



FRONT ROYAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (FREDA) MEETING MINUTES

Monday, November 6, 2023, at 12:00pm

Town Hall Upstairs 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 PRESENT: Chairman Richard M. Novak
Vice Chair Mark A. Tapsak
Director Thomas Eshelman
Director Aiden Miller
Director David Gedney
Director Frank Stankiewicz
Director Nicholas C. Bass- absent

SUPPORT STAFF PRESENT: Town Manager Joseph Waltz
Administrative Assistant Hillary Wilfong
IT Director Charles Hutchings
Planning and Zoning Director Lauren Kopishke
Manger of Community and Tourism Elizabeth Lewis

Approval of Minutes

Director Tapsak moved to approve the minutes with the correction of a misspelled word on the second page, seconded by Director Miller to approve the minutes of October 2, 2023.

Presentation of Town Comprehensive Plan with Focus on Economic Development: Director of Planning and Zoning, Lauren Kopishke, presented the Town's Comprehensive Plan. Ms. Kopishke shared that the last adopted Comprehensive Plan was in 1998, therefore a new one was needed and conducted, and finally adopted by Council in August 2023. Within the comprehensive plan is a strategic plan for community economic development. The full report is located on the Front Royal Town's website under Planning and Zoning.

Chairman Novak advised that a lot of focus has been on housing, did the Comprehensive Plan take into account the economic development from that standpoint and revenue from businesses that could generate for the Town's taxable income. Ms. Kopishke answered that the Comprehensive plan analysis is not for that process.

Chairman Novak asked if anyone could answer a question regarding the town budget; how much comes from businesses, residential and tourism. Chairman Novak noted that the information would be helpful to guide initiatives. Mr. Waltz will follow up with a breakdown ideally next meeting.

Presentation of Town Tourism Efforts: The Manager of Community and Tourism, Elizabeth Lewis shared her duties of her position and what she oversees. Ms. Lewis presented FREDa with a brief report of tourism statistics from National Park Services, the economic and fiscal impacts of Virginia State Parks report of 2022, along with the County Spending and Economic Impact report from Symphony Tourism Economics.

Director Tapsak asked if most of our revenue comes from tourism, Ms. Lewis is unsure of that information and will research the answer.

Chairman Novak asked if the Town and County collect lodging taxes from short term rentals; Mr. Waltz answered yes, the Town is working administratively on the issue of locating and correcting all the issues with zoning.

Old Business

Update on Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and revised by-laws: Mr. Waltz is still preparing a Memorandum of Understanding with Town of Front Royal. Mr. Waltz would like a clear outline to determine the level of support from the Town to FREDa. Mr. Waltz will work on having a rough draft to present to the Board, at least a week before the next meeting, allowing the Board to review the MOU and how it will coincide with the by-laws.

New Business

New Name/Re-branding- The Board discussed at the last meeting about having a different name to help the citizens know we are a different entity from the Warren County Economic Development Authority. Mr. Waltz shared that he had not yet received any new name ideas and advised the Board to submit ideas prior to the December meeting, allowing a list to be compiled so we can discuss and move forward. Mr. Waltz elaborated that the name change would have to go through the Town Council and be changed in the by-laws.

Chairman Novak advised that the Board also come up with a mission statement, that encompasses the Town's objectives which could help with a new name.

Open Discussion

Port of Virginia Seminar on Thursday, October 26th Unfortunately no Board members were able to attend however, Ms. Lewis attended and shared that economic impact of the port itself, she was impressed about site selection, and a third-party company they use and how they presented what they look for in site selection. Ms. Lewis will try to get the slide show to share with the Board.

Director Eshleman asked Mr. Waltz if our objective is to make suggestions to Town Council. Mr. Waltz advised that is the plan, once we have outlined goals and our MOU, the Board should have a more clear direction.

Next Meeting December 4, 2023, at Noon.

Adjourn

Chairman Novak asked for a motion to adjourn at 12:37pm, motion made by Director Eshelman and seconded by Director Miller.