CITY OF FAIRFAX ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
MEETING AGENDA
Wednesday January 8, 2025 6:00pm
In Person

10306 Eaton Place, Training Room 115AB, Fairfax, VA 22030

Commissioners Present:
Chair Mitchell Cho
Vice Chair Jeff Hermann
Treasurer Dawn McGruder
Commissioner Beth Young
Commissioner Kathleen Paley

Others Present:
JC Martinez, CFO, Economic Development Department
Chris Kulp, Partner, Hunton Andrews Kurt LLP
Kyle Laux, Senior Vice-President, Davenport & Company LLC
Chris Bruno, CEO/Director, 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
Jordan Locke, Economic Development Associate, Economic Development Department

1. Call to Order — Chair Cho
2. Adoption of January Meeting Agenda **[VOTE]** — Commissioners
    a. Agenda was amended to include a closed session.
        i. Chair Cho motions.
        ii. Commissioner Young seconds.
        iii. Passes unanimously.
3. Closed Session **[VOTE]** — Commissioners
4. Reconvene Regular Meeting **[VOTE]** — Commissioners
5. Resolution of the City of Fairfax Economic Development Authority Approving the Issuance of One or More Series of Revenue Obligations to Finance Various Public Facilities Projects for the Benefit of the City of Fairfax, Authorizing the Execution and Delivery of Certain Financing Documents in Connection Therewith, and Approving the Forms of Such Documents **[VOTE]**
    a. Final approval was requested for the resolution, which was previously approved by the City Council in December under a similar structure. The resolution, included in the packet, seeks action on the financing within the parameters outlined, delegating authority to the EDA officers to approve final pricing and sign the necessary documents.
        i. Vice Chair Hermann motions.
        ii. Treasurer McGruder seconds.
        iii. Passes Unanimously.
6. Business Investment Update (15 mins w/ Q&A) — Senior Assistant Director Toulouse

a. Fairfax City International Landing Incentive **[VOTE]**
    i. A proposal was made to create an international landing program aimed at supporting international businesses interested in relocating to Fairfax City. The program would offer grants of up to $5,000 to reimburse facility relocation costs, with an initial allocation of $20,000 that may roll over to the next fiscal year. The program's cost could be revisited in the future.
    ii. Director Bruno added that this initiative would formalize existing programs, providing consistency across the various businesses involved in the program.
        1. Vice-Chair Hermann Motions
        2. Commissioner Paley Seconds
        3. Passes unanimously

b. Upskill Fairfax City
    i. Announces official launch of program in partnership with Northern Virginia Community College which provides no cost certifications to Fairfax City residents and employees of Fairfax City businesses.
    ii. FCED launched an ad for the Upskill Fairfax City campaign on Meta that had around 500 interactions.

c. Farewell
    i. Shares news of new role as Director of Economic Development with the Town of Vienna. January 10, 2024 will be her last day with Fairfax City Economic Development.

7. Operations Update (15 mins w/ Q&A) Assistant Director Easley
    a. Completion of FY2024 Independent Audit
        i. Announces completion of FY2024 audit. This achievement was made possible with the support of staff, including Treasurer McGruder, Director Bruno, and CFO Martinez. The successful completion of the audit ensures the city can retain its AAA bond rating, further supported by the recent bond issuance vote.
        ii. Fairfax City CFO JC Martinez acknowledged the significance of this milestone for both the EDA and the city, noting the continuation of 43 consecutive years of Achievement excellence awards for the Annual Report. The city has applied for its 44th year, with a decision expected within six months. Gratitude was extended to the EDA and EDD teams for their collaborative efforts.
    b. Annual Report Release
        i. The fiscal year 2024 annual report, the second iteration of the report, was finalized and is set to go live on the website the following morning. This version incorporates an additional six months of data, and it will be released alongside the business bulletin to senior leadership and the city council. The report is important, particularly with the new city council in place, as it helps them understand the ongoing efforts and supports the advocacy for more resources with the CFO.

ii. Acknowledgment was given to the team, especially Matt, for the effort put into compiling the report, which was described as a collaborative office effort. It was noted that the process is not easy, but the result was well-executed.

iii. Brief discussion on including the Fairfax Independent in the list of publications for distribution. While no decision was made, it was agreed to keep an eye on the publication's growth and to consult with PR and Marketing Manager Jones about potential engagement.

