

**City of Falls Church
Economic Development Authority
Minutes – DRAFT
Tuesday, October 4, 2011 – 7 p.m.
Falls Church City Hall – Dogwood Room
300 Park Avenue, Falls Church, VA 22046**

I. Call to Order – The meeting was called to order at 7:06 p.m.

EDA Board Members Present: David Tarter (chairman), Kathy Hamor, Andy Rankin, Phil Duncan, Ed Saltzberg, Mike Novotny (joined the meeting at 7:35 p.m.), and Justin Berg (joined the meeting at 8:01 p.m.)

EDA Board Members Excused: None.

ED Staff: Rick Goff and Becky Witsman.

Public Attendees: Ira Kaylin (City Council), Lindy Hockenberry (Planning Commission), Tom Gittins, Barbara Cram, Bill Abel, Erik Pelton, Sally Cole, Nikki and Ed Henderson, Laura Hull, Donna Englander, Mike Schreiber, and Loralyn Coles.

II. Petitions from the Public – Erik Pelton spoke about the National Trademark Expo in Alexandria on October 14 and 15. He encouraged board members to attend and support the city’s exhibit of The Little City logo and brand. He explained that the event is attended by about 10,000 people each year. It is rare, he added, that a municipality such as Falls Church is selected to participate alongside an array of large corporations that feature well-known trademark brands.

III. Petitions from the Board – None.

IV. Approval of September 13, 2011 Minutes – A motion to approve the minutes was made by Mr. Saltzberg, seconded by Mr. Rankin, and carried by unanimous vote.

V. New Business

a. Presentation of Requests for EDA Grant Support

Chairman Tarter introduced this agenda item by stating that the EDA has limited funds with which to support the many worthwhile programs and events for which applicants are seeking grant funding. He said that some very difficult decisions will have to be made by the board and not all requests can expect to be approved. He added that no grant decisions by the board would occur tonight but, rather, would be made following board discussion in the weeks ahead.

i. 7:15 pm – CATCH: TheLittleCity.org

Barbara Cram presented a request on behalf of CATCH (City of Arts, Theatre, Culture and History) seeking \$3,440 from the EDA to create a website that will feature an arts, cultural and events calendar with links to individual websites of local arts and community organizations. She also pointed out that the website would be the key link for the city to the Virginia Tourism Corporation. She noted that Falls Church does not have a tourism office, so the website would perform the function of a centralized contact and distribution point of information. Ms. Cram answered several questions about the content of the website.

ii. 7:25 pm – Chamber of Commerce: “Shop Local”

Erik Pelton and Sally Cole distributed a written summary and explained the concept of a campaign to increase public awareness to encourage local spending at Falls Church businesses. They stressed that the campaign would meet all of the objectives of EDA grant support, including increased local business activity, tax revenue, and greater exposure of The Little City brand. The Chamber is seeking EDA grant funds to print and distribute decals, produce and display a banner, create flyers and yard signs, and run display ads in the Falls Church News Press. The Chamber’s grant request is for \$5,215.

Mr. Pelton and Ms. Cole responded to questions about other resources that will support the campaign. The Chamber has already contributed in-kind resources and will continue to do so, they said. They confirmed that the campaign would also raise awareness of what businesses are in the city and what they offer.

iii. 7:35 pm – Creative Cauldron

Laura Hull provided an overview of “Passport to the World,” an 8-week program produced by Creative Cauldron and performed in the Falls Church ArtSpace in Pearson Square. She said that the program draws from throughout the region and has generated a database of a thousand patrons. She pointed to their partnership with local restaurants to capture a theater and dinner business. Creative Cauldron’s request for \$4,000 in EDA grant support would be used for program publicity.

iv. 7:45 pm – Falls Church Education Foundation: Fun Run 2012

Donna Englander requested a renewal of the EDA’s annual support for the Fun Run, a 5K race on the Sunday following the city’s “Taste of Falls Church” in September. She said their grant application for \$1,100 would be used to purchase and display yard signs that announcement the event. She reported that 400 runners (about the same as 2010) participated in the 2011 Fun Run and paid \$35 apiece. Ms. Englander, in response to a question, said that the Fun Run would seek additional corporate sponsorship in 2012.

v. 7:55 pm – FIRSTfriday

Tom Gittins presented a request for \$7,050 to promote The Little City brand through the monthly FIRSTfriday event. He said that “marketing impressions” in the year ahead will greatly increase for The Little City with the Falls Church Community Guide, U-Tube productions, banner displays and many other publicity devices. Between 250 and 750 people attend FIRSTfriday each month, Mr. Gittins said in response to a question.

