

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

February 9, 2024

The regular meeting of the Economic Development Authority (EDA), of Stafford County, Virginia, was held at the George L. Gordon Jr. Government Center, 1300 Courthouse Rd, Stafford, VA 22554 with a virtual option on Friday, February 9, 2024.

1. CALL TO ORDER

This meeting was called to order by Mr. Howard Owen at 9:00 AM. A quorum was present and accounted for.

Members

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

ED/EDA Staff Present

Liz Barber
Dale Hendon
Linzy Browne
Josh Summits
Joey Peppersack
Christine Mulrooney

Also Present

Jennifer Morgan, RIoT
Chris McNamara, VHDA
Laura Sellers, Planning Commission

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. February 9, 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes. Mr. Owen opened up the discussion on the minutes. Ms. Hagerman moved to approve the minutes for January 12, 2024, as submitted. Mr. Rowley provided a second.

VOTE: 7-0 Approved

3. PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS

A. Mr. McNamara, representing Virginia Housing (a.k.a VHDA), underscored the agency's refreshed mission to integrate housing initiatives with economic development strategies. This shift, inspired by Virginia Housing's collaboration on projects like Amazon HQ II, aims to address the critical need for workforce housing to support economic growth. Mr. McNamara highlighted a report co-authored with Tamara Analytics, which demonstrates the essential role of housing in attracting and retaining a skilled workforce for successful economic development. He shared examples of Virginia Housing's collaborations with EDAs across various regions, showcasing innovative projects like the

Stafford County Economic Development Authority

transformation of a vacant strip mall in Hopewell into a mixed-use development. Additionally, he outlined the availability of grants and resources aimed at helping EDAs incorporate housing into their economic planning. The discussion also touched on Virginia Housing's programs to assist first-time homebuyers and provide down payment assistance, emphasizing the importance of making housing accessible to all workers. The meeting concluded with a Q&A session, where attendees engaged on topics such as the specifics of community impact grants and strategies to address housing affordability for essential service providers. Mr. McNamara's presentation reinforced the message that housing is a pivotal component of economic development, urging EDAs to prioritize it in their planning efforts.

B. Mr. Owen opened the floor for a presentation from the Economic Development Department.

- Ms. Barber expressed her gratitude towards the EDA for hosting events that facilitate casual yet productive interactions with existing businesses, often leading to valuable leads for her department.
- She updated the Directors on the Destination Stafford project, mentioning the extended deadline for the RFP to June 5th, due to feedback on the initial tight timeline and broad scope. Efforts to assist developers include a public procurement Q&A and leveraging CoStar for a broader developer outreach.
- On the RV Parkway project, she shared the approval of rezoning from R1 to M2, highlighting a scheduled meeting with a potential collaborator, thanks to a connection facilitated by Howard.
- Discussions on a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the EDA and County are ongoing, with legal advice suggesting a single MOU to avoid confusion.
- Ms. Barber mentioned the temporary postponement of county committees, affecting the presentation of recent business survey results. However, she plans to share these findings with the board at a future meeting.
- She shared statistics on Stafford businesses, showing a positive trend in new registrations and a low closure rate, with a handout illustrating the growth.
- She also discussed a pending contract with Retail Strategies, a retail consultant, awaiting a piggyback agreement to expedite the process. This partnership aims to bring targeted retail sectors to Stafford by providing qualified leads.
- Lastly, Ms. Barber touched on the EDA's Community Partners Funding request and the upcoming presentation of the County Administrator's budget. Ms. Barber stated that the initial presentation of the budget is currently scheduled for February 20, 2024. She will inform the EDA if there is a need for the EDA to present to the Board of Supervisors or answer any questions.

4. TREASURER'S REPORT

A. Financial Reports

- Mr. Rowley addressed a discrepancy in the operating account and the summary letter, explaining that the negative number was due to printed checks not yet signed by two authorized Members or mailed. He emphasized the importance of ensuring sufficient funds are available in the account at the time of check printing.
- Mr. Rowley then discussed the Christmas income, noting \$57,000 for 2023 and \$45,000 for 2022, with \$38,000 paid and an additional \$10,000 expected. Mr. Hendon responded, sharing that he had scheduled time with Parks and Recreation to reconcile expenses and income with the County. He anticipated a surplus from the Christmas Tree Lighting event's sponsorship. Addressing the surplus, Mr. Rowley raised a question about last year's surplus, inquiring whether it becomes part of revenue or returns to the county. Mr. Hendon clarified that, as donated funds, the county cannot accept them unless to cover an expense. At this time, they

