

CITY OF FREEPORT
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
200 West 2nd Street, Freeport, Texas 77541

STATE OF TEXAS)
)
COUNTY OF BRAZORIA)
)
CITY OF FREEPORT)
)

BE IT REMEMBERED that the Economic Development Corporation of the City of Freeport met in regular session Tuesday, August 14, 2018 at 6:00 pm in the City Hall Conference Room, located at 200 West 2nd Street, Freeport, TX, for the purpose of considering the agenda items.

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD PRESENT: Quorum Present

Jeff Pena
Brad Stephens
Mingo Marquez
Ed Garcia

Jennifer Hawkins: Director
Chris Duncan: Attorney

Visitors in Attendance:
Melanie Oldham

1. OPEN SESSION:

Attorney Duncan opened the meeting at 6:19 PM. Quorum was present.

2. Citizens Comments:

Ms. Oldham presented a book about Economic Development with her recommendation to read. Attorney Duncan stated the same

information can be obtained through PDF from the TML website or Texas State Comptrollers website.

3. Approval of Minutes for August 7, 2018.

Upon motion by Director Stephens and second by Director Pena it was VOTED: to accept Minutes from August 14th meeting.

VOTE: Yea 4 No 0 Motion prevailed.

4. Discuss Development Opportunities for Fiscal 2018-2019:

Attorney Duncan stated one of the goals of economic development is job creation. He went on to say that jobs are plentiful and perhaps we should also consider quality of life issues such as parks, etc.

Director Garcia said we also need to concentrate on business retention. Several board members suggested strongly that Freeport needs its own Chamber of Commerce as our needs for advertising are not being adequately met by the current Chamber.

Attorney Duncan went on to say that Freeport has too many problems to be addressed in one project. And asked “How can we get the highest return on project investment”? Director Pena said we should concentrate on four areas:

- Housing
- Building Relationships with Corporations
- Small Business Owners
- Tourism

The board agreed and Director Marquez added quality of life to the list. Director Garcia stated he would like to see more transparency from city administration. Attorney Duncan suggested that EDC give a verbal report to council once a month so they are fully aware of our status.

Attorney Duncan explained the usefulness of a TIRZ (Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone) possibly at some point in the future. Director Stephens suggested branding in the form of a hip, surf vibe. Attorney Duncan asked each board member what ideas they had for development.

Pena:

Signage for “Freeport Beach” at entrance of beach. If City implements a fee for beach entrance perhaps a beach control for

littering could be implemented, and local industry could be involved in Adopt a Beach programs and scholarship programs for volunteers. Director Pena suggested landscaping, palm trees (brand as a coastal town), and colored lights on bridges would all bring a sense of community and uniqueness to Freeport.

Marquez:

An entertainment district, possibly downtown. Possibly EDC could build and lease out.

Stephens:

Stated that since Freeport is a noted fishing town we should have a store that supplies fishing needs. He suggested a souvenir shop similar to those in Galveston with "Freeport" brand. Director Stephens suggested a 'Wake Nation' would be successful here.

Attorney Duncan added that an Urban Air would do well here, too.

Duncan:

Cantilevered walkway around certain areas of Brazos River. In order to bring more families into town, we need safety, good schools, and opportunities for kids and young adults. Attorney Duncan suggested something novel for families with special rewards for children. He said green pathways could be created from least used existing roads, kids would wear a wrist band and swipe it electronically through a system that keeps track of child's swipes or 'points'. A child can get free snacks, etc. at the end of the pathway in a technology center with very large viewing screen (parents can enjoy also). As kids get older they can get points for volunteer work, and other civic activities where those who excel can receive scholarships, their activities could even be referenced on college and job applications.

Hawkins:

Increasingly uncomfortable with solely relying on sales tax for EDC'S sole source of revenue, especially since sales tax was down 25% this year. She suggested investments in buildings in and around downtown that could be revitalized, or torn down, rebuilt and leased out. She also stated that while the community seems to be less at odds under Mayor Brimage's leadership, the future is always uncertain and wants EDC to have a broader, more positive impact on the city. She suggested the purchase of 227 W. Broad. The building is in the 'downtown area' and could house up to 20-30

leasable spaces. It also has a full kitchen and outdoor space that could be used for dining, etc. The building is over 7,000 sq ft and has a triple garage, fence on rollers and the entire complex is in good shape. Hawkins said several people have approached her after the success of Lucy Goose and Roc's American Diner about doing business downtown but they couldn't afford the cost of a rundown building and the cost of bringing it up to code and aesthetic standards already set by businesses operating downtown. She feels the purchase of 227 W. Broad would supply entrepreneurs with the space they need at a cost they can afford.

Open Session closed at 9:21 pm.

Executive Session opened at 9:22 pm.

Returned to Open session at 10:01 pm

A motion was made by Director Marquez and a second by Director Garcia that EDC will retain engineer to review all plans before construction by Realty World begins. IT WAS VOTED:

Yes 4 No 0

Meeting Adjourned 10:03

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Hawkins

Jennifer Hawkins
Executive Director