



CITY OF FAIRFAX ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
MEETING AGENDA

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

10306 Eaton Place, Training Room 115AB, 1st Floor, Fairfax, VA 22030

Commissioners Present:

Chair Mitchell Cho
Vice Chair Jeff Hermann
Treasurer Dawn McGruder
Secretary Soleymani
Commissioner Beth Young
Commissioner Kathleen Paley

Others Present:

Laszlo Palko, City Manager, Fairfax City
Andrew Wilson, Projects Manager, Economic Development Department
Nicole Toulouse, Senior Assistant Director, Economic Development Department
Matthew Easley, Assistant Director, Economic Development Department
Tara Borwey, Programs Manager, Economic Development Department
Stephanie Gerson, Tourism Specialist, Economic Development Department
Tatjana Mara, Account Support Specialist, Economic Development Department
Jordan Locke, Economic Development Associate, Economic Development Department

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| 1. Call to Order | <i>Chair Cho</i> |
| a. Meeting called to order at 6:03pm. | |
| 2. Adoption of November Meeting Agenda [VOTE] | <i>Commissioners</i> |
| a. Chair Cho motions. | |
| b. Commissioner Paley seconds, | |
| c. Passes unanimously. | |
| 3. Convene for Closed Session [VOTE] | <i>Commissioners</i> |
| a. Secretary Soleymani motions. | |
| b. Vice Chair Hermann seconds. | |
| c. Passes unanimously. | |
| 4. Reconvene Regular Meeting [VOTE] | <i>Commissioners</i> |
| a. Secretary Soleymani motions. | |
| b. Commissioner Young seconds. | |
| c. Passes unanimously. | |
| 5. Consideration of granting approval to authorize the Executive Director/CEO to enter into a business retention compliance agreement with Zeta Assoc., Inc. [VOTE] | |
| a. Secretary Soleymani motions. | |
| b. Commissioner Young seconds. | |
| c. Passes unanimously. | |
| 6. Mason Enterprise Center- Fairfax (15 mins w/ Q&A) | <i>Center Director Hill</i> |
| a. Fairfax Pediatric Therapy joined as a tenant, occupying a large office and lab space, thanks to a referral from Office Evolution. This addition is expected to attract a broader range of businesses, boosting occupancy from 50% to 56%. Key November events included a roadshow for Hungarian Life Science and MedTech companies and the Accelerated Investor Conference, which strengthened industry ties and positioned Fairfax City as an attractive hub. | |

- b. William Applegate, a GMU graduate and former Connected DMV member, joined as the NDC Fellow, focusing on marketing, community building, and showcasing MEC entrepreneurs. Shares plan to hire a full-time staff member to oversee operations in Fairfax
 - c. Discussed participation in DC Star Tech Week added valuable networking opportunities. Looking ahead, the Fuse MEC in Arlington will provide collaborative opportunities despite some competition. The two locations are expected to complement each other, offering enhanced networking and research opportunities for businesses across both sites. Tenants will be able to use both facilities at no charge.
7. Business Investment Update (15 mins w/ Q&A) *Senior AD Toulouse/ BI Specialist Spittell*
- a. JCU Project
 - 1. Details for the John Cabot University Fair City Economic Development Student Fellow Program, developed during a visit to Italy in September, have been finalized. The initiative, facilitated by Executive-in-Residence Jonathan Aberman, aims to strengthen economic ties between Fairfax City and Italy. Three students from JCU will be selected to develop a marketing strategy for Fairfax City in Italy, identifying target audiences, crafting messaging, and building relationships with business organizations. The students will work virtually during the spring semester and present their findings in May during a visit to Fairfax City, coinciding with the SelectUSA conference. Their visit will include tours, cultural activities, and exposure to international business practices.
 - 2. The program is intended as a multiyear effort, with future cohorts refining and implementing the initial marketing plan to attract Italian businesses to Fairfax City. The \$33,200 budget covers flights, accommodations, and other expenses, while JCU will cover costs for a faculty advisor overseeing the students.
 - 3. This partnership generates actionable insights and builds goodwill with international institutions, setting the stage for expanding Fairfax City's global outreach. Italy, with its strong reputation for luxury goods, design, and industrial products, provides a solid foundation for this pilot effort, which may serve as a model for future collaborations with other countries.
8. Finance & Operations Update (15 mins w/ Q&A) *Assistant Director Easley*
- a. Treasurer's Report *Treasurer McGruder/ Account Support Specialist Mara*
 - 1. Quarterly update on the fiscal year budget and expenditures, noting that 28% of the fiscal year budget has been spent, which aligns closely with the 25% mark of the fiscal year. Active programs, including Restaurant Week and the Culinary Careers Collaborative, continue to receive funding. The \$150,000 allocated to the MEC was transferred at the start of the fiscal year, while expenditures for tourism and public relations remain minimal.
 - 2. In the Business Investment Program, funds have been allocated to partnerships such as the SBBC and John Cabot University. For international partnerships, \$39,000 was allocated, with \$10,000 spent to date. Administrative expenses primarily cover personnel costs and reimbursements to the city for additional staffing.
 - 3. Strategic initiatives include \$20,000 spent on GMU partnerships, while the \$150,000 RTSD grant remains unused. Additional expenditures include the Neighborhood Development Grant for CFCCS and funds for economic development studies.
 - 4. Overview of MEC
 - a. Revenue collection for rent and client services is behind, with 17% and 18% collected, respectively. Personnel costs are at 27%, operating expenses at 24%, and year-to-date expenses at 25%, aligning with the budget. Commissioners discussed transparency regarding MEC funding, including any donor support provided through GMU.
 - b. Audit Update
 - a. Finance staff, including Treasurer McGruder, have worked extensively to provide the required documentation for the audit. Cherry Bekaert is conducting comprehensive reviews and tests, which have been resource-intensive for the team.
 - c. Local Spending Initiative RFP – Proposal Selection and Contract Execution

