



CITY OF FAIRFAX ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
MEETING AGENDA
Wednesday, August 5th, 2020 6:00 PM
Via Electronic Participation

Virtual Meeting via Zoom, Fairfax City, VA 22030

Commissioners Present:

Chair Jeff Hermann
Vice-Chair/Secretary Kathleen Paley
Treasurer Fred Cornett
Commissioner Soledad Portilla
Commissioner Paula Sorrell
Commissioner Tom Ross

Others Present:

Christopher Bruno, Director for Fairfax City's Office of Economic Development
Danette Nguyen, Assistant Director of Economic Development/Programs Manager, Fairfax City
Destinee Tenakoun, Economic Development Specialist
Emily West, ReConnected Grant Manager, Fairfax City
Nancy Montes, ReConnected Outdoor Restaurant Program Manager, Fairfax City
Jeremy Root, Fairfax City EDA Attorney
Andrew Wilson, EDA Construction Manager
Ken Buberaj, Savills
Saultana Toskos, Civilian

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 pm by Chair Hermann.

2. Approval of July Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Paley made a motion to approve the minutes from the July meeting. Commissioner Ross seconded the motion. A roll call vote was then initiated. Those who said aye were Commissioner Ross, Commissioner Sorrell, Commissioner Cornett, Commissioner Paley, and Commissioner Hermann. Commissioner Portilla was not present at this time.

3. Economic Development Office/Program Update

Director Bruno provides a brief update about an EDA fiscal policy that will be distributed to all commissioners before the monthly meeting in September. This document will be helpful for future commissioners.

a. ReConnected Grant Update

Emily West states that the grant is officially closed and 190 total and 164 were eligible 156 submitted their round two application. The expectation is that all 156 businesses who submitted their documents will receive \$5,000. We anticipate that 45 businesses will receive the \$10,000 grant, rather than 50 businesses. This is because we felt it was important to give all 156 businesses a grant. Emily, thanks all of the Commissioners who volunteered to be on the award committee. Emily gives a brief overview of a timeline for the grant distribution. Businesses will be alerted Friday that they have received at least \$5,000 and a press release that will be going out. After businesses receive a notification, the contracting process will begin. Emily states that she is already working on contracts.

Director Bruno acknowledges that Emily has been doing a tremendous job. Commissioner Paley acknowledges Emily's organizational skills and all the hard work she has been doing. Commissioner Ross questions how the business be notified if the committee is meeting on Friday? Emily clarifies that businesses will be receiving a notification that the business has been granted at least \$5,000. The businesses receiving the \$10,000 enhancement will find out the following week.

b. Approval for Chris Bruno to enter into grant agreement contracts with businesses on behalf of the EDA

Bruno states that this would help the grant process move smoothly. Bruno asks the Authority to grant a motion for him to enter into grant agreement contracts with businesses. Commissioner Sorrell made a motion to grant Chris Bruno permission to enter into grant agreement contracts with businesses on behalf of the EDA. Commissioner Paley. A roll call vote was then initiated. Those who said aye were Commissioner Ross, Commissioner Cornett, Commissioner Paley, Commissioner Sorrell, and Commissioner Hermann. Commissioner Portilla was not present at this time.

c. Approval for creation of new checking account at MainStreet Bank for EDA

Bruno states that he talked with the chief financial officer and determined that it would be best to establish a second bank account for the EDA to receive the city's allocation of CARES funding to run grant funding directing from the newly created account. Cornett inquires how much checking accounts are insured for by the FDIC. Danette states she will need to check into how much they are insured for and will get back to him with a specific number. Bruno states there can be a motion to authorize opening an account and will include Cornett, as he is the EDA treasurer.

Commissioner Paley moves to motion the creation of the new account for CARES funding. Commissioner Cornett seconds the motion. A roll call vote was then initiated. Those who said aye were Commissioner Ross, Commissioner Cornett, Commissioner Paley, Commissioner Sorrell, and Commissioner Hermann. Commissioner Portilla was not present at this time.

d. Fairfax City Outdoor Program

Nancy Montes provides a brief about the outdoor dining programs and initiative she is working on. Nancy states that the initiative is going well, and patrons are happy to be able to go outside. During July, we have had concerts happen, which businesses have been participating in. Old Town Fairfax Business Association (OTFBA) has put Music on Main together in hopes of creating a welcoming and safe outdoor dining environment. We have received encouraging comments that patrons and businesses participating in outdoor dining have been enjoying it and are grateful for the expansion. Nancy shares that she has added foliage around City Square to make a more welcoming environment and plans to bring in an artist to create a mural on the barriers. For August, OTFBA will be putting on another five concerts. Nancy provides insight to the new voucher program. The voucher program is to bring in new and previous customers back into Fairfax City. Additionally, Nancy states that she has sent out a survey to businesses to gather feedback on how businesses feel about City Square. Once she has the full results, Nancy plans on sharing those with the commissioners.

