner Tom Ross

Others Present:

Chris Bruno, President and CEO, Economic Development Department
Nicole Toulouse, Senior Assistant Director, Economic Development Department- remote
Matthew Easley, Assistant Director, Economic Development Department
Brittany Jones, PR & Marketing Manager, Economic Development Department-remote
Marie Spittell, Business Investment Specialist, Economic Development Department
Jordan Locke, Economic Development Associate, Economic Development Department
Michelle Smith, Tourism Grants Specialist, Economic Development Department
Stephanie Kupka, Public Works, Fairfax City
Vicky Kishel, Public Works, Fairfax City- remote

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| 1. Call to Order | Chair Cho |
| 2. Adoption of October Meeting Agenda [VOTE] | Commissioners |
| a. Chair Cho motions. | |
| b. Commissioner Young seconds. | |
| c. Passes unanimously. | |
| 3. Convene Closed Session for Consultation with Legal Counsel [VOTE] | Chair Cho |
| a. Secretary Soleymani motions. | |
| b. Commissioner Ross seconds. | |
| c. Passes unanimously. | |
| 4. Reconvene Regular Session [VOTE] | Chair Cho |
| a. Secretary Soleymani motions. | |
| b. Vice Chair Hermann seconds. | |
| c. Passes unanimously. | |
| 5. Draft Green Building Policy (30 mins w/ Q&A) | Stefanie Kupka, Public Works |
| a. Stephanie Ka from Public Works introduces a presentation on green building initiatives, supported by consultants from the Cabbage Group, with Vicky Kishel, who presented a draft green building. | |
| b. The policy's purpose includes the city's commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and shift to 100% renewable electricity for government operations by 2035 and community-wide by 2050. The policy applies to both public and private sector buildings, with stricter requirements for the public sector. It includes public construction and major renovations of buildings 1,000 square feet or more, with the goal of meeting LEED certification standards. | |
| c. For the private sector, new developments of 5,000 square feet or greater, or major renovations, would follow similar green building rating systems, such as LEED, Green Globes, EarthCraft, or Enterprise Green Communities. Incentives, like tax abatements, are structured around certification levels and energy performance, including pathways for both predicted and actual energy use reductions. | |

- d. The policy is designed to encourage flexibility, acknowledging that the city, operating under Virginia's Dillon Rule, relies on incentives to promote green building practices. Incentive options reviewed include bonus density, tax abatements, and potential education on federal or state grants.
 - e. The presentation concluded with questions from attendees on topics including outreach to the development community, timelines for compliance, and additional incentives. The team plans to continue community outreach through early November and emphasized the importance of preparing developers for upcoming policies.
6. Mason Enterprise Center- Fairfax (15 mins w/ Q&A) Center Director Hill
- a. An MEC alumni, Glore Networks, returned under Rob Fisher, specializing in AI, cybersecurity, and big data. Fisher is actively engaging with and mentoring younger companies. DisTech transitioned from virtual to co-working and now has a dedicated desk, demonstrating growth as it expands IT services to government clients.
 - b. Occupancy increased to 52%, with plans to further boost engagement through upcoming events like DC Startup and Technology Week and the Accelerate Investor Conference. A member survey will launch soon, aiming to assess engagement levels and gather insights.
 - c. Due to outdated technology, MEC's website is being rebuilt on Squarespace to improve usability and SEO. The new site, part of a Mason Enterprise initiative, aims for completion by December's end.
 - d. MEC partnered with Nova Labs for discounted educational programming access and is developing benefits for Nova Labs members. A collaboration with MIX on the GMU campus offers maker space access, though parking remains a challenge.
7. Tourism Updates (10 mins w/ Q&A) Tourism Grants Specialist Smith /
Tourism and Placemaking Specialist Gerson
- a. Wander In Recap
 - i. The Wander In pilot project, a partnership with OTFBA and Kimco, provided a low-cost retail space in Old Town Fairfax to support 30 small businesses. OTFBA operated the program, offering vendor meet-and-greets and classes. The project began with 22 vendors, added eight, lost three, and concluded with 27 in June.
 - ii. Key goals included enhancing Old Town Fairfax's retail scene, encouraging walkable shopping, activating a vacant storefront, and providing training and affordable retail space. Originally funded with a \$100,000 grant, the project utilized \$80,000 before an early exit due to successful leasing. Sales reached nearly \$600, with vendors paying monthly fees and sales commissions.
 - b. Staff Update
 - i. Stephanie Gerson started as Tourism Specialist on 9/16/2024.. Stephanie's background includes consulting on tourism strategies, managing an Indigenous Cola tourism project, and working with Destinations International and in hospitality. She's been familiarizing herself with the community over the past two weeks and is excited to begin focusing on tourism initiatives, with hotels as a key next step.
8. Business Investment Update (10 mins w/ Q&A) Business Investment Specialist Spittell
- a. Italian Trade Mission
 - i. Shared details on the recent Italian trade mission organized by the Virginia SBDC, which included participation from five Virginia businesses. The mission aimed to establish connections in the Friuli Venezia Giulia region to attract Italian companies to Northern Virginia. Key meetings included discussions with the US Consulate in Milan, where officials expressed interest in forming a partnership, and an audience with the regional president.
 - ii. The itinerary featured one-on-one meetings, networking events, and site visits across various sectors, including space technology, blockchain, and agri-foods. The group toured a tech incubator in Udine and the Fincantieri shipyard, known for building cruise ships and naval vessels. The trip was deemed highly productive, highlighting similarities between the Italian region and Northern Virginia in terms of industry and quality of life.

