



## **Economic Development Authority (EDA) Meeting/Retreat Minutes**

Tuesday, March 7, 2023 ❖ 7:00 pm

Viget Offices, 105 W. Broad Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, Falls Church VA 22046

1. **Call to Order:** at 7:05 PM by EDA Chairman Bob Young
2. **Meeting Attendees:**  
**In Person:** Brian Williams, Ed Saltzberg, Ross Litkenhous, Sandy Kiercz, Debbie Hiscott, Matt Quinn, Bob Young, Letty Hardi, Tim Stevens, Becky Witsman, Jim Snyder, Jim Coyle, Pirouz Khanmalek,  
**Virtual:** Phil Duncan, Elise Bengtson, Naomi Goodwin, Jim Snyder, Nick Benton, Jimmy
3. **Approval of February 7, 2023 EDA Meeting Minutes:** Motion by Jim Coyle; seconded by Sandy Kiercz; Unanimous approval.
4. **Presentation/discussion of referral from City Council of the City's proposed outdoor dining zoning updates** - Laura Arseneau, Principal Planner for the City gave the EDA a briefing on the Outdoor Dining Zoning Ordinance Amendment under consideration by City Council. The proposal will generally add language related to outdoor dining to the zoning ordinance and initially specify that the dining must occur on private property. Dining in the public right of way will be a future discussion topic. It will also provide a definition for outdoor dining, update existing references in the Ordinance related to outdoor dining use and create new Supplementary Regulations for Outdoor Dining providing for the Zoning Administrator to review and approve requests for outdoor dining based on specified guidelines, especially relating to available parking. She also briefed the EDA on the proposed new outdoor dining permit process for both new and existing restaurants for outdoor dining and highlighted the upcoming timeline for enactment of the Zoning Ordinance amendment, with possible Council approval on March 27<sup>th</sup>, just before the expiration of the Temporary COVID provisions. Several questions were asked and answered and Ms. Hardi reinforced that the City's involvement in the approvals for outdoor dining is limited (noise, parking, zoning) whereas the State Building Code dictates much of what is required (bathrooms, ADA, etc.). Tim Stevens mentioned that the Planning Commission has suggested that the success of the implementation of the new ordinance provisions should be reviewed six months after they take effect. Jim Coyle asked about whether there's an appeal process to the Zoning Administrator's decisions and Ms. Arseneau said she would get back to the EDA on that question. The EDA voted unanimously to have EDO staff draft and send a memo to the City Council, indicating their support for the proposed new Outdoor Dining Zoning Ordinance provisions.
5. **Status update of Virginia Village MOU/real estate closings** – Closings are now anticipated in mid-May, due to additional testing that Virginia Housing is requesting and other factors.
6. **Virginia ARPA Tourism grant update** – Becky Witsman reviewed the 3 main components of the approved \$80,000 tourism grant – marketing research, a Restaurant Week and a mini-tourism web site. The focus of these efforts is to drive more visitors/customers to the City, with the help of effective marketing efforts. The next steps on this effort are to work on a scope of work to engage a marketing firm to assist in evaluating and recommending how best to increase visitation



and customer spending in the City. City staff will be reaching out to EDA members for their continued input into this hiring process.

7. **ARPA parklets update** – Jim Snyder shared two preliminary design plans created by design firm Studio39 for the S. Washington Street “Fox Music Alley” parklet. Studio39 has designed/created similar and very successful parklet areas up at the Birch and Broad Shopping Center in the City and in Fairfax County on Richmond Highway at the Mt. Vernon Plaza Shopping Center. EDA members were impressed with the creative plans that each include some measure of dining areas, artificial turf, a stage area, lighting, an on street “attractor” feature, landscaping and furniture. Initial cost estimates for the work range from \$300,000 - \$400,000 but revisions to the initial plans are anticipated that may reduce the price. Many nearby businesses and customers as well would benefit from having a new and well-designed outdoor dining area nearby and with the EDA’s support during the meeting, Mr. Snyder will move the project forward to final design and other necessary steps such as coordination with the owner of the property on which it will be located via an easement agreement with the City.
8. **ARPA “The Little City” gift card update/final report** – EDA members received an update on the gift card program advising them so far, 3,200 gift cards and 3,157 bonus cards have been purchased representing over \$450,000 in combined gift card purchases. When all bonus cards have expired by late April and it appears that most gift cards have been redeemed, EDO staff will analyze and report on the economic impact of the program in terms of City revenues generated by the program – meals, sales and business taxes.
9. **EDA 2023 retreat/work plan priorities and budget** – As a prior step on this effort, staff suggested that before the April 11 EDA meeting, a survey could be e-mailed to members to solicit feedback on prioritizing work plan items and assigning approximate funding amounts for those items. That information would then be shared at the 4/11 meeting. Becky Witsman and Jim Snyder will also be in discussion with Planning staff in re: timing, funding and staff resources regarding the possibility of a comprehensive parking study scope and report back with that information. Ed Saltzberg volunteered to assist with creating a scope of work for the parking if City Planning/EDO staff are unable to take on the task in a timely manner.
10. **Ground floor voluntary concessions (VC’s)**– this topic was discussed at the February EDA meeting and there was interest in the EDA possibly assisting in an effort to improve the way VC’s are negotiated and amended. But it was reported that the City Manager would prefer that this effort be undertaken by City staff.
11. **Adjournment** at 8:30 PM