



**CITY OF FAIRFAX ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
MEETING AGENDA**

**Wednesday, December 6, 2023, 6:00 p.m.
In Person at Economic Development Offices**

10300 Eaton Place, Small Conference Room, Fairfax, VA 22030

Commissioners Present:

Chair Beth Young
Vice Chair Kathleen Paley
Treasurer Dawn McGruder
Secretary Tom Ross
Commissioner Mitchell Cho
Commissioner Patrick Soleymani
Commissioner Jeffrey Hermann

Others Present:

Chris Bruno, President and CEO, Economic Development Office
Nicole Toulouse, Senior Vice President, Economic Development Office
Matthew Easley, Vice President, Economic Development Office
Tara Borwey, Programs Manager, Economic Development Office
Andrew Wilson, Project Manager, Economic Development Office
Joey Peppersack, EDA Associate, Economic Development Office
Michelle Smith, Contracts Manager, Economic Development Office

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| 1. Call to Order | <i>Chair Young</i> |
| a. Meeting called to order at 6:01pm. | |
| 2. Adoption of December Meeting Agenda [VOTE] | <i>Commissioners</i> |
| a. Motioned by Secretary Ross. | |
| b. Seconded by Vice Chair Paley. | |
| c. Passes unanimously. | |
| 3. Convene Closed Session [VOTE] | <i>Chair Young</i> |
| a. Motioned by Secretary Ross to convene closed session under section 2.2-3711.A.8 of the <i>Code of Virginia</i> for consultation with legal counsel. | |
| b. Passes Unanimously. | |
| 4. Reconvene [VOTE] | <i>Chair Young</i> |
| a. Motioned by Secretary Ross to conclude closed meeting at 6:22pm | |
| b. Passes Unanimously. | |
| 5. Business Investment Update | <i>Senior Vice President
Toulouse</i> |

Senior Vice President Toulouse begins her update by welcoming the newest hire for the Economic Development Office Brittany Jones, who will be serving as the Marketing and Public Relations Manager.

Vice President Easley informs the Economic Development Authority that Economic Development Associate Joey Peppersack will be resigning in his current role and starting a new role at the Stafford County Economic Development Department. His last day will be December 21st.

- a. LIFFT

- i. 8 applications are either approved or pending totaling just over \$90k. One application was rejected since the applicant was based in Sterling.
- ii. Each application is requesting approximately \$3,000 or \$12,000 each.
- iii. Industries range from home renovation and finance to spine care and therapy.
- iv. All applicants have already signed leases. LIFFT is being used to recruit new tenants.
- v. Approximately 2500 sqft average of lease space is currently being leased with this program.

b. R&D

- i. Senior Vice President Toulouse thanks Commissioner Soleymani for speaking in support of the Research and Development Zone Text Amendment at the November 14th City Council meeting.
 - 1. Senior Vice President Toulouse mentions they were able to detach this from other controversial zoning text amendments being passed.
 - 2. In direct result of this passing, there has already been one lease signed. The tenants sister company being operating in Loudoun County will also join Fairfax City.
 - 3. Two existing businesses that desire to expand their R&D operations within their facility, including a major defense contractor and a quantum sensing company.
 - a. Commissioner Ross asks if these companies are signing on through LIFFT.
 - i. Senior Vice President Toulouse state: the goal is to get the specific companies to apply for it.
 - ii. Senior Vice President Toulouse mentions that issues related to Zone Text Amendments stalled this progress, but once those issues were resolved these companies were able remain.

6. Tourism Update

- a. In 2022 a \$150,000 grant was provided by the VTC. All counties and independent cities in the state of Virginia were eligible for this. These funds were given to DMO's across the state, however Fairfax City does not have one. FCED was able to get permission to obtain the fund for several projects.
 - i. Projects included:
 - 1. 25,000 for murals
 - 2. 40,000 for town and gown (to strengthen the relationship between George Mason University and the City of Fairfax businesses.
 - 3. 60,000 for artistic light installations.
 - 4. 25,000 for a digital and printed map of the city. Highlighting historic resources and cultural arts in the city.
 - ii. Additionally, FCED funded \$50,000 in Spring of 2022 for support staff.
 - iii. All projects involve heavy coordination with historic resources, cultural arts, George Mason University, OTFBA, NOVA Labs, etc.

