

MEETING MINUTES  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION  
SEPTEMBER 15, 2021, 8:00 AM

**CALLED TO ORDER BY:** The Economic Development Corporation Meeting was called to order by Chairman Cantor at 8:02 am.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Lew Cantor, Scott Elliott, Fritz Beiermeister, Sam Slaughter, William Hartsock, T. R. Carr

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Kimberly Lindsey-Feagin, Mark Zachos

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Ken Massey, City Council Member/EDC Liaison, Samantha Seimer, AKT Peerless; Joe Valentine, Assistant City Manager; Diane Holcomb, Resident; Mark Brucki, Resident; Calvin Cupidore, Resident; Norm Soloman, Resident; Danielle Ware, Resident.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

Chair Cantor requested Old Business be moved before New Business on the agenda as presented Motion by Carr, support by Elliott to approve the agenda as amended.

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

MOTION CARRIED 6-0

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Motion by Elliott, support by Beiermeister to approve the meeting minutes from May 19, 2021, as submitted.

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

MOTION CARRIED 6-0

**CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:**

- Chair Cantor invited Mr. Carr to give an update about the Innovation Center.

## **Innovation Center Update**

- Mr. Carr updated the Board that Public Sector Consultants has been retained to do Phase II of the Feasibility Study for the Innovation Center at the Hawk.
- Goals of the program include determination if innovation center is programmatically and financially stable and eventually will become revenue positive; assessment of current facility and cost of buildout, determination of business support services; estimate of capital and operational costs; marketing plan.
- Deliverables of the study include market demand assessment with relation to other innovation spaces in the area, assessment of the physical structure, preliminary financial analysis
- The final deliverable is the business plan which will include: an executive summary; market sectors; governance; staffing requirements; equipment needs, a financial analysis; and marketing and communication strategy.
- Mr. Carr added that PSC plans to be directly engaged with the EDC and will provide an update at the October meeting.
- The goal is to have a presentation ready for review at City Council's January goals and budget objectives meeting.

## **REPORTS AND UPDATES:**

### **Assistant City Manager**

- Mr. Valentine informed the board that the city is working to fill the Economic Development Director position. The city plans to conduct follow up interviews soon and provide a recommendation next month.
- The city will be undergoing an update of its Vision and Master plan. The EDC will be involved in the process of updating each of those plans.
- Mr. Valentine informed the EDC that a company named SciFi Networks, will be bringing the first broadband system in Michigan to Farmington and Farmington Hills. This will be a connection to every business and home in the City and Farmington with infrastructure installation expected to be complete between 2022-2023. The company places the fiberoptic lines and providers lease space.
- This represents a \$150 million dollar investment and there is no cost to the city. The internet speeds will surpass what is available to residents and businesses currently. This program will have the ability to lower rates in the area as there will be no infrastructure cost to the network provider. Mr. Valentine offered to share more information as it becomes available. He added that the Metro Act permits the City to allow this infrastructure to be placed within Right of Way.

### **City Council Liaison**

- Mr. Massey reiterated that they City's budget process begins in January with a goals and objectives meeting with administration to set forth a plan for the upcoming year. There is a specific focus on goals that require a funding allocation. From there, these goals are sent to each respective department and brought together into the full budget. City Council reviews the full budget in May and approves the first meeting of June.
- Mr. Massey states that the innovation center at the Hawk is unique. People and companies need innovation space and what really sets the Hawk apart from other spaces in the area are that the area set aside is in the former high school physics labs. He noted that the EDC is a key component of the success of a long-term, sustainable economy and is uniquely positioned to seek grants, and support initiatives and economic development functions of the community.
- Chair Cantor added that it will be important to track and understand the overall positive impact in terms of new businesses and jobs created that can be tracked to the Hawk Innovation Center.

- Mr. Massey and Chair Cantor thanked the guests present for attending the EDC meeting and encouraged their involvement in the board regardless of whether he or she chooses to become a voting member. Chair Cantor spoke to the long-term commitment of Ms. Holcomb and thanked her for being a consistent non-member contributor. Chair Cantor spoke about a plaque that will be presented at Mr. Anhut's memorial service with a permanent bronze copy to be placed on the bridge at the West entrance to the third floor of The Hawk.

**BUSINESS:**

**Old Business  
Mentorship Program**

- Mr. Beiermeister stated that the school district has a new superintendent, and he is interested in beginning meetings pertaining to the mentorship program. There is a lot of energy around this program from previous leadership and he hopes that the momentum will continue forward with the new school administration

**Connected Farmington Hills Newsletter**

- Chair Cantor stated that the Connected Farmington Hills Newsletter was a program initiated by committee a few years prior. The goals are to provide the business community with information needed, programs and resources available as well as provide a platform to highlight businesses.
- Mr. Valentine and Mr. Massey noted that it will be important to create a fair and transparent program where businesses self-select to be part of the program, therefore the city is not directly picking and choosing who is highlighted and promoted. This can also be done through assistance from the Chamber of Commerce.

**New Business:**

- Chair Cantor informed the board of some upcoming initiatives and areas of interest that will be explored at future EDC meetings including the following: building relationships with other relevant boards/commissions, doing a business vacancy survey; searching out assistance needed in the community and resources available to aid to business reopening, possible supplemental property uses post-Covid, etc. Also, the EDC needs to search funding opportunities (grants, etc.)

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

- None.

**BOARD MEMBER'S COMMENTS:**

- Mr. Massey informed the board that as certain topics arise with City Council that involve ordinance changes, the EDC may want to be involved. It is anticipated that these types of requests for involvement will go through the City's Economic Development Director along with updates from the Planning Commission.
- Chair Cantor asked about involvement and crossover with the Grand River Corridor Improvement Authority (CIA). Ms. Seimer added that the CIA will be meeting on Monday, September 20, 2021. Mr. Massey serves on the CIA and can be a conduit between the two City Boards and Commissions.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

- Visitor, Dr. Cupidore asked about the type of businesses that we are looking to attract to the innovation center. Mr. Massey stated that businesses sought for the innovation center include startups and early-stage businesses. Chair Cantor added those that need more space will be considered with the goal of eventually growing the business to locate within the community.
- Visitor, Ms. Ware asked if the city will be setting specific rates with the new broadband network. Mr. Valentine responded that the city has no control or impact on the rates offered by providers. Mr. Elliott added that the increased broadband access and competition may lower the rate.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

- The next meeting of the EDC is scheduled for the third Wednesday in October 2021 at 8:00 AM.

Motion by Slaughter, support by Hartsock to adjourn the meeting at 9:23 AM

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

Nays: NONE

Absent: LINDSEY-FEAGIN, ZACHOS

Abstentions: NONE

MOTION CARRIED 6-0

Minutes drafted by: Samantha R. Seimer