



CITY OF FALLS CHURCH

**City of Falls Church
Economic Development Authority (EDA)
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, February 5, 2019
7 PM
George Mason High School Library
7124 Leesburg Pike
Falls Church, VA 22046**

I. Call to Order – The meeting was called to order by Mr. Novotny at 7:08 PM

EDA Board members present: Mike Novotny, Edward Saltzberg, John Sandoz, Brian Williams, and Robert Young

City staff present: Wyatt Shields (City Manager), Becky Witsman (Division Chief – Economic Development) and Carla Johnson (Senior Administrative Assistant)

Other attendees: Jim Coyle, Councilperson Letty Hardi, George Houk, Evan Jones, Planning Commissioner Tim Stevens, Councilperson Phil Duncan

II. Approval of January 8, 2019 EDA Meeting Minutes – Motion made by John Sandoz and a second by Robert Young, the minutes were unanimously approved.

III. Petitions from the Public (5 minutes per petitioner) - None

IV. Petitions from the Board (5 minutes per petitioner) – None

V. Election of EDA Chair and Vice Chair – The vote has been postponed until March 5, 2019 so that Mr. Pelton can attend.

VI. New and Continuing Business

a. Update on West Falls Church Interim Agreement (IA) – City Manager Shields distributed a handout and gave a report on the West Falls Church Economic Development Project. The development team – “Falls Church Gateway Partners” (FCGP) found an error in their projections while doing financial due diligence and asked for an amendment to the IA. The request was discussed with Council at an open session on February 4, 2019 and formal action on the request by Council is scheduled for Monday February 11, 2019. The City worked with FCGP to arrive at a creative solution to solve the proforma/financing issue.

If the error cannot be remedied their financial metrics no longer make sense to the FCGP investors. There was in-depth discussion about the proposed solution to the financing issue detected by FCGP.

Councilperson Letty Hardi stated the school board was unified and in-step with the changes to the IA. Mr. Young made a motion that the EDA support the change to the IA so far and to encourage Council and staff to finish the negotiations, obviously to the best benefit of the City. Mr. Pelton moved and Mr. Sandoz seconded the motion. The motion to support the IA passed 5-0.

City Manager Shields said that everyone has been working very hard on this including the City Attorney and Ms. Aubrey, who is managing the most complicated land-use case in the City's history. Assuming City Council approval of the changes to the IA on February 11, 2019 the formal referral for a revised IA for Council consideration will occur on February 25, 2019 and review by the Boards and Commissions will occur during the month of March.

- b. **Update on progress with Downtown Plaza renovation project** – Ms. Witsman mentioned that Ms. Callahan's last day with the City is Friday, February 15. It looks like Phase II of the Plaza project could be built by Arbor Day in April and the \$200,000 allocated so far appears to be enough money to finish Phase I and Phase II. A motion was made to recognize Ms. Callahan's good work with a farewell gift certificate of \$100. The motion passed 5-0.

There was discussion about park programming, including Mr. Young's discussions with Mr. O'Hara representing the Parks and Recreation board, and lots of ideas for how the park might be programmed, including Mr. Shields suggestion that a part-time staffer be hired to manage/promote the park.

- c. **EDA representation on Committee discussing Naming the downtown park** – Councilperson Letty Hardi suggested moving the naming of the park up on the Agenda. Mr. Young presented an email exchange with the Parks and Recreation department regarding programming for the park. A recommendation has been made that business/community involvement be increased. Programming for the park will need to continue to be discussed by the EDA throughout the year.

Councilperson Letty Hardi speculated about whether after the park renovation is completed, it will be added to the list of City parks. And she wondered would the Parks and Recreation department provide programming services for the park. She noted that it is a challenge to designate new parks and increase the workload of the Parks and Recreation department so the EDA may need to consider providing financial support. Another alternative mentioned was the possibility of the EDA, via the 1% transient occupancy tax funds, providing funding to hire a part-time (10 hour/week) employee to be responsible for programming. City Manager Shields said the issue of how to program and maintain the park on a sustained basis should involve a discussion of multiple City departments. He committed to organizing that meeting and reporting back to EDA.

Councilperson Letty Hardi suggested the naming process for the park include a committee with a member from the EDA, the Parks and Recreation Board and also include community input. The committee could work on the park name during February and perhaps provide a

list of five names to Council in March, and then Council will vote with the result being the park is named by Arbor Day. Mr. Williams nominated Mr. Pelton (in absentia) to the park naming committee, Mr. Young seconded and the motion was passed 5-0.

- d. **Marketing Video update – Brian Williams** – The attendees watched the updated video. Mr. Williams advised that the video is mostly finished. As soon as final edits are complete, he would like to start using the film in City marketing affairs. The question was asked about how to market the video to businesses leaders who are considering changing their business location. The video will be posted on YouTube and the link can be shared and embedded on the EDO website Choosefallschurch.org. Shorter versions will be created and shared on Facebook. City Manager Shields said that he and other staff are concerned that the video may not represent the community’s diversity. Mr. Williams said that another round of interviews could occur sometime in the future to resolve this concern.
- e. **Scheduling when to discuss recommending expenditures for 1% transient occupancy tax monies** - Ms. Witsman suggested perhaps that a decision can soon be made on EDA spending recommendations for these funds during a future EDA meeting or retreat, probably to be scheduled after a new EDA chair is elected. She noted the spreadsheet of the potential projects was in the packet and that she would follow up with Mr. Pelton on a possible survey, so that he could poll the members as to their priorities and create a list of projects to pursue in the short term.
- f. **Request for permission to use “The Little City Gym” as a Trademark**- “The Little City” is a registered trademark and the City Attorney has recommended that the EDA establish criterion to evaluate any requests to use the name “The Little City.” Next month, a meeting will be held to address this issue.
- g. **2019 retreat to consider 2019 goals** – No action was taken on this topic.
- h. **Aldi Grand Opening**- is February 21, 2019 and members of the EDA should have received their invitations.
- i. **Founders Row groundbreaking**- Monday, March 4 at 4pm

VII. Staff Report

- a. **Updates on Development Projects and Proposals** - Thompson’s Italian is expected to open in April or May in the former Argia’s space. Other updates were provided via the February EDO Business and Real Estate News Bulletin.
- b. The Valentine's Day tree lights, in the downtown, will be turned on from February 8 through Feb 14.

VIII. EDA Member Reports – none

IX. Other Business – none

X. Adjournment – the meeting was adjourned at 8:58 PM