



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

Tuesday, April 11, 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 Kiersz, Debbie Hiscott, Bob Young, Letty Hardi, Tim Stevens, Becky Witsman, Jim Snyder, Jim Coyle, Alan Brangman, James Brooks  
**Virtual:** Phil Duncan, Elise Bengtson, Naomi Goodwin
3. **Approval of February 7, 2023 EDA Meeting Minutes:** The minutes were unanimously approved.
4. **Presentation on participation in a partnership banner program with CGI Digital –** Nikki Carroll, Executive of Government Relations & Strategic Partnerships, gave a virtual powerpoint presentation on a banner program that would have no cost to the City and would allow City businesses, per an annual fee per banner, to opt in to the program by sponsoring a banner(s), so that their business name/logo would appear on the lower third of the banner. CGI would provide to the City with free design services, installation and maintenance services, insurance and replacement of damaged banners, free banners for non-profits based on a formula and replacement of banners on an annual basis.



Ms. Carroll responded to numerous questions and there was much discussion by meeting participants after Ms. Carroll virtually left the meeting. Reaction to the banner program was mixed, with there being an interest in possibly checking with CGI's references, as well as investigating the possibility of a City staff led banner program alternative that would not include a business "sponsor area" on the banners.



## 5. Updates/discussion:

- a. **Status update of Virginia Village Memorandum of Understanding/closings** – Needed repairs on the roof and other items at 310 S. Maple have caused delays for the closing that is now anticipated in late July (new date as of 4/24/23).
- b. **EDA work plan updates and survey**: The survey on work plan priorities for staff time and resources unfortunately did not give good guidance on a consensus of opinions. A summary of work plan items and updates follows:
  1. *Review upcoming development projects and other Council items referred to EDA during 2023* – continuing, with Quinn/Homestretch project likely to come to EDA this summer.
  2. *Parklets (new outdoor dining areas) via Federal ARPA funds*– Jim Snyder reviewed progress on the 3 proposed parklet locations, in the order in which they will be worked on and constructed starting with:
    - a. Hillwood Alley, where two design plans will be merged and value engineered to provide tables and chairs, a synthetic turf area and stage, lighting and an entry feature along the S. Washington Street frontage
    - b. South Washington Street and S. Maple Avenue corner near the traffic signal, where a relatively simple design of landscaping, tables/seating, walkways and an entryway to the Cavalier Trail path will be provided
    - c. The “triangle” park on the corner of W. Annandale Road and S. Washington Street where, contingent on the remaining funding, there will possibly be fixed and flexible seating, a pergola and arched entryways, updated landscaping, walkways and irrigation and lighting.
  3. *Commercial district amenities (like banners)* – the 2023 install of the street light flower baskets in the “downtown” area will be completed in late April/early May and Mr. Brown’s Park will receive a refresh of the landscaping and turf. Plans for banners and other amenities are yet to be determined.
  4. *Parking code update study* (if funding and staffing are available) Planning staff is planning to bid out this work and staff the effort this late spring/summer, so EDA funds/staff may or may not be needed for this effort.
  5. *Hiring/managing a market research consultant* – Jim Snyder and Becky Witsman have been in discussions with a real estate professional who has worked with the City before and plan to move forward with that study/analysis once procurement staff are able to assist.



6. *Hiring/managing a marketing consultant* – the market research/study will inform the direction for searching for a marketing consultant.
  7. *Restaurant week* – instead of hiring outside assistance with organizing and moving forward with this effort, this may possibly become an effort led by local business leaders who have expressed an interest in participating along with EDO staff. Funds will be available to promote the event and possibly other aspects of this effort.
  8. *Mini-tourism web site* – this work will likely be done by a marketing consultant
  9. *Transfer Virginia Village properties to Wesley and remain involved in redevelopment discussions in the future* – closings are now scheduled for late July.
6. **“Voluntary concessions” for ground floor uses in mixed use projects** – There has been a recent need to amend the Special Exception Voluntary Concessions in both the Byron and Pearson Square, to enable single tenant replacements in these buildings. The process for doing so is very time and staff intensive. EDA members continued a discussion about how to address these issues given the changing retail climate. There seemed to be some consensus to be that perhaps a short list of prohibited uses might be created, to set parameters for future tenant replacements. There was also discussion about trying to establish minimum commercial build out construction standards for the ground floor of new buildings, to incentivize occupancy of those spaces more concurrently with residential occupancies. This discussion is to be continued at the next EDA meeting.
7. **Status of hiring EDO staff**
- a. Business development analyst position announcement closed March 31; interviews were scheduled after spring break week and a new hire is anticipated before the next EDA meeting.
  - b. Marketing specialist position announcement closes April 20 (hiring pending availability of resources from FY ‘24 budget for salary and benefits)
8. **Adjournment** at 9:02 PM.