*Contracts Manager
Michelle Smith*

1. Primary goal is to attract out-of-city visitor traffic to key sites throughout the city and city businesses.
- b. Secretary Ross asks Contracts Manager Smith if there has been consideration to add a “Love” sign to Fairfax City which has historically been an attraction for tourism across Virginia localities.
 - i. Contracts Manager Smith mentions that there is a program with the VTC to obtain reimbursement for a Love sign.
- c. Commissioner Cho asks if the Fairfax Museum is getting funding from any of this.
 - i. Contracts Manager Smith states that they are not, however they are working with FCED on updating map descriptions. They are mostly civil war history oriented. This site is not getting any improvements from ARPA funds.
- d. Contracts Manager Smith explains the benefits from having murals in municipalities.
 - i. Shows the EDA pictures of murals funded by the VTC painted by Virginia artists:
 1. Greetings from Fairfax; Leesi Pillar, Point 50 shopping center, Big Buns
 2. Candy Coated Splash; Mike Pacheco and Rodrigo Pradel, The Moxley Apartments at Camp Washington
 3. Nova Labs Mural, David Barr (Coming Soon).
 - a. FCED is contributing the remaining funds in collaboration with Nova labs to finish this.
 - b. If Nova labs decides to change this in the future, they will have the ability to do so.
- e. Contracts Manager Smith provides a brief overview of the tourism placemaking initiative.
 - i. Town Gown – primarily to strengthen the GMU/Fairfax City relationship.
 1. Contracted with Civicbrand to conduct a placemaking audit and provide a report to FCED. Some of the suggestions will be implemented in the Spring.
 2. Civicbrand is also in the processes of creating a virtual map and a printed map. This will be included at the visitor center in Fairfax city and will be distributed to welcome centers across the state.
 - ii. Secretary Ross asks what the key recommendations of the contractor were.
 1. Contracts Manager Smith answers that the contractor recommended redoing patriots path, incorporate green and gold on patios in old town, embrace George Mason University colors, get more interactive places in Fairfax Square. States that the main objective was to help George Mason students feel at home.
- f. Contracts Manager Smith provides an overview of illuminate Fairfax which will take place December 15 – February 10.
 - i. A issue that was presented during the planning phase of illuminate was some projector art couldn’t be shown for the entire duration due to technical limitations.
 - ii. This will be free and open to the public.
 - iii. Multiple FCED employees will work on promotion for this event.
 - iv. KME will be assisting in the social media campaign to promote illuminate.
- g. Chair Young asks why Fairfax City does not have a tourism office.
 - i. Senior Vice President Toulouse states that Fairfax County has a tourism board, but since there is a clear distinction between Fairfax City and County they are unable to cover Fairfax City. Traditionally, historic resources have done this but they typically

highlight civil war sites FCED wants to use destination marketing for Fairfax City.

- ii. There has been an FTE request for a full-time employee to take on this task. If this isn't possible, a part-time employee will be tasked to this.
- h. Commissioner Cho states that he is not familiar with illuminate and asks for a better idea.
 - i. Contracts Manager Smith provides a clearer picture of illuminate.
- i. Secretary Ross asks for more information about the locations of the lights.
 - i. Contracts Manager Smith provides an overview of the locations and clarifies that there will be a map onsite.

7. Neighborhood Connected Grant Update

Vice President Easley

- a. Three non-profit organizations doing work in Fairfax city have been awarded this grant with the assistance of Secretary Ross and Commissioner Hermann.
 - i. Britepaths – organizing Pathfinders kitchen out of Mackenzie's Tunes and Tonics. They have partnered with several other organizations to help make this program a possibility.
 - ii. The Heart Leaf Center developing a workforce program training program to train graduate students in evidence-based children play therapy.
 - iii. Cameron's Coffee and Chocolates – a pop-up hot cocoa bomb cart partnering with certain city business. This will provide more working hours to their current employees.
 - iv. \$36,000 was committed to this grant program from FY23. FCED will look to do this again in FY24.