vi. 8:05 pm – Tinner Hill Heritage Foundation: Blues Festival

Nikki and Ed Henderson reported that the 2011 Blues Festival was the most successful in the 18 year history of the event. They said that money spent on promotions produced local TV and radio coverage. It was the first year the Blues Festival charged a fee to attend performances and ticket sales at \$10 per person were strong. Mad Fox sold beer at the event and the Blues Festival shared in the sales proceeds. Asked about overall attendance, the Hendersons said that about 4,000 people participated throughout the weekend of the Blues Festival. They added that there would be a stepped up effort to obtain corporate sponsors in 2012. Their EDA grant request is for \$6,000.

vii. 8:15 pm – WAMA: The 2012 Wammies

Loralyn Coles and Mike Schreiberman highlighted the success of the 2011 Wammies Awards Show at the State Theatre. They said that they enjoyed excellent media coverage and that there had been good participation by Falls Church food and beverage establishments both before and after the main event. WAMA’s request for a \$5,500 EDA grant is part of an overall \$21,000 budget that covers State Theatre rental, lighting, and many other costs to produce the Wammies. The event sells out every year in the 600-seat venue. Ms. Coles and Mr. Schreiberman promised to provide TheLittleCity.org with a video of the 2011 Wammies that can be used on the new website.

viii. 8:25 pm – Watch Night

Ms. Cram informed the board that Watch Night 2011 will mark the 14th year of the event. She said that in 2010, Watch Night grew in attendance, entertainment offerings, and business activity. She distributed testimony from business owners that described the positive impact of the event on sales and patronage. Watch Night operated on an overall budget of about \$12,000 in 2010. Ms. Cram is requesting \$5,000 from the EDA for 2011 grant support.

b. Board Discussion

Board members agreed to begin their discussion of the grant requests and a plan for the allocation of resources at their next board meeting on November 1. They held open the possibility of making a public announcement of grant awards following the November meeting.

VI. Old Business

a. Falls Church Community Guide Restaurant Guide and Map

On September 13 the EDA board approved in concept funding to sponsor a fold out Falls Church restaurant guide and map in the soon-to-be-published Falls Church Community Guide. Design of the restaurant guide and map was completed and a hard cost of \$2,578 was established for the production of 20,000 copies. Mr. Gittins answered several board questions about the project. Mr. Goff advised that the board would need to formally approve an allocation of funds so that payment could be made to FIRSTfriday for the restaurant guide.

Ms. Hamor proposed a motion to approve \$2,578 in EDA funds payable to FIRSTfriday of Falls Church to produce 20,000 restaurant guides for the Falls Church Community Guide. Mr. Rankin seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

b. Little City Banners: Consideration of Purchase of Banners

This item followed a board discussion in September about the possibility of replacing old banners in city commercial areas with new banners featuring The Little City logo and accompanying messages such as “Eat,” “Shop,” “History,” “Arts,” and “Music” at selected locations. Ms. Witsman and Ms. Cram explained that new banners would cost \$100 apiece and that installation brackets would also need to be purchased. The total cost for the project was estimated at no more than \$2,800.

The board discussed the merits of consistency versus variety of background colors for the banners. Ms. Cram offered to contact Matt Smith about the issue from a marketing perspective.

Mr. Duncan said he supported the project and called it a multi-year investment. Several members expressed the distinction between this project as a capital expense in contrast to EDA grants for programs and events in the city. Mr. Tarter asked that final design proofs be made available to the board before full production of the banners.

Mr. Novotny moved to approve up to \$2,800 in EDA funds for the banners pending final board review of proofs. The motion was seconded by Ms. Hamor and was approved unanimously.

VII. Staff Reports

a. Development Projects

Mr. Goff reported that demolition at the Northgate site is well underway. He added that the Hilton Garden Inn site plan was approved by the Planning Commission the night before. He reminded the board of two upcoming events they might consider

attending: 1) the National Trademark Expo on October 14 and 15 in Alexandria; and 2) the N. Washington/W. Jefferson small area plan kick-off meeting on October 29 from 9-11 a.m. at Columbia Baptist Church.

b. Business Report

Ms. Witsman reported that Dominion Jewelers retail and office project at 917 W. Broad Street was approved by the Planning Commission. This is the site of the former El Zunzal restaurant.

VIII. EDA Member and Subcommittee Reports

Mr. Novotny directed several questions to Planning Commissioner Hockenberry about the upcoming small area plan meeting and the area planning process. He reiterated a concept that he previously suggested at the September EDA meeting to create an ad hoc group of board and commission representatives to serve as the primary body to formulate areas plans before they are vetted through a wider public input process. Ms. Hockenberry responded that she would share the suggestion with Planning Director Jim Snyder.

IX. Other Business

Mr. Duncan noted that there are a number of vacancies that remain in commercial space in mixed use development projects in the city. He said that the board should discuss ways that the city and EDA might assist in filling empty commercial space, including temporary uses. He asked that the board place the topic on an agenda of a future meeting.

X. Adjournment – A motion to adjourn was proposed and seconded. It carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.