



Economic Development Authority Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, April 5th 2022 ❖ 7:00 pm

Virtual Meeting

1. **Call to Order**
2. **Reading of Virtual Meeting Notice**
3. **Roll Call:**

EDA Members Present: Jim Coyle, Chair Bob Young, Vice Chair Brian Williams, Matthew Quinn, Edward Saltzberg, Ross Litkenhous

EDA Members Absent: Sandy Kiersz

Student Liaisons Absent: Alex Lacroix

City Staff Present: Jim Snyder, Val Weiner, Becky Witsman, Cindy Mester, Wyatt Shields

Public attendees: Letty Hardi, Phil Duncan, Debbie Hiscott, Caroline Lian

4. **Approval of March 22, 2022 Retreat/Meeting Minutes:**

<https://www.fallschurchva.gov/DocumentCenter/View/16061/draft-march-8-22-minutes>

Jim Coyle motioned to approve, seconded by Brian Williams. Unanimous approval.

5. **Proposed new commercial real estate tax in FY '23 proposals, BPOL comparison**

City Staff Cindy Mester and Wyatt Shields presented the opportunity for Commercial & Industrial (C&I) and C&I Equivalent. EDA members expressed concern about the impact the proposition would have on businesses without clear and direct benefits to those same businesses, and that it is a blanket tax on all businesses regardless of benefits received. EDA members also expressed concern with the timing of the tax, considering all the new development in the pipeline. There was discussion of whether it is fair to compare Falls Church to neighboring jurisdictions, since the size and composition of the City's commercial tax base is significantly different. EDA members chose to request that staff provide their collective comments to the City Council rather than taking a formal vote to either support or oppose the proposed new commercial real estate tax.

There was additional discussion on lowering specific BPOL tax rates to incentivize new business and support existing. No action was taken on this item.

6. **Wesley Housing/302 Shirley Street refi/Virginia Village Update**

Deputy City Manager Cindy Mester presented an update on Years 2 and 3 of the Amazon grant. Staff is still working on terms for Year 2. Year 3 Amazon Reach Grant, which is funding the acquisitions at Virginia Village with Wesley Housing, is also still underway. Staff is working on the rehab of 310 S Maple and the tenants will be relocated. Staff is still in the process of finalizing the refinancing plan. They anticipate finishing the refinance by June



30th 2022, which includes the reimbursement of EDA's funds for the purchase of 302 Shirley Street. The plan is for the EDA to receive their refund by June 30th.

7. West Falls Church redevelopment project land transfer/lease and Community Development Authority - City staff presentation and approval request

<https://www.fallschurchva.gov/DocumentCenter/View/16062/resolution-approving-documents>

City Manager Wyatt Shields provided an update on the West Falls Land transfer to the EDA, and noted the EDA will have no rights to the property outside of approving the lease transfer. Mr. Shields requested the EDA approve the following motion:

“Motion to approve the RESOLUTION OF THE FALLS CHURCH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY TO APPROVE LEASES, A DEED AND MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT WITH THE CITY AND RELATED DOCUMENTS PURSUANT TO THE COMPREHENSIVE AGREEMENT”

Motion was approved by Jim Coyle, seconded by Ross Litkenhous. Unanimous approval.

EDA members were assured by the City's risk manager Cindy Mester and City Manager Wyatt Shields they are protected by sovereign immunity, as long as they are acting legally and within the bounds of the law. In addition, the City has coverage for all board members and officials in the City should the sovereign immunity be pierced. \$1 million per occurrence per official and an additional \$4 mil in excess general liability per incident that would cover the EDA, and additional coverage for the CDA.

8. EDA retreat summary overview

City staff provided a brief overview of the annual retreat, including major projects and quick wins.

9. Report on grant applications (closed 3/25) and eligibility change recommendations

City staff provided an update on the grant program and proposed changes to eligibility requirements. The proposed eligibility changes include:

- The business or non-profit must have been in operation prior to or on January 1, 2019. Previously the eligibility requirement was 1 year prior to January 1, 2019.
- The business or non-profit had gross receipts of no less than \$30,000 and no more than \$1 million between the end of calendar years 2019 and 2020. Previously the eligibility requirement was a minimum of \$50,000 in gross receipts.
- Now requiring non-profits to submit a Letter of Determination and Form 990. Previously non-profits had the option to provide one or the other.
- Updated use by date to September 30, 2022 and final report due date to October 31, 2022. Previously funds needed to be used by July 31, 2022 and the final report needed to be submitted by August 31, 2022.



Jim Coyle motioned to adopt the changes in the eligibility requirements, seconded by Brian Williams. Unanimous approval.

10. Founders Row 1/EDA theatre subsidy info and agreement

City staff provided the EDA with more information on the theatre subsidy agreement that will be coming to them for approval in the following months. Chair Bob Young asked to coordinate a developer-sponsored walk through of the project with other Boards and Commissions and Council.

11. Wayfinding update

City staff presented an update on the wayfinding project, most of which was installed in the last month. Vice Chair Brian Williams expressed disappointment that 10 of the locations were installed in the sidewalk and that even with the addition additional concrete bump outs they were still a step backwards for accessibility issues. City staff Cindy Mester agreed and expressed disappointment that 10 of the signs were in the sidewalk and that while they are ADA compliant they do not reflect the spirit of the law. City staff Jim Snyder noted that there are a multitude of opportunities to improve the City's pedestrian accessibility, and that the City should make a plan to address it.

12. Discussion of process for new businesses to open in the City/options to improve

CPEDS Department Director Jim Snyder updated the EDA on a plan to increase staff and streamline the permits process moving forward.

13. Update on T zone revisions

CPEDS Department Director Jim Snyder updated the EDA that the revisions are still underway, and the City currently does not have staff to finish it quickly. City Council members would like staff to write the revision before new staff is added.

14. Discussion of current pipeline for new projects

Staff provided an update on new projects and the status of new tenants.

15. Update on status of new tenants – City staff Becky Witsman did a quick overview of the progress of new retail business openings in the City.

16. Discussion of future meetings (virtual, in person, etc.)

EDA members were fine with either virtual or in person meetings moving forward.

17. Adjournment 9:30