8. Mason Enterprise Center – Fairfax (15 Mins w/ Q&A)

Center Director Hill

- a. Monthly Update
 - i. Not many things have changed since the month of November.
 - ii. There has been a reduction in 3 virtual clients.
 - iii. The MEC holiday party is coming up the week of Dec 11. There will be 60-80 attendees.
 - iv. Monthly and biweekly meetings have gone underway to help with the cohesiveness and transparency in the partnership. These will also cover business development opportunities.
 - v. Companies usually do not take new space between November and December. Through PTAC, Center Director Hill has been informed of prospective companies that have recently been awarded contracts. This list is smaller than anticipated.
 - vi. Highlights from the Marketing Strategy:
 - 1. Education events are set for the upcoming year.
 - a. Master classes will be introduced very soon.
 - 2. Outside sponsorship opportunities are being explored.
 - 3. Ecosystem partnerships are being confirmed. These businesses will provide services to members and will work with the MEC to grow operations and send referrals.
 - a. There is progress towards a working relationship between the MEC and the Northern Virginia Technology Council. They will provide a discounted membership for all members at the Fairfax MEC. They will assist with MEC programming. The NVTC will assist the MEC in finding new prospective companies in addition to these other benefits.

4. The MEC is developing the first cohort for the CEO roundtable. This will be done with more experienced internal members of the MEC. Once the model is more refined, the production of these will be increased. This will increase the quality of peer-to-peer mentorship. The first roundtable will potentially take place in late February.
5. The MEC intends to develop an advisory board of MEC graduates.
6. The MEC will be making steps towards obtaining feedback from current members on its performance.
- vii. Commissioner Cho states that he is grateful that Center Director Hill is making positive steps. However, is concerned with the short-term revenue generating actions.
 1. Center Director Hill states that the relationship with NVTC will definitely help with the short term and get potential tenants into the MEC.
 2. The ecosystem partnerships will be key.
 3. Center Director Hill has been attending various events in D.C to speak with business leaders to attract them to the MEC.
- viii. Commissioner Cho suggests a business plan competition alike the CBP (which he won).
 1. Center Director Hill states that the MEC would be interested in taking part in something like this, however bandwidth is limited.
 2. Also mentions the MEC would be interested in doing more on Mason's campus.
- ix. Commissioner Cho reminds the commission that the MEC has access to a large resource of entrepreneurial potential in the undergraduate and graduate student body.
 1. Further states that marketing students could conduct competitive research on other incubation centers in the region.
 2. Commissioner Soleymani mentions that there are classes and seminars for private companies.
 3. Senior Vice President Toulouse mentions that CEO Bruno will be a board member of the NVTC shortly. Also mentions that the FCED will be funding a part-time fellow to help Center Director Hill in his bandwidth.
 - a. Center Director Hill states that a job description for the fellow will likely not be provided until late January. The fellow will also help the MEC find opportunities on Mason's campus.
- x. Secretary Ross states that prior to his membership on the EDA board that he was not aware of the MEC. States that the marketing should emphasize the "Mason" of the Mason Enterprise Center.
- xi. Chair Young asks what avenues have worked best for finding and retaining clients.
 1. Center Director Hill states that the marketing already conducted helps, the new ecosystem partners will be key, and attending events in person.
- xii. Commissioner Cho states that the MEC should rebrand to "Mason Incubator" and should lean into government contractors.
 1. Commissioner Soleymani mentions that there would need to be a partnership with the Baroni Center for Government Contracting to really make this possible.
 2. Senior Vice President Toulouse states that FCED had a conversation with the Baroni Center for Government

Contracting that programming should be held at the MEC to potentially attract new clients.

