

**Wednesday, April 22, 2015 Meeting Minutes**

**Economic Development Committee – Joint Workgroup Meeting**

**EDC Members Present:** Paul White, Ed Morrell, Lesia McKenzie, Barry Perry, Don Brown, Ginny Porter

**EDC Members Absent:** Steven Kyle Williams, Jo Anne Wright

**Staff Present:** David Bergmark, Patrick Reidy, Allison Rice

**Guests:** None

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The meeting was called to order by Paul White at 5:41 pm. Barry Perry made a motion to approve the minutes from the February 25<sup>th</sup> meeting. Paul White seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

David Bergmark discussed Item 5A related to the Downtown Retail Overlay District. He described the former Downtown Retail Overlay District standards and gave staff suggestions. He also explained that the EDC had suggested changing the boundaries of the district at the last meeting to include businesses on Third Street but to end it at Main Street and Fourth Street. He asked what uses the EDC thought wouldn't be appropriate in the district.

Mr. Perry asked how the District would affect his building that houses the lawn mower engine repair shop on Campen Street. He said he didn't want the building to become nonconforming and said a small engine repair shop didn't need parking while a large vehicle repair shop would. He said that his other warehouse on Campen Street could only be used as storage. Mr. Bergmark said there wouldn't be a problem with the storage building. He said any amount of storage within the building could retain that use. Mr. Bergmark said the owner could put a paint can in there while it wasn't being rented and it would still be a continuation of that use, so long as the use didn't change to something else. He said he would look at how to address the engine repair shop.

Allison Rice asked if a bicycle repair shop would be allowed, or manufacturing of small products like bagels and the distillery. Mr. Bergmark said that wouldn't be a problem. He said distilleries were their own use and would still be permitted. Mr. Perry and Mr. White asked about game rooms and event spaces. Mr. Bergmark said game rooms would be considered a type of indoor amusement or indoor recreation, which was not being affected by the proposed overlay district standards. He said an event space would likely be limited to the upper floor, if that was its sole function.

The EDC members agreed with the proposed boundary lines. Mr. Bergmark said there was no reason to include the Women's Club since it was owned by the Town.

Mr. Bergmark introduced information on a draft Economic Development Incentive Policy. He gave 3 grant options that the Town could implement. Mr. Bergmark asked what other options would give a real incentive to businesses to relocate downtown. He noted one other town had a grant for businesses to renovate upstairs storefronts. Mr. White noted the Town didn't have any money to give towards a grant. He said a tax waiver would provide money as an incentive that the Town didn't have to have first.

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Mr. Bergmark said the problem with a tax reimbursement was that it didn't add up to much, even over five years. He said the amount wouldn't incentivize people to move in to Wendell.

Mr. Bergmark suggested that the building renovation incentive require that the applicant increase the tax value by \$50,000 and that the business must be located in the DMX.

Ms. Rice asked to add language to encourage applicants to rehab buildings according to historic standards. Mr. Brown suggested that a staff-member would be allowed access to the property to assess and document what should be saved and preserved.

The EDC said they liked the proposal with the stacked grants based on the amount the property value is increased, better than the tax reimbursement option. They said this would be a better marker than the amount spent on the property. Mr. Brown asked if the distillery would qualify for the grant since property values are dependent on the surrounding areas, etc. Mr. Bergmark said that the grant should only apply to businesses that hadn't invested yet and couldn't be retroactive. He said he would talk to a tax assessor to see what type of work would increase values to a property. Mr. White said this would incentivize people who already own buildings downtown to renovate the buildings. The EDC agreed.

Mr. Bergmark asked if the EDC liked the idea of encouraging residential units to be built above storefronts in addition to Grant option 3. The EDC agreed.

Mr. Bergmark asked if the Town should give more money to downtown businesses for the façade grant. The EDC agreed and they approved of the suggested amount of \$2500.

Mr. Bergmark went over the idea for the restaurant incentive grant. He said the Town would give money per square footage leased to restaurants that stay in business for 12 months. He suggested that the Town only gives it to restaurants in the DMX, up to \$30,000 maximum. The EDC agreed. The EDC also agreed to restrict the grant to restaurants regulated by the Wake County Health Department.

Mr. Reidy said that he had talked to NCDOT about what would be necessary to get a highway directional sign for specific businesses. He said businesses needed to be located within 3 miles of the sign placed on the highway exit, and Downtown was outside of that 3 mile radius. He said the information would be good to give to businesses as they open in Wendell, but it wouldn't help the businesses in Downtown Wendell. Ms. Porter asked if staff could look into getting a gateway sign for the Downtown at the intersection of Wendell Falls Parkway and Third Street.

Ms. McKenzie made a motion to adjourn. The motion passed.