- iii. Plans were mentioned to collaborate with a local university to further support economic development initiatives in Italy.
 - 1. Do you see any immediate prospects?
 - a. several businesses were met during the trade mission, with a collection of business cards for follow-up. One particular company, which already has a presence in the US, was discussed regarding office space in the MEC, as they assist Italian businesses in entering the US market.
- iv. Mentioned that opportunities are being explored with Korea, as there is interest from Korean businesses in sending startups to the MEC. A potential partnership is being considered for the spring.
- v. Next steps include sending follow-up emails, with the SBDC team aiding in maintaining momentum. There is strong enthusiasm for fostering relationships with business associations and companies that facilitate entry into the US market, ensuring that Northern Virginia remains top of mind.

~~b. Project Opal~~

9. Operations Update (10 mins w/ Q&A)

Assistant Director Easley

- a. FY2024 Rollover Memo
 - i. Approximately \$150,000 is being carried over from the fiscal year 24 budget, reflecting a total expenditure of about \$700,000, which is considered positive. The majority of the rollover funds will be allocated to economic opportunity (\$62,000) and economic development initiatives (\$94,000). Some surplus from the previous website update and branding efforts will be divided between the two newest divisions for additional support.
 - ii. OTFBA funding is included in the current fiscal year budget. Documentation indicating this funding is available in the closed session packet, and the city funding agreement will be executed soon.
- b. Audit Update
 - i. Meetings with finance staff are underway, with planning requests due by the 15th and the audit to be submitted to the city by the end of the month or early November. The CFO is aware and supportive of this process.
- c. OTSD/CFCC/WEGO Agreements Update
 - i. In collaboration with finance staff and the OTFBA, an agreement for \$150,000 has been executed to support OTFBA's programming and development, aimed at expanding its reach.
 - ii. A grant agreement for \$30,000 has been finalized to support the CFCC, doubling the previous year's grant and underscoring the strong relationship between the two organizations.
 - iii. A grant related to the Women Entrepreneurship Empowerment Luncheon has been increased from \$25,000 to \$28,000 due to additional funds found in the budget. Six grants will be awarded, and meetings with women-owned businesses will take place over the next two weeks.
- d. Shop Local RFP
 - i. A second RFP for the Shop Local initiative has been released independently of the city, attracting seven proposals. All proposals will be pursued, and a committee has been formed to finalize the program, with updates expected next month.
- e. Staffing
 - i. Six people have recently been onboarded, including a returning Business Investment Intern, Sam Campbell as our Programs Intern, Monica as a Programs Associate, and Cheyenne as a Marketing Associate. Stephanie is our Tourism and Placemaking Specialist, and Marcus Moore is our Communications Intern. An update not shown here is that we're starting our MEC fellow on October 14th, who will work closely with Eddie but report to the Business Investment department.