Stafford County Economic Development Authority

will remain in the account until the final expenses are settled. Mr. Rowley suggested setting up a separate column to track the surplus, endorsing the idea of applying it to the next year if the event recurs. Mr. Owen pointed out a potential surplus of around \$10,000, which was deemed a fair estimate by Mr. Hendon. Ms. Davis posed a question about access funds and their transition over fiscal years. Mr. Hendon clarified that the balance of the Christmas Tree Lighting income could carry over. The EDA's \$10,000 committed for 2023 was designated to only cover expenses related to the 2023 program per the motion at the October meeting. The meeting concluded with Mr. Owen cautioning about the organization's cash reserves and Ms. Davis seeking clarification on fund accessibility.

- Mr. Rowley proposed streamlining future reports, citing duplicate statements. He then moved to approve the Treasurer's Report, which received unanimous approval. Mr. Owen highlighted concerns about declining assets, emphasizing the importance of considering the organization's cash position, including CDs and long-term loans.

Mr. Rowley moved that the EDA accept the Treasurer's report.

VOTE: 7-0 Approved

5. SECRETARY'S REPORT

A. Marketing Update.

- Beer & Business: Ms. Browne discussed The Beer & Business gathering held on Wednesday. There were 86 registrants and approximately 58 attendees. During the closing announcements, available sponsorships for November were highlighted, resulting in immediate interest from several businesses. The popularity of the event led to sponsorships being secured for the rest of 2024.
- Business Appreciation Reception: Ms. Brown noted that contracts were signed, and everything is set for the event scheduled for April 24 at Riverside Dinner Theater. Promotion efforts have commenced, and nominations for awards, including Business of the Year, Don Newlan Community Stewardship Award, and the Innovation Award, are currently open until February 29. Six nominations have been received, and two board members, Price and Heather, volunteered to sit on the review committee. The absence of Transurban as the title sponsor, traditionally contributing \$6,000, was noted. Ms. Browne expressed the urgent need to secure a title sponsor and emphasized the willingness to explore co-sponsorship arrangements. Suggestions were sought from the board for potential sponsors. Current committed sponsors include Germanna, Dominion Energy, and Stafford Printing, with pending confirmation from Peterson Company. Mr. Rowley proposed considering Amazon as a potential sponsor, citing their expressed commitment to community responsibility. Mr. Owen confirmed reaching out to Amazon and was awaiting a response.

C. Mr. Hendon, Secretary

- Christmas Tree Lighting: He reemphasized that he would be meeting with Parks and Recreation in the coming week to finalize reconciliation, promising to provide further details verbally or otherwise shortly.
- ARPA Request for Proposals (RFP) related to the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) concerning work opportunities in qualified census tracts within Stafford County, Mr. Hendon reported that internal staff discussions had taken place. However, as of now, there have been no responses to the RFP. He mentioned plans for proactive outreach to individuals believed to be qualified, anticipating responses as the process unfolds. The closing date for responses is February 29, affording some breathing room for the evaluation.

Stafford County Economic Development Authority

6. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

- Mr. Owen, expressed gratitude to the staff for their efforts in organizing the recent Beer & Business event and acknowledged Marlon for his role as the emcee. He also invited EDA members interested in fulfilling the emcee role to contact Linzy. Mr. Owen shared positive feedback on the recent event, highlighting the networking opportunities and commending the brewery that hosted the event for its good beer and food.
- The discussion then shifted to the 2024 American Junior Golf Association agreement. Mr. Owen noted a request for a \$25,000 contribution. He asked for verification if the tournament was not taking place this year. He suggested postponing the decision until more information could be gathered, emphasizing the importance of understanding the expenses related to the tournament.
- Ms. Barber provided updates on the Log Cabin, indicating that there was no additional information. Mr. Rowley mentioned reaching out to the owners but had not received a response. Ms. Barber explained that she had gathered information for VDOT programs to provide to the owners when they eventually reached out.
- Mr. Owen acknowledged Laura Sellers from the planning commission and invited her to ask any questions she might have. Laura expressed her gratitude for being present but did not have any specific questions at the moment.
- The discussion then shifted to the chambers' regionalism luncheon, where Mr. Owen, Ms. Browne, and Mr. Rowley attended on behalf of the EDA. Mr. Owen mentioned the need for more information and slides promised during the event, expressing uncertainties about the future steps for the regionalism initiative.
- Mr. Owen raised questions about the resignation of the Testbed Manager, expressing concerns and suggesting a meeting with key stakeholders to understand the current status and plans for the Testbed. Mr. Owen mentioned trying to have regular meetings with Dave, from VIPC, to include EDA members Mr. Wilson or Mr. Roosa. He also asked if Ms. Morgan and Riot could find out more about the plans for the Testbed. Mr. Owen mentioned that the Testbed recently hosted an event for the National League of Cities in the Philippines. Ms. Morgan provided insights into the event, highlighting the presentations by County staff. The event hosted vice mayors from the National League of Cities in the Philippines, representing various districts. Their focus was on integrating smart city and smart community solutions into their comprehensive planning efforts. The flood and wildfire sensors deployed in Stafford garnered significant interest, and vendor engagement played a crucial role in the discussions. Mr. Owen inquired about the duration of the event, to which Ms. Morgan responded that it took place throughout the day on Wednesday, from 9 AM to 5 PM. When asked about feedback, Ms. Morgan stated that the attendees were impressed and eager to incorporate the information into their cities' planning efforts. Regarding how they found out about the Stafford testbed, Ms. Morgan mentioned that it might have been through the Washington Global Institute, a nonprofit with ties to Maryland professors working on international engagement. She also highlighted interactions with the Canadian Embassy, indicating a growing interest in Smart City initiatives and technology integration.