Does Commissioner Ross ask if there have been any issues with social distancing during the concerts? Nancy states that there have not been issues about social distancing. Tables are set 6 feet apart, and temperature checks happen as patrons arrive. Ross inquires about how many are typically attending. Nancy states the capacity is 32-35 with full tables and notes that the event is RSVP. Bruno states that any program that has some support from the EDA is required to establish a minimum standard of health and safety regulations during COVID-19. Danette states that there is a COVID-19 medical plan that has to be adhered to. OTFBA has required that tables are only sold as tables, meaning patrons are seated at a table with the pod they are quarantining with and not with random patrons they do not know. They also have contact tracing in place, which is where you must register, so in case there is an outbreak, those who also have attended can be contacted. There is also security hired for the event to ensure that people are complying with social distancing.

Commissioner Paley inquires about what the voucher program is. Nancy states that the voucher program is 500 cards to each business in the form of \$5. This initiative is a return back to the businesses and to help get new and returning patrons to come back into our city. Bruno states that the voucher program was done as a proactive, supportive measure for businesses surrounding City Square, who may be impacted. Paley inquires if we can provide umbrellas in City Square for patrons, as it is getting hotter outside. Nancy states that we have umbrellas in City Square already but is looking into buying additional umbrellas that are full coverage, rather than half umbrellas. Bruno mentions that City Square and other outdoor dining initiatives are supported by CARES funding and do not come out of the EDA allocation from the city council.

e. Restaurant Week (RW) 2020 Update

Danette Nguyen shares an overview of RW To-Go. Restaurant Week will have a small initiative and will be handing out to-go bags, while supplies last, to patrons that opt for carryout orders. We have implemented the Restaurant Week Chef Chat series similar to our Business Chat series. The first one that will be posted is Capital Ale house. The goal of the series is to showcase restaurants in a new way and give RW a kickoff. Almost half of the businesses participating are new businesses. Danette thanks Nancy for helping get Mama Chang's on board with RW this year.

f. ReConnected Program Update

Out of the program's five pillars, the most active is the ReConnected Outdoor program, the ReConnected Grant, and the ReConnected Pledge. The majority of those who have applied for the grant have also been asked if they would like to take the ReConnected Pledge. The majority of the businesses have agreed to take the Pledge, which brings our total to close to 300.

g. Parking Day

Nguyen states the parking day will be held in Fair City Mall and partnered with HHG Properties and George Mason University (GMU) on this program. GMU will be providing a Flute ensemble Sept 18th, from 11-2 pm. Danette is also working with GMU to do some marketing to get their student, faculty, and staff involved in Parking Day. We are currently working with their off-campus student housing department to create fliers that directly target those students.

4. MEC Update

Commissioner Sorrell states that the MEC is continuing to lose the tenants over the past month. To retain tenants, the MEC put safe holds in place, such as rent abatements. Once the rent abatement was over, the MEC started losing more tenants. Sorrell states that this is not unusual, as she has checked around to see if this was happening in other cities as well. The MEC is still providing mailing services, printing services, and the front desk is there for a few hours a day, but they are asking that people stay home to stay safe.

5. Park View Update

Commissioner Portilla provides the update on the Park View project and states Andrew Wilson met with Aaron (property manager), who shared his proposal on how to move forward with the project and financing. The financing will be discussed in a closed session. Andrew states that the fencing will not go up until the 2-hour parking signage was taken down.

6. Chair Comments

Commissioner Hermann states that he does not have any comments. Hermann recognizes Council Member Joseph Harmon and thanks him for joining.

7. Public Comment

No public comments.

8. Other/New Business

No comments

9. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 6:38 pm and moved into a closed session. Commissioner Paley moves to a closed session. A roll call vote then approved a decision. Those who said aye were Commissioner Cornett, Commissioner Ross, Commissioner Hermann, Commissioner Sorrell, Commissioner Portilla, and Commissioner Paley.

Next regular meeting of the EDA is scheduled for the 2, of September 2020.