

**MINUTES
TOWN OF SAN ANSELMO
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
Zoom Meeting**

January 12, 2021, 8:45 a.m.

Committee Members Present: Chair Jessica Rising, Rebecca Bugas, Rich Burns, Benedetto Cico, Jaime Ginsberg, Kim Pipkin, Brian Stewart, Kelley Warner.

Committee Member Absent: None.

Others Present: Mayor Colbert, Town Manager Donery, Director of Building and Public Works Condry, Director of Community Services Mauk, Planning Director Semonian, Assistant Public Works Director Schneider, Town Clerk Kacmar, and Associate Planner Sarah Price, Fran Farmer, Belinda Wickwire, Jennifer Grenier Selvig, John Wright, Nancy Altman, Pat Townsley and Richard Berkson.

Call to Order: Chair Rising called the meeting to order at 8:45 a.m. and welcomed audience members.

Approval of Meeting Minutes: M/s Warner/Ginsberg to approve the December 8, 2020, meeting minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

Open Time for Public Expression: Mayor Brian Colbert thanked the committee for their service and asked to be notified if he can be of any assistance to the EDC.

Review EDC Accomplishments for 2020

Rising presented PowerPoint slides to recap the EDC results and accomplishments for 2020 including: 1.) beautification projects (Median Project, Red Hill/Miracle Mile and Signage, including monument signs and wayfinding signs); 2.) Property Owner Questionnaire (paused due to COVID-19); 3.) Parking Study; 4.) Formation of emergency EDC COVID-19 Business Task Force and many actions to support businesses during COVID-19; and 5.) Small Business Saturday and Holiday 2020 support. Bugas reported on the holiday shopping evening at Red Hill Shopping Center. Fran Farmer thanked the EDC for their efforts to support local business.

Business License List Project Update

Rising reported on the updates made to the Town business license forms in order to improve communication with businesses. Semonian indicated businesses were asked for additional contact information and also information on business types. No one wished to comment.

Update on Website Business Resource Pages

Rising reported on the update of the Business section of the Town website. EDC members were asked to provide Rising with any comments and suggestions for improvement.

Discuss Potential Date or Time Change for Meetings

The EDC considered if they should change the date or time of the meetings in order to make them more accessible to more business owners, residents, and potential EDC members. Warner suggested they consider doing half of the meetings in the evening and half in the morning, or to hold subcommittee meetings at different times. Donery indicated the current time was selected to allow business owners to attend prior to opening their shops. Merchants had indicated in the past that evening meetings were not desirable. There are numerous staff assisting with the committee that may have evening meeting conflicts. The EDC discussed if online meetings would continue. Some committee members were opposed to an evening meeting time.

The EDC agreed to maintain the meeting day/time on the second Tuesday of the month from 8:45 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. The EDC will collect more information from members, constituents and new residents and consider the item again. No one from the public wished to comment.

Discuss 2021-2022 EDC Economic Development Plan Action Plan

Rising recommended that each member reviews the action item that they are responsible for, develop a timeline for action, identify any necessary resources, and report back at the February meeting. She noted that the EDC agreed that every member would lead an action item and the strength of the EDC is everyone's participation and work on items. There were no public comments.

Discuss Process for Economic Development Plan Update

Rising requested the EDC to review the Economic Development Plan and note what is good, what needs to be changed, and what is missing. A separate meeting will be scheduled to edit and fine tune the document.

Ginsberg suggested the plan should have a stated commitment to keep the restaurant businesses that we have. He would like the EDC to consider how delivery services are affecting our local businesses, and traffic in our community by outside businesses. He warned of business closure due to outside food delivery services. Cico believed people will return to restaurants after COVID 19.

Colbert indicated the County committees are considering immediate relief and also having conversations about longer term assistance. Keep Marin Working (business and labor leaders from Marin and Sonoma) are looking at how to improve the business climate in 5-10 years. He suggested EDC note any issues they want County and multi-county initiatives to address so that he can communicate back to the committees.

Condry was concerned about the influx of Amazon vehicles that speed on streets, park on sidewalks, park on Drake, and have unmarked vehicles. He thought there should be regulation of some sort, possibly at a broader level.

Townsley expressed concern with the businesses that are not open and questioned how the Town can hold them accountable to be open and sharing with the consumer what their hours and purpose are. Some unused spaces could be used for something tangible, usable, and with economic viability.

Berkson noted that the Action Plan is a document separate from the Economic Development Plan. The Action Plan includes goals and action items that they can revisit due to COVID-19. There may be a need for a subcommittee to focus on short term issues like delivery issues and work with staff and stakeholders. The Economic Development Plan provides a broad framework to improve the Town's economy and help businesses in the long term, which will make the town a better place for residents. The original Plan was completed 3 years ago, and it is time to update it. He suggested targeting the plan update by the Fall to gather more information on the business mix, updated Census data, and other background research, and have a better idea of where we are at with COVID-19. The finance advisory committee will look at revenue enhancements that may be dedicated to improving the business environment.

Pipkin indicated she joined the EDC to work on initiatives to get new businesses to the town. Berkson indicated a goal in the Action Plan is to identify the sorts of business that, in the long term, the town wants to attract, which will have implications on land use, planning issues and targeted marketing.

Berkson was thanked for his work on the plan.

COVID 19 Status

Colbert reported that the Marin Economic Recovery Task force with Supervisors Connelly and Arnold have worked to package \$1,000,000 in grants for small business in Marin. 80% of funds will go to San Rafael and Novato. The funds available per business will depend on the number of applications. He also reported there is a longer term effort to try to capture money from the federal government. He suggested the Town seek to be more like Yountville business district. The Town has a lot of multi-unit housing near downtown to give a more diverse economic mix for food businesses.

Colbert reported that the Mill Valley City Council will urge Governor Newsom to open outdoor dining. He will ask the Town Council to discuss this. Ginsberg was concerned with the Town Council taking a position that it is safe to dine outdoors and cited a national study that indicated 72% of COVID-19 patients have participated in outdoor dining. He noted that those that eat at restaurants have other behavior that makes them more likely to contract COVID-19. He was concerned with encouraging this use, which may not lead to restaurant reopening. He suggested waiting until Spring. Cico supported the Town taking a position in support of outdoor dining as he did not believe it increases infection.

Requests for future agenda items Rising indicated EDC can email any future agenda items to her.

Adjourn

Rising thanked everyone who attended the meeting and everyone for their service. Rising adjourned the meeting at 10:15 a.m. The next meeting is scheduled for February 9, 2021 at 8:45 a.m.