



Front Royal Economic Development Authority

“Business Development Board” (BDB)

Work Session Meeting

Monday, March 18, 2024 @ 12:30pm

Town Hall East Conference Room

1. Roll Call – *Hillary Wilfong*
2. Goal Setting Discussion
 - A. Infrastructure
 - Downtown Parking
 - Traffic Studies
 - B. Existing Business
 - Survey Questions
 - C. New Business
 - Identify Target Sectors
 - D. Workforce Development
 - Site Tours of Blue Ridge Technical Center and Laurel Ridge Community College
 - E. Asset Development
 - Inventory of Assets
3. Next Meeting – *April 1, 2024 @ _____ pm*
4. Adjourn



FRONT ROYAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (FREDA) MEETING MINUTES

Monday, March 4, 2024, 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
Director Aiden Miller
Director David Gedney
Director Frank Stankiewicz
Director Nicholas C. Bass
Director Robert Elliott
Director Thomas Eshelman
Director Frank Stankiewicz

SUPPORT STAFF PRESENT: Town Manager Joseph Waltz
Director of Community Development and Tourism Elizabeth Lewis
Executive Administrative Assistant Hillary Wilfong
IT Director Charles Hutchings

Approval of Minutes

Director Stankiewicz moved to approve the minutes from February 5th meeting and the work session on February 12th, seconded by Director Bass.

Vote: Yes- Novak, Eshleman, Miller, Gedney, Stankiewicz, Bass, Elliott

No-N/A

Absent- N/A

Abstain N/A

Old Business

Mr. Waltz shared that Town Council approved the MOU for FREDA, and Chairman Novak will need to officially sign the document.

Mr. Waltz advised that some changes still need to be made to the Bylaws and Town Code Chapter 16 he is actively working on the by-laws and will submit to the Board before the next meeting of the revisions.

Continued Goal Setting

Ms. Lewis reviewed the goals from the initial goal setting work session; and asked if anyone had anything else to add, Ms. Lewis started with the first goal; Infrastructure. Continue to support the growth of the Inland Port as it relates to the Town. Chairman Novak brought up parking downtown, Ms. Lewis advised that in 2019 a parking study was done and will provide the Board with the study prior to next meeting.

Director Eshleman discussed having an analysis of traffic flow, as there is specific intersections where during peak times, it makes traveling difficult, and our roads do not accommodate our current traffic flow and concerns for future growth in our town.

Next, Ms. Lewis discussed existing business goal, the Board agreed that we need to formulate questions to survey current businesses, Ms. Lewis asked the Board to submit questions to her prior to the next meeting, allowing her to have the Boards questions combined to initiate the draft of the survey. The Board also agreed that having a “tool kit” for new businesses, with a step-by-step plan, along with start up incentives. Chairman Novak asked if we can determine what other EDA Board’s are doing and build from theirs. Ms. Lewis advised that is a great idea, we can also use our survey to assist with our resources.

The next goal Ms. Lewis reviewed is new businesses, which the Board agreed that the survey and tool kit will assist with new businesses, also providing information on our website.

Workforce is the fourth goal that Ms. Lewis opened the discussion up to the Board. Director Stankiewicz shared that he is unsure what the technical centers and college courses offer and their availability, he also shared that he knows from being a small business owner the struggle it can be to find trained staff locally. Ms. Lewis will work on setting up tours for Blue Ridge Technical Center and Laurel Ridge Community College allowing the Board to see what courses they offer.

Lastly, the Board reviewed their asset development goal as a supportive role from FREDa. The Board agreed it is important and believes from the survey they will gain vital information regarding what the businesses are looking for.

Chairman Novak advised the Board that regular monthly meetings will likely not be enough since this is a new board, and suggested meeting every two weeks to help ensure we reach our goals.

Mr. Waltz advised that the Board start working on a survey for the existing business owners, and for the workforce development, the next step would be the touring the local workforce training facilities such as Blue Ridge Technical Center and Laurel Ridge Community College. Mr. Waltz advised that he will provide the parking study prior to the next meeting, and lastly the reviewing of the inventory of current properties in Front Royal which Ms. Lewis has started working on.

Ms. Lewis distributed a list of properties available that she was able to locate and provided to the Board. Ms. Lewis also shared with the Board a retail map of the current shopping centers with vacancies and pad sights.

New Business

Review of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Ms. Lewis hared that herself, Mr. Waltz and Chairman Novak attended the Northern Shenandoah Regional Valley Commission stake holder meeting. They are starting the process of repulling their development strategy and are looking for input from our board. When Ms. Lewis receives more output information from this study she will share with the Board. The current presentation that was presented was completed in 2019. Mr. Waltz shared their goals which align with our own Board, Chairman Novak viewed the meeting as a possible resource for FREDa.

Open Discussion

Chairman Novak also shared that on February 27th Rob McDougall held a meeting at Royal Cinemas on his plans to open an art center in the Murphy Building. Director Miller attended and shared his thoughts on the new art center and how it will provide great opportunity and diversity downtown.

Next Meeting

The Board agreed to have a work session meeting on March 18th at 12:30 to follow up on the goals.

The next regular meeting for FREDa will be April 1, 2024 at noon.

Adjourn

Chairman Novak asked for a motion to adjourn at 1:04pm, motion made by Director Miller and seconded by Director Eshleman.

DRAFT