

MEETING MINUTES
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
MARCH 17, 2021 8:00 AM

CALLED TO ORDER BY: The Economic Development Corporation Meeting was held electronically and called to order by Chairman Cantor at 8:04 am.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Lew Cantor (Farmington Hills, MI), Mark Zachos (Farmington Hills, MI), TR Carr (Farmington Hills, MI), Scott Elliott (Southfield, MI), Fritz Beiermeister (Farmington Hills, MI), Sam Slaughter (Farmington Hills, MI), William Hartsock (Farmington Hills, MI)

MEMBERS ABSENT: John Anhut, Kimberly Lindsey-Feagin

OTHERS PRESENT: Gary Mekjian, City Manager (Farmington Hills, MI); Ken Massey, City Council Member/EDC Liaison (Farmington Hills), Samantha Seimer, AKT Peerless (Oxford, MI), Mark Stec, City Planner (Farmington Hills, MI)

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Motion by Elliott, support by Slaughter to approve the agenda as submitted.

Yeas: CANTOR, HARTSOCK, ZACHOS, CARR, ELLIOTT, BEIERMEISTER,
SLAUGHTER
Nays: NONE
Absent: ANHUT, LINDSEY-FEAGIN
Abstentions: NONE

MOTION CARRIED 7-0

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Motion by Beiermeister, support by Carr to approve the meeting minutes from February 17, 2021 as submitted.

Yeas: CANTOR, HARTSOCK, ZACHOS, CARR, ELLIOTT, BEIERMEISTER,
SLAUGHTER
Nays: NONE
Absent: ANHUT, LINDSEY-FEAGIN
Abstentions: NONE

MOTION CARRIED 7-0

UPDATE FROM PLANNING DEPARTMENT:

- Mr. Stec gave updates from the Planning Department dating back to November.
- 38500 Nine Mile, the former swim club, being redeveloped by Pulte Homes with a proposed 28-unit detached cluster home. This redevelopment is through planning commission public hearing process, City administration has received revised plans, entering last phase to go before City Council for final approval
- 38215 Grand River used car sales lot, permitted by the zoning ordinance,
- 12 Mile and Orchard Lake Road the former Chefs table, high-end Asian restaurant, plans include revisions to parking lot, has site plan approval.
- Radisson at 12 Mile and Orchard Lake Road has Planned Unit Development (PUD) Qualification to convert hotel into senior assisted living facility. The developers are looking to work with restaurant to connect the parking lots

which would remove one curb cut from 12 Mile Road eventually. Mr. Elliott mentioned that the developers are from Bay City and are doing a great deal of development down river.

- Gas station improvement on the corner and the conversion of the Ruby Tuesday for a gas station too with carryout pizza and retail units along the side.
- There has been some interest in Roberto's restaurant, but nothing solid yet.
- The EDC raised concerns about the number of senior living units in the area and proposed.
- Rose Senior Living PUD approved and going through the remaining approval process
- Wellspring Lutheran Services at 28000 Nine Mile plans to redevelop site but, retain child services and school and add rehabilitation and recovery center
- Medical marijuana policy for Caregivers is being discussed by the Planning Commission hearing next Thursday
- Nine Mile and Haggerty, optimize eye-doctors
- Orchid ortho – expanding parking lot due to new expanding business opportunities and additional hiring.
- Mr. Stec will provide the Board with a written update of developments in Farmington Hills.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:

- Chair Cantor updated the EDC Board with news that the liquor license was approved at The Hawk
- City Council has opening for workshop, April 12th. Place Dynamics will make presentation of Phase I to Council and Council will determine if it would like to move forward to Phase II at that point.
- Chair Cantor reminded the Board that Phase II is a more finite study with business and organizational format and financial considerations and partnership identification. The discussion with Council is timely with the beginning of the development of the City's budget. Council Liaison Massey stated that City Council was supportive of the innovation center in 2019, there is one new council member who is aware and supportive.
- City Manager Mekjian and Council Liaison Massey added that the space that is earmarked for the incubator is right above the pool. It would be extremely expensive to put in infrastructure for a commercial kitchen above the pool area.
- There is an additional outstanding issue concerning property taxes depending on how the assessor classifies the space. Zoning challenge also play into the property taxes. Mr. Zachos asked about how personal property taxes will be handled at the incubator. Mr. Mekjian stated that the function of the space has to be reasonably related to the functions of the Hawk. Staff will be meeting prior to the April 12 City Council Study Session to discuss these issues.
- Mr. Zachos stated that the above concern creates an additional role that the EDC can play for small business support to help them understand how property taxes work and where they are paid to the city.
- Mr. Beiermeister asked how the EDC can have more official engagement with the innovation center. Mr. Cantor stated that phase two will identify many of the organizational questions. Ms. Seimer said that based upon her conversations with Place Dynamics and the EDC, the increased role would more than likely pertain to the EDC Board of Directors having direct oversight of the vetting process and financials of the innovation space.
- The consensus of the EDC was to make a motion prior to the April 12 City Council Study Session to formalize their engagement moving forward.

Motion by Beiermeister, support by Carr to include a provision in the final Place Dynamics Presentation to City Council on April 12, 2021 to include ongoing involvement in the operations and oversight of the future innovation center.