- xiii. Chair Young asks if there is a database of potential new clients.
 - 1. Center Director Hill states that at any given time, it is generally known who is a potential tenant.
- xiv. Treasurer McGruder states that rent coming in from Sponsored Program tenants is half of what the WillowWood rent that must go out. The MEC is planning to make up that shortfall from their own reserves which is about \$8,000 a month. States that commissioners want to be assured that the MEC is still viable.
 - 1. Center Director Hill states that currently there is enough money for the MEC to continue to 2027. \$220k of non-restricted use funds.
 - a. Treasurer McGruder asks if this is contingent on current EDA funds.
 - i. Center Director Hill is not sure.
 - 2. Chair Young states that as a client of some of the sponsored programs, the services offered for free are vital to small businesses, which is why the rent is likely lower.
 - a. Center Director Hill states that the sponsored programs receive funding from other entities in addition to George Mason.
 - b. Chair Young states that PTAC is a national company that happens to be based in the MEC.
 - c. Center Director Hill states that the economic impact of the PTAC last year was over 2 billion.
 - d. Secretary Ross asks how long the leases of the sponsored programs are.
 - i. Commissioner Hermann states that most of them are over in 2026.

9. Discuss Creation of Committee to Solicit Local Auditing Firms

Treasurer Dawn McGruder

- a. Treasurer McGruder states that the last year the EDA was a part of the city audit was the ending of June 2023.
- b. CEO Bruno states that for the last 25 years the EDA has been a part of the city's internal audit as a constituent agency. As the EDA continues to separate the funding and management it has been a long-held goal to have an independent audit in the interest of promoting financial transparency.
- c. Treasurer McGruder states she will be soliciting members of her committee.

10. Director Update

Director Bruno

- a. CEO Bruno mentions that Senior Vice President Toulouse attended a lunch at the Northern Virginia Economic Development Alliance which was sponsored for partners at the VEDP in Richmond. Simultaneously CEO Bruno spoke on a panel regarding the future of Fairfax city and County at BizNow in Northern Virginia.

11. Introduction of Amendments to the EDA Bylaws Reflecting Gender Neutral Phrasing for References to Officers of the Authority - Commission Action in January 2024

Director Bruno

- a. CEO Bruno states that there will be a motion in January to amend the bylaws in support of gender-neutral phrasing for officers of the authority.
 - i. Commissioner Soleymani asks for clarification if pronouns will also be changed to gender neutral.
 - 1. This is confirmed.

11. Public Comment (5 Mins)

Public

- a. William Pitchford expresses his support for the capital bikeshare role out program, especially with the addition of electric bikes.

- i. William Pitchford asks if the maps being generated by Civicbrand will include locations of the bikeshares.
 - 1. Contracts Manager Smith confirms this.
- b. William Pitchford also expresses his support for the bike lane improvements with additional widening.
- c. William Pitchford expresses his support of the Mason Enterprise Center, especially for starting businesses who need month-to-month leases.
 - i. Emphasizes the importance of connecting the business community with George Mason University. Mentions how most of his employees are mostly engineers from George Mason University. States that the university has so much to offer in the assistance of the MEC.
- d. Tess Rollins – OTFBA:
 - i. Thanks Center Director Hill for providing meeting space and for doing a presentation about the MEC.
 - ii. The OTFBA has a vendor coming out of the Mason Enterprise Center to participate in Wander-In. States Center Director Hillis referring any potential product vendors to Wander-In.
 - 1. Thanks Contracts Manager Smith for her collaboration in the work being done on Wander-In. Everything is starting to come together on this.
 - 2. Chair Young asks for the status on Wander-In
 - a. Tess Rollins states the architect has sent necessary information to engineers to do the assessment for HVAC and lightning. Another update will occur shortly.
 - b. Commissioner Cho asks if Wander-In will be open for the Holidays.
 - i. Tess Rollins states that this is a possibility, however it could also not be a reality. Vendors are not concerned, but will need space after the Holidays to sell their products. Potential new vendors are already in-progress. States that a diverse set of products are being prioritized.
 - 3. Commissioner Cho mentions his appreciation for the mention of Fairfax City souvenirs at the latest City Council meeting.
 - 4. Senior Vice President Toulouse thanks Commissioner Cho and Tess Rollins for representing the EDA and OTFBA during the city council meeting on the 28th.