8. Tourism Update — Tourism and Placemaking Specialist Gerson

a. Tourism Committee Update

i. The City Tourism Committee recently hosted a meeting on December 6th, where a brief brainstorming session took place with representatives from various departments, including Parks and Rec, Cultural Arts, Transportation, Office of Historic Resources, IT, Marketing, and Communications. The focus of the session was on tourism and its relationship to the city.

ii. Citywide marketing efforts related to tourism events and activities were discussed. Each department was already involved in some form of marketing and outreach, and the session helped to better understand their current efforts. Several staff members noted that these marketing efforts are limited due to a lack of resources.

iii. The tourism committee is currently on hold pending further direction from the city manager's office, as the initiative was a request from the previous city manager. The committee plans to move forward once more direction is provided.

iv. Director Bruno assures the committee's work on tourism remains a priority for economic development, despite ongoing discussions about the committee structure, and further updates will be shared as the process continues.

b. StreetSense Update - Scope of Work

i. The team re-engaged with Streetsense, who had previously worked on the economic development work plan, to amend the current plan by adding tourism as a key element. They will also conduct a market analysis and provide recommendations for implementation and next steps. The scope of work, which is included in the packet, was presented with a cost of $50,000, which will be funded from the approved tourism budget.

ii. Streetsense will conduct significant community outreach, engaging with city departments and the community at large to assess existing tourism assets, including historical resources, parks and rec events, and cultural arts initiatives. Their recommendations will focus on how to expand and promote these assets, grow tourism, and potentially develop a visitor center.

iii. Metrics for measuring tourism success were discussed, including indicators such as hotel occupancy rates, restaurant capacity, and the demand for additional hotels or events. There is also interest in using data from tools like Placer AI to capture more detailed information on tourism-related activities and spending. This will help gauge the impact of tourism on local commerce and ensure tourism efforts are aligned with economic growth objectives.

iv. Director Bruno assures the committee's work on tourism remains a priority for economic development, despite ongoing discussions about the committee structure, and further updates will be shared as the process continues.

c. Ongoing Projects

i. The mural project for the Sunbury Marlow Inc location on Main Street is in progress. The potential muralist has been contacted, and collaboration with Megan from Cultural Arts and the Arts Commission is ongoing to continue this project.

ii. The Love sign project is also moving forward, with funding already allocated in the budget. The concept aims to attract visitors and is part of a broader initiative in Virginia, where over 300 "Love" signs are placed at various locations, often becoming tourist attractions.

iii. The plan is to make Fairfax's Love sign stand out and be a unique destination. The idea is to involve four local organizations, each responsible for designing one letter of the "LOVE" sign. The signs are typically 4 to 5 feet tall and can be designed in various creative ways. Further details and examples of Love sign designs will be shared via email and added to the next meeting agenda for discussion as the project progresses.

9. New Business Commissioners

a. A timeline for the appointment of the new commissioner was discussed. The City Council is scheduled to begin interviews later this month, with hopes to have an update by the next meeting. There is also anticipation that changes may be made to the timeline or process moving forward.

b. Chair Cho congratulates Assistant Director Borwey on their promotion.

c. Assistant Director Borwey gave a brief update on ongoing initiatives such as the Chocolate Lovers Festival and the Culinary Careers Collaborative. Further details will be provided at the next meeting. Additionally, an update on the launch of the Marketing Microgrant program is expected to be available by the first week of February.

10. Public Comment (5 mins) Public

a. Bill Pitchford- Smarter Growth

i. Bill provided an overview of *Fairfax City Citizens for Smart Growth*. Their goal is to foster city developments that prioritize walkability, drivability, and public interaction. They advocate for spaces that encourage people to gather, such as green spaces, where people can eat, drink, and socialize. Bill also shared his personal connection to the city, noting that he has been a resident for many years and has operated a small engineering firm in the area for 20 years. The company, founded by Bill and his three brothers, operates locally.

ii. The conversation shifted to public comments, with Bill stressing the need for active involvement in redeveloping older properties, especially in areas like Old Town, where property consolidation is key to urban grid plans and greenway trails. He noted that developments like the Davies Property could become enclosed spaces unless integrated with walkable connections and green spaces, offering a chance to improve the city's grid and walkability.

iii. The Davies Property, long a development challenge, had seen rejected proposals due to a lack of public space. Bill and others are advocating for a more integrated plan with public spaces like a greenway. Doug Church from the Central Fairfax Chamber of Commerce echoed these points.

b. Doug Church- Central Fairfax Chamber of Commerce

i. Details were shared regarding a Jennifer Rose's participation in an executive certification session for chamber executives in Tucson, with the experience described as intense but beneficial for both the individual and the organization.

11. Adoption of December Regular and Special Meeting Minutes **[VOTE]** Commissioners

a. Commissioner Young motions.

b. Vice- Chair Hermann seconds.

c. Passes unanimously.

12. Adjourn Chair Cho

a. Meeting adjourned at 7:00pm.

*****Next Meeting: February 5, 2025*****
6 pm, 10300 Eaton Pl. Fairfax, Virginia 22030
Subject to Change. Please Check gofairfaxcity.com for more information.