7. COMMITTEE AND WORKING GROUP REPORTS

- A. The Loan Committee (H Owen, D Davis, J Summits)
- Mr. Summits, reported on the January 2024 loan payment report. He highlighted one late payment and discussed a request for a three-month extension on interest-only payments for Next Level Mosaic, citing delays in the project. Mr. Rowley reiterated that Next Level needs to stay on the payment schedule after this extension. Mr. Summits agreed and ensured a discussion would take place in June should this come up again.

Stafford County Economic Development Authority

Mr. Owen called the question to approve an extension of the interest only payment by Next Level Mosaic for 3 Months.

VOTE 7-0 Approved

8. COMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. Loan Committee (D Davis, J Rowley, J Summits) – No Report
- B. Business Resources Committee (J Rowley, P Jett, L Barber)
 - Mr. Rowley, discussed the contribution request for \$6,000 for the Grace Chapter of the Eastern Star. In regards to the race Chapter 239 Easter Star contribution request, Ms. Barber said the organization did not appear to meet the state registration requirements.
 - Mr. Hendon stated that the committee has also met and recommended the EDA commit up to \$10,000 in funds for the 2024 Business Acumen Series. For 50 seats to be available for Stafford Businesses.

VOTE: 7-0 Approved funding for the Business Acumen series.

- C. Property Group (H Hagerman)
 - Ms. Hagerman discussed CPACE, research on food halls, and experienced concepts in markets of similar size, cultivating a list of who to contact, and what may work.
 - Mr. Summits added additional details regarding RV Parkway, to discuss hurdles such as zoning, easement dedication, and utility considerations. There will be a public hearing in the next few months.
 - Mr. Owen asked Mr. Wilson to inquire about the status of Moncure School to discuss the EDA's support for redeveloping that property.
- D. The Technology Committee (M Wilson, J Roosa and D Hendon)
 - Mr. Wilson, discussed the ongoing work on the Testbed's governance and operations. Mr. Roosa mentioned the need for a working session to discuss further details.

10. OLD BUSINESS

- Mr. Rowley provided an update on the construction progress of the new buildings and remodeling for the Germanna Community College's location in Stafford. The construction is scheduled to be finished by the end of August and they are looking at a mid-October soft opening, with full opening in January 2025. The EDA invested \$750,000 into the project and it has been completed without any County funds.

11. NEW BUSINESS

12. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Owen moved to go into, and Mr. Roosa provided a 2nd.

VOTE: 7-0 Approved

The EDA Board Went into Executive session in accordance with Section 2.2 – 3711.A.3, et al of the Code of Virginia 1950, as amended. The EDA pursuant to proper motion and unanimous vote intends to hold its closed session to discuss matters related to Section 2.2-3711.A.3, regarding real estate. Upon concerns regarding a Planning Committee vote in the future, Mr. Owen did ask Ms. Sellers to

Stafford County Economic Development Authority
excuse herself from the closed session. No votes were taken during the Executive Session.

12. ADJOURNMENT

In closing, Mr. Owen expressed appreciation for Mr. Hendon's work and flexibility over the past months.

The next regular EDA meeting will be held on March 8, 2023 at 9AM in 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