



Economic Development Authority (EDA) Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, June 6, 2023 ❖ 7:00 pm

City Hall, Dogwood Room, 300 Park Avenue, Falls Church VA 22046

1. **Call to Order:** at 7:01 PM by EDA Chairman Bob Young
2. **Meeting Attendees:**

EDA Board Members Present:

In Person: Chairman Bob Young, Ross Litkenhous, Jim Coyle, Brian Williams,
Matt Quinn

Virtual: Ed Saltzberg

Council Liaison Present: Letty Hardi

Student Representatives Present: Matthew Downs, Elliot Lam

City Staff Present: Jim Snyder, Becky Witsman, Naomi Goodwin, Sarah Swinton, Sophie Katchur

Public Attendees: Phil Duncan, Graham Eddy, Erik Ulsaker, Nick Benton, Tim Stevens, Gene Gresco, Alan Brangman, Michelle Rosenbaum, Elise Neil Bengston, Richard

Absent: Sandy Kiersz, Liam Ross

Jim Coyle motioned that the EDA approve remote participation by Ed Saltzberg in tonight's meeting due to a temporary medical condition, Brian Williams seconded. Unanimous approval.

3. **Approval of May 2, 2023 EDA Meeting Minutes:**

[Economic Development Authority Meeting Minutes - May 2, 2023](#)

Brian Williams motioned to approve the minutes of the May 2, 2023 EDA meeting, Jim Coyle seconded. Unanimous approval.

4. **New Marketing Specialist hired! And New Student Representatives Appointed**

New Marketing Specialist (Sarah Swinton) has been hired and two new Student Representatives (Elliot Lam and Liam Ross) have been appointed. Those present were introduced by staff and welcomed by the EDA. Jim Coyle and Sandy Kiersz were thanked for offering to mentor the new student representatives.



5. **Discussion with Graham Eddy**, Capital Commercial Properties, Inc.
Graham Eddy provided an overview of the Eden Center’s history, role within the community and future intentions. He reiterated that there are no plans to displace any businesses or redevelop in the foreseeable future. The value of the Eden Center to the Falls Church community was reinforced by members of the EDA and staff.
6. **City commercial real estate potential discussion** with Erik Ulsaker – Commercial Division of Long & Foster
Parking and regulatory restrictions (EG: zoning regulations) were identified as key issues limiting commercial/retail location use opportunities in the City. National retail chains require large daytime populations to locate to an area. The City has historically been a more neighborhood driven location but office closures and the increase in telework is changing the retail location assessment and decision-making framework.
7. **Status of Council Work plan item** - ‘Identify top commercial uses desired in new developments, which also reflect current market trends, in the City, and negotiate for those uses in the Special Mixed-use ground floor voluntary concessions – using data reflecting post COVID-19 economic trends’
Staff advised that Lisa Benjamin (Senior Managing Director, Newmark) is under contract to assist with this item. Key additional contract deliverables will include assisting in filling the Target vacancy and advising on realistically optimizing the ground floor of new projects. She will attend the next EDA meeting to discuss.
8. **Updates/discussion:**
 - a. **Status update of Virginia Village Memorandum of Understanding/closings**
Current closing window is now September 2023. This timeline change is driven by the availability of the contractors to provide a quote. Per last update the initial quote came in high, so Wesley has been working with the architect and VA Housing to control costs and have successfully negotiated down the VA Housing requirements. Contractors are delaying getting current quotes however due to vacations, etc. Quotes are anticipated in the coming weeks and then approximately it is expected to take 2-3 months for VA Housing to approve loan terms and close. Health and Human Services anticipates most of the ARPA funds will be used to pay for 310 S Maple repairs. Once a construction budget has been agreed on, Wesley can move forward with 310 S Maple Ave repairs and possibly even completions prior to land closing.



b. FYI - City of Falls Church Community Survey Results

The latest City of Falls Church Community Survey Results have been distributed to EDA members for their information. Key finding: over 43% of residents work from home.

c. Updates on:

i. Parklets

Three estimates have been received (**\$393,441 - \$410,416 - \$605,768**) for construction and furnishings for the Tinner Hill Alley parklet from very well qualified firms leaving ~\$300,000 for two other parklets (~\$225,000 for Triangle Park and ~\$75,000 for S Maple Park). Staff requested EDA authorize up to \$500,000 from ARPA funds for the Tinner Hill Alley Parklet (estimated to suffice for contingencies and other costs). Once funds are approved work is hoped to be completed by the end of 2023.

Jim Coyle motioned that the EDA approve \$500,000 for the Tinner Hill Plaza. Ross Litkenhous seconded. Unanimous approval.

ii. Commercial district amenities

15 street light pole planters have been planted and are being waters (hotel tax funded) and Mr. Brown's Park has had a spring refresh and maintenance work continues at the parklet (EG: irrigation system).

iii. Parking update study funding and staffing

Staff are working on obtaining funding. \$36,000 was spent with Walker for the last "downtown" parking study.

iv. Hiring/managing a market research consultant

Lisa Benjamin (Newmark) has been engaged to evaluate and make recommendations about existing, vacant and future retail uses on a project basis.

v. Hiring/managing a marketing consultant

This will be done once marketing research has concluded.



vi. Restaurant week and mini-tourism web site

Restaurant Week is anticipated to be held in late January 2024. Staff are finalizing a contract with Tricia Barba (Preservation Biscuit) to undertake the following:

- Restaurant recruitment
- Logo Creation
- Website Building
- Website Maintenance (EG: uploading logos, offers, etc...)
- Influencer Outreach
- Media Outreach (EG: Falls Church Patch and FCNP, etc...)
- Social Media - to post relevant reels and static posts
- Graphics as needed

Mini-tourism web site work to be undertaken after market research completed and possibly by the marketing firm we hire.

**vii. Little City Gift/Bonus Card and Small Business Grants
Summary/Overview**

ARPA Small Business Grants

- Two rounds of ARPA Grants for Small Businesses & Non-Profits for urgent COVID-19 related expenses (EG: rent, business plan revisions, outdoor dining etc...)
- 63 businesses funded (from 158 applications)
- \$315,000 total disbursed (\$5,000/grant)
- Eligibility requirements expanded for round two from \$50,000 - \$1,000,000 gross receipts to \$30,000 - \$1,000,000 gross receipts

Little City Gift/Bonus Card

- Program of gift card sales with matching bonus gift cards ran from November 26, 2022 – January 31, 2023
- \$150,000 ARPA funds - \$100K initially towards matching bonus gift cards
- Additional \$50,000 ARPA funding invested due to program success
- 72 businesses participated
- \$448,844 (6,391 cards) worth of gift & bonus cards purchased with \$363,168 redeemed (5,558 cards) as of June 6, 2023



9. Updates on new business openings and City projects/retail

Overview of progress on numerous commercial projects in the City provided by staff with a focus on major developments and anticipated new businesses/openings. The City's development as a neighborhood of 10-minute neighborhoods and resulting benefits to the community as a result of commercial developments undertaken was emphasized.

10. Other member issues

Letty Hardi advised there will be a Falls Church Forward and City of Falls Church Chamber of Commerce sponsored event at Harvey's this Sunday (6/11/2023).

11. Adjournment at 8:39 PM

Next meeting: 7:00 PM, July 11, 2023 at Viget Offices (unless otherwise noted)
105 W Broad St. – 5th floor