10. Programs Update (10 mins w/ Q&A)

Programs Manager Borwey

- a. OTFBA Executive Director Search
 - i. Tina Dish has been appointed as the new Executive Director, bringing extensive experience in board work, tourism, volunteer coordination, and strategic planning.
 - ii. The OTFBA received a \$150,000 grant, with \$90,000 allocated for the Executive Director's salary and \$25,000 earmarked for additional support personnel.
- b. WEEL
 - i. Held in partnership with Central Fairfax Chamber of Commerce (CFCC), OTFBA, and the Commission for Women, the event had 110 attendees. The event included a panel discussion led by Mayor Reed and a keynote by Jessica McCarthy from Joya Riot on amplifying business messaging. The event received positive feedback, especially on networking opportunities. Six of the Women's entrepreneur grant recipients were also recognized.
- c. Fall Festival
 - i. The 48th annual Fall Festival is scheduled for October 12, 2024, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. in Old Town Fairfax. City Leadership has decided to consolidate all city service booths into one, where FCED staff will also be present.

11. Public Relations and Marketing Update (10 mins w/ Q&A)

PR & Marketing Manager Jones

- a. Paid Ads
 - i. New advertising efforts have begun with two 15-second NPR radio ads on WAMU 88.5 as part of a three-month campaign, promoting Fairfax City for business investment and attraction. If anyone hears the ad, please provide feedback. Discussions are ongoing for a follow-up six-month campaign with iHeart stations after a previous successful run on DC101.
 - ii. A new TV ad will air in the 6 PM news hour, with a 30-second spot highlighting Fairfax City as a strategic business location with transit access, affordable commercial spaces, and proximity to key agencies and markets. The ad features local businesses like Dogs & Business, Teal, and Nova Labs.
 - iii. A recent citywide photoshoot captured B-roll for the TV ad. Businesses featured were selected based on last-minute availability, ensuring a variety of Fairfax settings.
- b. IDA Annual Conference Recap– University Partnerships for Economic Development
 - i. Economic Development Authority Secretary Patrick Soleymani, Chris Bruno, Tara Borwey, and Brittany Jones, attended the 70th Annual International Downtown Association (IDA) Conference in Seattle, Washington, last month.
 - ii. The session attracted significant interest, with high engagement and networking opportunities. The city will pursue similar events to highlight expertise in economic development and collaboration with academic institutions.

12. Consideration and Support for Granting Authorization to the Director/ CEO to Establish a Real Estate Opportunity Fund **[VOTE]**

- a. Secretary Solyeymani motions.
- b. Vice Chair Hermann seconds.
- c. Passes unanimously.

13. New Business

Commissioners

14. Public Comment (10 mins)

Public

- a. Jennifer Rose- Central Fairfax Chamber of Commerce
 - i. Shared updates on recent events, including the successful Women's Business luncheon with 75% attendance, fostering engagement with non-members. She highlighted the candidate forum's positive reception with about 180 attendees, and upcoming events: the Pub Crawl (in partnership with OTFDA), Chocolate Lovers Festival planning, and Halloween-a-Rama with OTBA, featuring games and activities at Old Town Square. Additionally, Jennifer invited members to the Fairfax Finest Valor Awards breakfast on October 25 to honor police and fire departments. Chamber membership has grown to 360, aiming for 400 by year-end.

b. Ashley Curtis- Town of Vienna Economic Development Office

- i. Introduced herself as the marketing and business engagement specialist. She noted Vienna's department transitions, with their Business Liaison Committee shifting to an advisory role. Vienna is observing Fairfax City's approach to collaboration and plans to return next month to continue fostering regional partnerships.

15. Adoption of September Meeting Minutes **[VOTE]**

Commissioners

- a. Chair Cho motions.
- b. Secretary Solyeysmani seconds.
- c. Passes 4/6. 2 abstentions.

16. Adjourn

Chair Cho

- a. Meeting adjourned at 8:20.

*****Next Meeting: November 6, 2024*****

6 pm, 10300 Eaton Pl. Fairfax, Virginia 22030

Subject to Change. Please check gofairfaxcity.com for more information.