- Discussion on the motion; Council Liaison Massey mentioned that EDC has the ability to fundraise and depending on the structure and nature of the business the EDC involvement is synergistic with the innovation center and its success.

Yeas: CANTOR, HARTSOCK, ZACHOS, CARR, ELLIOTT, BEIERMEISTER, SLAUGHTER
Nays: NONE
Absent: ANHUT, LINDSEY-FEAGIN
Abstentions: NONE

MOTION CARRIED 7-0

REPORTS AND UPDATES:

City Manager

- Mr. Mekjian stated that Council is currently discussing how to hold town hall sessions in order to hear from folks in the marijuana industry. There are conversations happening about how to engage the public and garner input during the pandemic.
- Additionally, Farmington Hills is looking for an Assistant City Manager and Economic Development Director as a dual role. So far, the search has been unsuccessful. Ms. Seimer mentioned to check with the City of Wixom, they recently combined those two positions as well. Mr. Elliott agreed additionally stating that he has a contact at the City of Wixom.

City Council Liaison

- None

BUSINESS:

New Business

- None

Old Business:

Small Business Support

- The Small Business Support Program discussed at the January and February EDC Meetings as a partnership between the Greater Farmington Area Chamber of Commerce, Farmington DDA, and EDC is moving forward.
- An email was sent by the Chamber along with a joint press release seeking feedback from the business community about areas where we may be able to offer support. We are waiting on the results of the survey.

Mentorship Program

- Last month the EDC discussed a potential mentorship program. An informal subcommittee formed and met over the last month to provide further context to the program.
- Mr. Beiermeister offered an update to the Board. He stated that the goal of this program is to support entrepreneurs, the economic initiative by EDC and public schools for purpose of cultivating entrepreneurial spirit and success. He mentioned that the program could be a series of seminars from EDC to garner interest, include tour of innovation center.
- Clients and students who join the program could potentially be paired with entrepreneurs could potentially earn school credit.
- Additionally, the seminars could be recorded to create library of information. This could be supplemented with interviews and informational sessions with people utilizing the innovation center as well as entrepreneurs within the community.
- Students of the program could work for, and with clients of the innovation center
- Next steps for the mentorship program include fine-tuning this idea and engaging in discussions with the schools to understand their level of involvement.
- Mr. Beiermeister added that he would send a copy of subcommittee meeting discussion to the Board.
- Mr. Elliott had to leave the meeting. He noted that he had his marketing team look at the current economic development marketing flier. They did not recommend making any changes to the piece. However, there is potential to add additional information as the innovation center progresses.
- Mr. Hartsock, felt that the mentorship program as presented by Mr. Beiermeister is a great approach, fits perfectly into the mission of the EDC.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Connected Farmington Hills

- Ms. Seimer made a brief presentation about Connected Farmington Hills Initiative.

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- She reviewed that the original Connected Farmington Hills Initiative stemmed from the 2014 Oakland County Connected Vehicle Task Force. This task force was a series of stakeholder engagement sessions that eventually produced a 2017 report highlighting the marketability and feasibility of a Connected Vehicle program in the County.
- In 2018, P3Mobility was selected to put together a Connected and Autonomous Vehicle pilot project which included public deployment of dedicated short range communication infrastructure and connected vehicle technologies on 12 intersections with a study pool of 250 local motorists. The goal of the pilot program was to demonstrate the technology feasibility and test potential customer adoption of these services. Ms. Seimer added that to date, the pilot program has not been complete.
- The conversations at the county sparked interest with the EDC about how to engage our business community working on these technologies. Over the last two years, a subcommittee of EDC Board Members and City Staff broke down the Farmington Hills Connected Initiative into three categories: Business Survey, Connected and Autonomous Vehicle Technologies and Marketing/Brand Awareness.
- The first step in the program was to identify if Connected Farmington Hills is something of interest to the community. A survey was conducted in partnership with the Greater Farmington Area Chamber of Commerce. The results showed interest in more engagement and a business-oriented newsletter.
- City staff further involved the business community through a targeted business retention and attraction strategy, highlighting Farmington Hills as a hub for connected and autonomous vehicle technologies. City staff paired businesses together and with the Road Commission of Oakland County to test technologies and utilize public roadways and infrastructure throughout the City.
- Based on the results of the survey and retention and attraction program, staff drafted a layout of the Connected Farmington Hills Newsletter and has compiled an email marketing list of over 400 businesses. The goals of this newsletter include increased communication with the Farmington Hills website and available resources, shared information and success stories, a platform for sharing information and providing relevant industry information and finally increasing Economic Development Corporation branding and awareness.
- Ms. Seimer will provide the Board with a copy of the presentation.

BOARD MEMBER’S COMMENTS:

- None

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- None

ADJOURNMENT:

- The next meeting of the EDC is scheduled for April 17, 2021 at 8:00 AM.

Motion by Zachos, support by Beiermeister to adjourn the meeting at 9:01 AM

Yeas: CANTOR, HARTSOCK, ZACHOS, CARR, ELLIOTT, BEIERMEISTER,
SLAUGHTER

Nays: NONE

Absent: ANHUT, LINDSEY-FEAGIN

Abstentions: NONE

MOTION CARRIED 7-0

Minutes drafted by: Samantha Seimer