



Economic Development Authority December Meeting Minutes

Tuesday December 1st, 2020 @ 7 PM

NOTICE: This meeting will be held pursuant to and in compliance with the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, Section 2.2-3708.2 and state and local legislation adopted to allow for continued government operation during the COVID-19 declared emergency. All participating members of the Economic Development Authority will be present at this meeting through electronic means. All members of the public may view this electronic meeting via the meeting link listed above and in the City's website calendar.

Public comments may be submitted to vweiner@fallschurchva.gov until November 30th, 2020 at 8:00 pm. All comments will be provided to the EDA members.

PLEASE NOTE: This meeting will be conducted using Microsoft Teams. Don't have the Teams app? You can still join a Teams meeting. See the instructions attached to this meeting agenda. Please email vweiner@fallschurchva.gov if you need assistance with installation. During the meeting, staff will likely not be available to assist with installation.

1. Call to order 7:04
2. Roll call and virtual meeting notice

EDA Members Present: Vice Chair Brian Williams, Jim Coyle, Erin Messner, Edward Saltzberg, Matthew Quinn, Sandy Kiersz

EDA Members Absent: Chairman Bob Young

Student Liaisons Present: Rex Crespin, James Trombo

City Staff Present: Jim Snyder, Val Weiner, Sue Long, Becky Witsman

Public Attendees: Letty Hardi, Tim Stevens, Phil Duncan

3. Approval of November 10th EDA Minutes
 - a. Link to EDA Minutes:
<https://www.fallschurchva.gov/DocumentCenter/View/13524/Draft-November-Minutes>
 - b. Jim Coyle motioned to approve, Erin Messner seconded, approved unanimously at 7:06.
4. Discussion of EDA's role in affordable housing with Housing and Human Services (HHS) Staff
 - a. Link to recent HHS study on maintaining and creating affordable housing:
<https://www.fallschurchva.gov/DocumentCenter/View/13523/Creating-and-Maintaining-Affordability-Memo-FC>
 - b. EDA 2019 Affordable Housing Memo to Council:
<https://www.fallschurchva.gov/DocumentCenter/View/13525/2019-Affordable-Housing-Memo-to-Council-from-EDA-Chair>
 - c. Council member Letty Hardi and City of Falls Church Housing and Human Services director Nancy Vincent presented an opportunity for the EDA to support affordable housing in the City through changes to the voluntary concessions for the Insight project,

to put more emphasis on affordable housing. Specifically, Letty Hardi and Nancy Vincent noted they would like EDA support to ask Insight developers to increase their affordable housing units in the project.

- i. The EDA discussed and compared the value of asking developers for more money to put into the affordable housing fund, versus asking them to include more affordable units in their projects. More money would allow the City to make their own plan for maintaining and creating affordable housing, more units would house people faster.
 - ii. City staff noted the Insight project is one of a few that promised affordability for the life of the project, and asked whether this ask for twice as many unit as required by the City would not work in the developer's proforma. The project is near approval, going through Board and Commission comments now, and this ask could push back the approval indefinitely. EDA members noted that there needs to be a trade-off. If the EDA were to ask the developers to increase the number of affordable units, the City needs to give up a different concession (money to the library, school, etc.). EDA members noted that moving money from one concession to another is more reasonable than asking the developer to double the number of units at the 11th hour and also requiring all of the other usual Voluntary Concession.
 1. Council member Letty Hardi noted two concerns: there needs to be awareness of how much additional affordable housing units cost the City, and, on the other hand, whether there is a plan for the money should the City ask for it.
 2. City staff Jim Snyder mentioned that the City's edits to the special exception criteria process could provide Council more flexibility to make these decisions on a case-by-case moving forward.
 - iii. There was discussion as to what extent the EDA should be involved in affordable housing and how. The EDA decided the best method would be to offer support to the housing team through memos to Council. EDA members were overall more supportive of asking developers to move money from other concessions to affordable housing, rather than an increase in units, because it is more scalable and could make a larger impact.
 - iv. EDA members didn't feel comfortable supporting a certain percentage of units for Insight, but would support the concept of supporting more money to go towards affordable housing as a concession, and then additional units in future projects. Matthew Quinn motioned for the EDA to send a memo to Council in support of asking developers to put more concessionary funds towards affordable housing as opposed to other recipients like schools or the library, as well as specifically with the Insight project. The memo would need to get to Council by the following Monday. Seconded by Jim Coyle, unanimously approved.
- d. City staff Nancy Vincent also presented on the opportunity for the City to apply for an Amazon grant that would support affordable home ownership in the City, about \$3.7 million. The goal would be to work with a non-profit developer to purchase condos and sell them to income eligible households, supporting about 14 families. The money could also be spent to maintain affordability in current units where rent is about to increase to market rate.

- i. EDA members asked whether the current City workforce is served by affordable housing. City housing staff noted they do receive priority but the small number of available units is not enough to house a majority of the workforce.
 - ii. City staff Nancy Vincent offered to help write a memo of support, Jim Coyle motioned to move forward with the memo, Sandy Kiersz seconded. Unanimous approval.
5. Discussion of EDA funding for extension of staff part-time COVID salary
 - a. City staff asked the EDA to fund Naomi Goodwin's part-time salary at \$15,000 for 6 months from the COVID/landbanking fund, as funds for half of her current full time salary will expire on December 31, 2020 . Naomi Goodwin has been working on COVID issues and business relations for the past couple months, and staff needs her to continue as COVID worsens. She could also work on the website and community relations moving forward. CPEDS would cover her other half of her salary, so she would work a full 40-hour work week. The goal is to make her position full-time so EDA will not have to fund her salary again.
 - b. EDA members noted that while they support this effort, this was not the intent of the landbanking fund. Members do not want to create a precedent and that instead the position should be funded through the City budget. .
 - c. Brian Williams motioned to approve the \$15,000 for Naomi Goodwin's part-time COVID salary, seconded by Jim Coyle. Unanimous approval.
 - d. City staff provided a budget update for the EDA.
6. Update on Kaiser Signage
 - a. City staff Becky Witsman provided an update on City staff discussions with Kaiser on electronic signage to promote public parking on the outside of their building. Kaiser reps originally provided a quote for three signs, two of which had zoning issues and did not promote public parking well enough. After discussions, Kaiser came back with a new quote for just the electronic LED sign on the side of the building. The quote is much higher than staff expected, so discussions will continue until each side has reached a final offer to present to the EDA at next month's meeting.
 - b. EDA members noted staff should include an outline of sign maintenance, liability, and messaging in the potential contract with Kaiser.
 - c. City councilmember Letty Hardi suggested City staff have Frazier and Associates look at the sign proposal to check whether it is appropriate.
 - d. EDA members asked staff to ask Kaiser to remove the green 'members only' parking sign at the entrance to the lot. Staff agreed to speak with Kaiser in the coming days.
7. Annual Holiday Tree lighting ceremony – cancelled due to COVID
 - a. City staff updated the EDA that the tree lighting ceremony was cancelled, but the Office of Communications and the EDA worked to create a short 'shop and dine safely' video supporting Falls Church businesses.
8. Wayfinding Project Update
 - a. City staff updated the EDA that they are working on the bid for the Wayfinding project with the City purchasing agent and DPW.
 - b. EDA members asked whether more locations could be added to the program in the future like Tinner Hill, City staff will check with the consultants and get back to the group.
 - c. Department of Public Works staff Sue Long informed the EDA that there is a project happening in the Tinner Hill area that includes signage that honors its history.
9. Adjourn at 9:30