- a. Fairfax City Local Spending Initiative Committee, comprised of three economic development staff members and an economic development commissioner, has selected Joy Riot, LLC, to furnish the services of the Local Spending Initiative Program for the upcoming fiscal year. They considered various factors, including scoring, oral presentations, and budget negotiations, before concluding that Joy Riot had the most fitting proposal for future programmatic needs.
 - d. WEGO Update
 - a. Six grants totaling \$28,000 were executed for women-owned businesses in Fairfax City, including Smiley Skin, Accelerated Communications, We're Gonna Be Baking, Epiphany Pilates, and two BE Pilates locations.
- 9. Programs Update (15 mins w/ Q&A) *Programs Manager Borwey*
 - a. Local Spending Initiative Update
 - 1. Joy Riot was selected to manage the branding for this initiative, following their successful work on Restaurant Week. The program will debut in time for Small Business Saturday and will include enhancements to previous years' efforts, such as the Flex Card program. This year, the Flex Card will feature a "Buy One, Get One 40% Bonus" offer with a limit of two cards per person, maintaining the same values as previous years. Paradise Games and Gifts has collaborated to ensure broader participation in the program. Notably, marketing resources will be allocated for the first time to support the Flex Card and Small Business Saturday initiatives.
 - 2. In partnership with CFCC and OTFBA, the welcome station will be expanded to activate three locations across the city: Fair City Mall near Cinema Arts, the Funky Flea market, and Fair Circle. Additionally, a brochure highlighting shopping specials and promotions will be created to further engage local businesses, while maintaining marketing budgets for digital promotions.
 - 3. A proclamation for Small Business Saturday is scheduled for the November 12 council meeting.
 - b. New OTFBA Employee Introduction
 - a. Tina Dish, The Old Town Fairfax Business Association (OTFBA) new Executive Director, was introduced to the Economic Development Authority. She highlighted ongoing efforts aimed at integrating business activities with city events to attract visitors. Membership processes are being refined, and progress on a new website is underway to better showcase Old Town activities.
- 10. Tourism Updates *Tourism and Placemaking Specialist Gerson*
 - a. Tourism Strategic Workplan Update
 - 1. Discussed upcoming city events, including the Chocolate Lovers Festival and Small Business Saturday and upcoming projects such as murals and a permanent "Love" sign, both aimed at enhancing visibility and benefiting the city's tourism efforts. The "Love" sign is planned for Old Town Park, with ideas to involve multiple artists in its creation.
 - 2. City Tourism Committee meeting, which includes representatives from several city departments and aims to align tourism efforts strategically, will be on November 7, 2024.
- 11. New Business *Commissioners*
- 12. Public Comment (5 mins) *Public*
 - a. Bill Pitchford- Smarter Growth
 - 1. Emphasized the importance of maintaining a strong retail market in Old Town. They raised concerns about recent development proposals, which would reduce retail space without clear plans for replacement.
 - b. Jennifer Rose- City of Fairfax Chamber of Commerce
 - 1. Expressed gratitude for city staff's involvement in the Chamber's second annual business meeting and shared positive feedback about the success of recent events. plans for upcoming events, like the Chocolate Lovers Festival and Small Business Saturday.
- 13. Adoption of October Meeting Minutes and October Special Meeting Minutes [**VOTE**] *Commissioners*
 - a. Chair Cho motions.
 - b. Commissioner Paley seconds.

c. Passes 5/6. One abstention.

14. Adjourn

Chair Cho

a. Meeting adjourned at 7:24pm

*****Next Meeting: December 4, 2024*****

6 pm, 10300 Eaton Pl. Fairfax, Virginia 22030

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