



TOWN COUNCIL JOINT MEETING WITH FRONT ROYAL EDA MINUTES

Monday, October 17 2022

Town Hall Conference Room

The following minutes are a summary of items on the agenda.

This meeting may be viewed in its entirety by accessing the video of the same date online via the Town's website at www.frontroyalva.com.

ROLL CALL COUNCIL PRESENT: Mayor Chris W. Holloway
Vice Mayor Lori A. Cockrell
Councilman Gary L. Gillispie
Councilman Zachary Jackson
Councilwoman Amber F. Morris
Councilman Duane R. "Skip" Rogers
Councilman Letasha T. Thompson

ROLL CALL FRED A PRESENT: Chairman Rick Novak
Vice Chairman Mark Tapsak
Director Nick Bass
Director James Crowell, Jr.
Director David Gedney

ABSENT: Director Isaac Rushing
Director C. Frank Stankiewicz

STAFF PRESENT: Clerk of Council Tina L. Presley, Interim Town Manager Kathleen Leidich, Deputy Town Attorney George Sonnett, Finance Director BJ Wilson, and member of the press.

DISCUSSION PERTAINING TO THE DIRECTION AND SUPPORT OF THE FRONT ROYAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (FREDA)

Interim Town Manager Kathy Leidich gave Council and FREDA an overview of why this meeting was called and to clarify what direction Council wanted moving forward. Council confirmed that the boards and commissions that Town staff support currently were Planning Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA), Board of Architectural Review (BAR), Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee (ESAC), Tourism Committee, Front Royal Economic Development Authority (FREDA) and Town Council. They confirmed that staff members prepared and distributed agendas and minutes for each board.

There was much discussion on what was needed for FREDA to complete their setup. Chairman Novak asked for consensus on whether Council wanted to continue with FREDA. Council advised that they did want to continue with FREDA, but preliminary processes needed to be worked out first.

Councilman Rogers asked why FREDA was under discussion tonight. Council gave him an overview of the Warren County EDA (WCEDA) scandal/crisis and the current situation Warren County was in which gave Council reasons to move forward with their own EDA. Councilman Gillispie voiced frustration that the

taxpayers were paying an EDA [WCEDA] that is bankrupt, and that Council needed to look forward with the current FREDa. Councilwoman Thompson explained that after the former Town Manager left it was discovered that specific legal issues were not completed. Vice Mayor Cockrell noted that Council could not wait until the County “got their act together”. Council agreed that what currently needed answers were setup of FREDa, the Executive Director position, legal counsel, support staff and budget.

Deputy Town Attorney noted that the legal format of FREDa was approved by the General Assembly through special legislation due to the crisis with WCEDA. He explained that he was brought into the FREDa situation in July [2022] and some things “jumped out at him” such as conflicts between the approved by-laws of FREDa and the Town Code.

Director Gedney pointed out that the Chairman of the WCEDA attend a FREDa meeting and advised them that there were legal issues with selling properties. It was noted that if any properties were sold the monies were required to go towards a judgement. Mr. Sonnett explained that the judgement placed a lien on all property owned by the County and those properties jointly owned by the Town and County.

The discussion turned to support staff and Chairman Novak noted that he hoped to rely on someone to assist FREDa. Clerk of Council Tina Presley advised that she attended every meeting, prepared and distributed agendas, prepared minutes, formatted by-laws and formatted Town Code amendments. She noted that supporting FREDa was extra work and would like to be compensated as such. There were numerous concerns with having the Town’s Town Attorney as legal counsel for FREDa, noting possible lawsuit concerns. Finance Director BJ Wilson advised that he attended about half the meetings.

The meeting concluded and both entities agreed to have Ms. Leidich research the various concerns mentioned and to come back with a report in another joint meeting.

FREDa adjourned at 8:10pm

The Mayor adjourned at 8:14pm

Approved by Town Council

Date: -----