

Approved March 11, 2020

MEETING MINUTES
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
FEBRUARY 19, 2020 8:00 AM
FARMINGTON HILLS CITY HALL – COMMUNITY ROOM
31555 W. ELEVEN MILE ROAD
FARMINGTON HILLS MI 48336

CALLED TO ORDER BY: CHAIRMAN CANTOR AT 8:03 AM

MEMBERS PRESENT: ANHUT, BEIERMEISTER, CANTOR, CARR, ELLIOTT, SLAUGHTER,

MEMBERS ABSENT: HARTSOCK, LINDSEY-FEAGIN, ZACHOS

OTHERS PRESENT: Samantha Seimer, Economic Development Director; Gary Mekjian, Assistant City Manager; Diane Holcomb; Connor Osborn, Greater Farmington Area Chamber of Commerce Executive Director.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Motion by Carr, support by Anhut, to approve the agenda.

Motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – January 15, 2019:

- Mr. Anhut revised the meeting minutes from January 15 to reflect Mr. Slaughter as absent. In the minutes as presented Mr. Slaughter's name appeared under both Members Present as well as Members Absent.

Motion by Elliott, support by Slaughter to approve the minutes as amended.

Motion carried unanimously.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:

a) Presentation from the Greater Farmington Area Chamber of Commerce

- Ms. Seimer introduced Mr. Osborn, the Executive Director of the Greater Farmington Area Chamber of Commerce.
- Mr. Osborn spoke about the benefit of being a member of the Chamber and its mission to be an asset and platform for business to grow and network through event and community involvement. He mentioned signature events such as the State of the Cities and Founders Festival. The Chamber is a source of business to business referrals and involvement with local government officials.
- Chairman Cantor asked how the Chamber works with the City of Farmington EDC. Mr. Osborn stated that He works closely with Kevin Christianson, Chair of the Farmington EDC.
- Ms. Holcomb asked about changes that are planned for Founders Festival. Mr. Osborn responded that the event will still be at Shiawassee Park, the carnival will be expanded; the Chamber controls the carnival, beer tent, music and Fido Festival. Mr. Osborn is working to encourage more involvement from the Downtown Businesses to make it a more community-wide event.
- Mr. Beiermeister asked how the Chamber tracks its successes. Mr. Osborn stated that the Chamber tracks membership numbers, growth in events and referrals within networks.
- Mr. Anhut asked about the mission of the organization. Mr. Osborn replied that it is the goal of the Chamber to better our businesses and communities. Mr. Anhut noted that he founded the Chamber in 1964 and stated that it is important for Mr. Osborn to get involved with the Michigan Chamber of Commerce in Lansing. The motto of the Michigan Chamber is "Your voice in Lansing."
- Mr. Carr added that he wants to see the businesses and local economy stay strong and grow.
- Mr. Osborn asked the EDC Board how the Chamber can assist in furthering the mission of the EDC. Chairman Cantor responded that the goal of the EDC is to have a vibrant business community, employment and growth as well as support entrepreneurial activities such as the work being done to create the business incubator at The Hawk. He suggested, with unanimous consent of the other members, that the success of ALL EDC's and

chambers are best realized if the main focus is centered on the growth and health of “for profit” business in a community. Mr. Osborn was encouraged to work with the Farmington Hills EDC and to expect full support and cooperation wherever possible.

b) Involvement with the Farmington Library

- Chairman Cantor stated that there is a new Librarian, and Board Member Bill Largent is working hard to increase the viability and visibility of the Library. Mr. Largent plans to attend the next ECD Meeting to share the vision of the future and determine if there is synergy. Ms. Seimer and Chairman Cantor plan to meet with Oakland County Business Development Center to learn about programs that can maybe be hosted at the Library or replicated in the community.

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- Chairman Cantor asked if the EDC would be willing to move the March meeting up one week to March 11. There was consensus at the Board Meeting and Ms. Seimer will send a follow up email to confirm a quorum.
 - The Board reconfirmed its summer recess dates and will not meet in June, July or August.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Ms. Seimer reviewed an annual report of her activities with the EDC Board. The report highlighted retention activities and programs throughout the year, target industries for 2020 and discussed programs, partnerships and the importance of involvement with other economic development agencies at varying levels of government.
- She asked for feedback on the report and stated that she could do a more in-depth presentation at a future EDC Meeting. She received enthusiastic support and was encouraged to re-present the report in greater depth in the upcoming March meeting as there are many nuggets that call for further analysis.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

a. Hawk Incubator

- Chairman Cantor stated that City Council awarded the bid to Place Dynamics at their meeting on February 10.
- A kick-off meeting will be held and the Board will be involved and updated as the feasibility study progresses.

b. Connected Farmington Hills

- Ms. Seimer briefly reviewed the results of the Connected Farmington Hills Business Survey with the Board. She noted that Survey Monkey does not allow the exporting of data, so to fully understand the responses she will need to extrapolate the data individually. There were 52 respondents to the survey.
- Ms. Seimer thanked Mr. Osborn for his assistance in getting the word out about the survey to Chamber membership and noted that the results may be helpful in guiding education events for the community.

BOARD MEMBER’S COMMENTS:

- Mr. Anhut gave a update about Mercedes Benz Financial Services (MBFS) and the Nissan Tax Abatement. Mr. Anhut stated that MBFS anticipates a spring groundbreaking.
- Mr. Anhut asked about the status of the Nissan Tax Abatement. Ms. Seimer replied that their abatement has been approved by City Council and will be sent to the State Tax Commission for final approval. The abatement will not go into effect until construction on the site is complete and other goals met.
- Mr. Beiermeister stated that he attended the Oakland County Business and Industry Strategic Planning Session at the end of January. The County has hired consultants to assist in framing the plan for their economic strategy and that of the Department of Economic Development and Community Affairs. Mr. Beiermeister added that the EDC may be able to get further involved in cultivating the local workforce. Chairman Cantor suggested a workforce development subcommittee for the EDC.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- None.

ADJOURNMENT:

- The next meeting of the EDC will be March 11, 2020 at 8:00 AM.

Chairman Cantor adjourned the meeting at 9:14 AM
Minutes drafted by: Samantha Seimer