

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

January 12, 2024

A special strategy meeting of the Economic Development Authority (EDA), of Stafford County, Virginia, was held at the Virginia Smart Community Testbed, 2143 Richmond Hwy, Stafford, VA 22554 with a virtual option on Friday, January 12, 2024.

1. CALL TO ORDER AND OPENING REMARKS

This meeting was called to order by Mr. Howard Owen at 11:00 AM. A quorum was present and accounted for.

Members

Howard Owen, Chairman
Heather Hagerman, Vice-Chairman
Jack Rowley, Treasurer - Virtual
Price Jett - Virtual
Danielle Davis - Virtual
Marlon Wilson
Jeff Roosa - Virtual

ED/EDA Staff Present

Joey Peppersack
Josh Summits
Liz Barber
Dale Hendon
Linzy Browne

Also Present

Jennifer Morgan	RIoT
Tom Snyder	RIoT
Rachel Newberry	RIoT

- A. Mr. Owen opened up the strategy session by thanking members for attending and highlighting the importance of periodically having an open dialog regarding the work the EDA chooses to take on. Mr. Owen stated that the EDA's success is based on a series of partnerships to include the partnership with the Economic Development Department and RIoT among many others. He also opened this meeting with two caveats that the EDA will need to consider as they move forward. The first is the change in Board leadership at the County and how that may impact strategic direction. The second is an MOU with the EDA and Stafford County to support the operations of the EDA.
- B. Ms. Browne shared a toolkit put together for the EDA Directors with marketing and reference materials, details on EDA accomplishments, By-Laws, and other materials.

2. MISSION AND VISION REVIEW

- A. Mr. Owen shared the EDA's current Mission and Vision with some general thoughts.
- B. Ms. Browne noted that the last time the EDA reviewed the statements was in 2018. She asked Directors to make sure they align with where the EDA desires to go over the next few years.

Stafford County Economic Development Authority

- C. Mr. Roosa offered initial comments to flip the vision and the mission in the order they are displayed. Further, he wanted to make sure that vision and mission tie into the strategic goals and create synergy with the Board of Supervisors.
- D. Mr. Jett suggested that the Mission is broad and could benefit from some strategic focus and alignment with the County's mission/goals.
- E. After additional discussion the group agreed that there needed to be further review of the Mission, Vision, and Values and they would provide feedback accordingly. Ms. Barber also stated that she would share the County Strategic Plan as well.

3. GOALS

- A. Mr. Owen asked each member for a few specific goals.
 - Mr. Jett stated that there are both internal and external goals.
 - Internal being focused on improving the EDA and BOS partnership.
 - Secondly is a focus on businesses that will support and improve the quality of life in Stafford
 - Mr. Rowley reiterated Mr. Jett's comments and clarified that improving the BOS relationship is a high priority. Mr. Roosa added his agreement as well.
 - Ms. Davis said the timing of the joint meetings with the BOS is too infrequent and we should realign to get the two groups together more often.
- B. Mr. Wilson brought up the discussion of restaurants as a strategic goal.
 - Mr. Owen stated that the difficulty is that retail brands are not looking for incentives or waiting on a phone call. They have formulas and specific metrics that they look for and that is the only item that dictates their next location.
 - Mr. Hendon stated that part of the issue is how we phrase and approach the issue. We have traditionally characterized the general desire for restaurants as a business attraction effort. The reality is that this is better resolved by talking about and thinking about this in terms of entrepreneurial development. We have gotten off the mark when we talk about attracting national brands when we should be talking about generating genuine experiences locally through entrepreneurial creativity.
 - Ms. Morgan suggested the EDA consider a food hall concept.
 - Ms. Barber suggested that there may be an EDA discussion to develop incentives or initiatives and bring them to the BOS to align with the EDA and build trust.

4. COMMITTEE GOALS

- A. Mr. Owen asked each Committee to convene and discuss goals for the upcoming year, as the EDA is not all in person. These can be both recurring goals so static goals for each year.
- B. During a group discussion the EDA put together these broad categories:
 - *Board As a Whole:*
 - Attract and Retain Businesses – Retail/Experience Economy
 - Tight partnership between EDA and County – MOU, Regular/More Meetings between BOS and EDA
 - *Loan Committee:*
 - Loan Pool/Expansion/Capital
 - Sustaining funding for the EDA (Community Partner Funding)
 - *Technology Committee:*

Stafford County Economic Development Authority

- Grant funding - GoVA Implementation
- Sustaining Funding for the Testbed/Clarification
- Broadband Funding – BEAD
- *Property:*
 - CPACE
 - Food Hall or Experience Concepts
 - Destination Stafford PPP
 - Land Inventory
- *Business Resources:*
 - Community request that meets the mission of the EDA (application/guidelines)
 - Jump-starting businesses
 - Communicate the value of incentives for economic growth

5. **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the EDA, the EDA did adjourn at approximately 1:15 P.M. The next Regular Meeting will be in person at the Stafford County Government Center, 1300 Courthouse Rd, Stafford, VA 22554.

MINUTES APPROVED BY:



Howard Owen
EDA Chairman

MINUTES SUBMITTED BY:



Dale Hendon
EDA Secretary