

Wednesday, October 25, 2017 Meeting Minutes

Economic Development Committee – Joint Workgroup Meeting

EDC Members Present: Paul White, Valerie DeLoach, Gene Braddy, Niki Jones

EDC Members Absent: Ed Morrell, Stacey Piesche, Bryan Green, and Lee Mabry

Staff Present: David Bergmark, Patrick Reidy

Guests: none

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The meeting was held in the Conference Room at Town Hall, 15 E. Fourth Street. The meeting was called to order at 5:40 P.M. David Bergmark welcomed all present, including the Mayor. Mr. Bergmark said there were no members of the public present to comment.

David Bergmark provided a review of regional and economic data collected by Ted Abernathy. He said overall Raleigh competed very well with comparable metropolitan areas, with strengths in the tech sector, cost of living, cost of doing business, and educational opportunities.

David Bergmark said Mr. Abernathy’s data provided a good transition into the discussion on Amazon’s HQ2 project. He said Newland had submitted a proposal to Wake County with the Town’s help. Mr. Bergmark said the more he talked with others about the proposal, the more realistic he thought it could be for a site like Wendell to be chosen. He said Amazon wouldn’t look at it as locating their headquarters in Wendell, NC. David said they would view such as decision as locating in the Raleigh Metro region, within a specific area with less congestion and more versatility than more built-up areas. Niki Jones commented on the sheer number of proposals which would be submitted for the HQ2 project.

Paul White asked for a status update on the medical office building and Cruizers site. Patrick said Cruizers had re-submitted construction drawings to make some modifications to the fast food pad site, as they had identified a user. He said a contract was expected to be finalized in December for the medical office building.

Paul white asked about the status of the school. Mr. Bergmark said he hadn’t heard anything new from schools looking to locate in Wendell Falls. Mayor Gray provided an update on the Town’s interaction with Wake County regarding Wendell Elementary.

Patrick said plans for Everest Kitchen were picked up recently by the health department. David Bergmark said their plans included a menu, which showed a mix of Asian and American foods. Gene Braddy said the operator of Everest Kitchen should decorate or put up a sign saying ‘Coming Soon’ for Wendell Wonderland.

Patrick Reidy said we should approve the minutes now that Gene had arrived. David Bergmark asked for a motion. Niki Jones made a motion to approve the minutes from the September 27, 2017 EDC meeting. Gene Braddy seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

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David Bergmark suggested we cover the discussion item on Wendell Wonderland. He asked Patrick to provide an overview. Patrick said he had reached out to vendors and has 8 booths secured. He said staff had been out to the new location on Main Street and thought they could fit 11 vendors in the service bay space. Paul White said the Town could use the entry foyer space as well. Patrick said the Town may look to have a few vendors outside to draw attention, depending on the weather.

Valerie DeLoach suggested contacting Kannon's in order to have them turn their lights on and perhaps allow basic decorations placed inside. Mayor Gray said empty present boxes could be placed by the window. Patrick said it would offer Kannon's an opportunity to showcase their space to prospective buyers.

Paul White asked about the indoor event space mentioned in the Friday memo. David Bergmark said a young woman named Kate had contacted him a couple of weeks ago about locating an indoor event venue in the downtown area. He said her idea resembled a supper club. David said the use would be considered a private club, but not in order to be exclusive. He said the private club designation provided more freedom than a restaurant designation in terms of the health code. David said Kate had contacted the owner of the former 1903 location, but had discovered that a lien existed on the property. He said he had also put her in touch with the property owned by Wynn Vaughan. Paul White suggested they locate above Wine and Beer 101.

Paul White said Grillbillies should be open by the 1st of the month. He said they just completed a bunch of landscaping.

Patrick Reidy said the Dara family had closed on the Bart's Fine Arts building. He said the Walker's had closed on the Martial Arts Building on Third Street.

Niki Jones asked about the Town's façade Grants. Patrick Reidy provided an update of recent recipients.

Patrick Reidy said Paul had agreed to consider allowing a tenant to convert his car wash into a restaurant or similar use. He said he was not interested in selling the building or paying for the improvements, but he could compensate the tenant for improvements with the lease structure.

Gene Braddy asked when the ABC building would be completed. Paul White said perhaps February.

David Bergmark asked if Paul could obtain a new business announcement from Grillbillies to provide to Wake County. Patrick Reidy said he could get one from the owner.

Paul White said the proposed wedding venue on Marshburn road was under contract to purchase additional property for residential development.

Gene Braddy asked when the EDC would be meeting next. David Bergmark said there was not a regularly scheduled meeting in November due to holidays. He suggested the EDC meet on November 15th at 5:30 P.M. at Town Hall. Those members present agreed to the date and time.

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Mr. Bergmark asked for a motion to adjourn. Valerie DeLoach made a motion to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 7:15 P.M.