- a. Commissioner Cho mentions that a select council member stated that a larger focus be made on George Mason, specifically athletics.
 - 5. Senior Vice President Toulouse also thanks Commissioner Soleymani for taking some EDO staff to a George Mason basketball game.
- e. Jennifer Rose – CFCC:
 - i. Highlights some accomplishments from 2023:
 - 1. Introduced an introductory membership with limited benefits.
 - 2. Over 300 members.
 - 3. Hosted/Co-Hosted almost 120 events which equates to approximately 10 events per month.
 - 4. Participated in 41 ribbon cuttings with more scheduled.
 - 5. Upgraded more members to the premium tier.
 - 6. Produced 2023 community guide and business directory. The 2024 version is underway.
 - 7. Hosted a women-owned business expo featuring a prominent keynote speaker.
 - 8. From a government affairs perspective, the CFCC has been involved with R&D ordinances and on a national level chiming in on key economic issues.
 - 9. Hosted first annual Fairfax Finest Valor Awards.
 - 10. Brought back the annual economic summit.
 - 11. Participated in the 6th restaurant week.
 - 12. Rolled out BOSS (Business, Owner, strategy, Support) group lunches. 4 were done in 2023 with 6 on the way in 2024.
 - 13. First community love and community impact expo, highlighting a quarter of 43 non-profit members. Will begin regularly next year.
 - 14. Participated in summer and fall crawl.
 - ii. In 2024 there will be work done to form a foundation.
 - 1. The approved budget will include a part-time events person.
 - 2. The CFCC goal is to hit 400 members in 2024.
 - 3. There will be more expo type events held in Fairfax City as well as one in the St James.
 - 4. Youth employment program: will provide soft skills training programs to high school students and provide job opportunities for them.
 - 5. Expanding educational offerings.
 - 6. Ambassador program is hoping to triple in size for 2024.
- f. Doug Church:
 - i. States that he was able to visit the Costello College of Business for an event featuring many alumni.
 - ii. States that the CFCC is very happy with the participation and collaboration with the EDO and EDA.
 - iii. States that it is very important that commissioners attend as many events hosted by the CFCC as possible.
- g. Secretary Ross:
 - i. Mentions that EDA Associate Peppersack set up a OneDrive page for EDA meeting materials.

- ii. EDA Associate Peppersack states to access this page commissioners will need to use their EDA emails to ensure FOIA compliance.
- h. Commissioner Cho asks who creates YouTube content:
 - i. Manager Borwey states that the videos are developed by the Marketing and Communications department. It is filmed by various employees but the editor is frequently KiKi Cowen.
 - ii. Senior Vice President Toulouse presents Public Relations Manager Jones to introduce the EDA:
 - 1. Public Relations Manager Jones gives a brief introduction and offers her services to the EDA if there are any marketing needs.
 - iii. Secretary Ross asks if there is an update on the new EDA logo.
 - 1. Senior Vice President Toulouse states that the logo color is being changed to be easier to view.
- i. Chair Young states that BOGO cards at Small Business Saturday were sold out despite showing up early.
 - i. Manager Borwey states that the BOGO funds last year lasted a few months but this year lasted a few days. Based on this, an additional \$10,000 will be put into the BOGO in addition to ad-buys in collaboration with KME.
 - 1. Manager Borwey states that the businesses involved with this will be more diverse going forward.

Commissioners

12. Adoption of November Meeting Minutes [VOTE]

- a. Commissioner Hermann states he is not listed as a participant in November's EDA meeting.
- b. Vice Chair Paley motions to amend November Meeting Minutes to show Commissioner Hermann as present.
- c. Secretary Ross seconds.
- d. Passes Unanimously.

13. Adjourn

Chair Young

- a. Meeting Adjourned at 7:40pm

Next Meeting: January 3, 2024

6pm, 10300 Eaton Pl. Fairfax, Virginia 22030

Subject to Change. Please Check fairfaxcityconnected.com for more information.