

Economic Vitality Commission—Special Meeting  
11-14-18

**CITY OF ISSAQUAH**  
**Economic Vitality Commission--Special Meeting**  
**SUMMARY MINUTES**

November 14, 2018

City Administrative Offices  
Pickering Room

1775 12th Avenue NW  
Issaquah, WA 98027

<p><b>EVC MEMBERS PRESENT</b> Jeff Howlett, Chair Amit Bhardwaj Therese Garcia, Vice Chair Karl Leigh Kathy McCorry Ashwin Muthuvenkataraman Kristi Tripple</p>	<p><b>STAFF PRESENT</b> Christopher Wright, Project Oversight Manager Tim Dutter, Economic Development Manager</p> <p><b>EVC MEMBERS ABSENT (EXCUSED)</b> Chris Beaudoin Samantha Breider Saikat Sen</p>
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**1. CALL TO ORDER**

HOWLETT, Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:36 PM.

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

a) MOVED BY TRIPPLE, SECONDED BY GARCIA that minutes of the EVC meeting on October 17, 2018, be approved as presented. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY, 7-0.

**3. AGENDA ITEMS**

**a) Update from Staff (I)**

*Presented by: Economic Development Staff*

- **Destination Marketing Organization (DMO)**

Dutter reported that about 80 applications for the position of DMO Executive Director have been received. McCORRY gave an update on the process of selecting an Executive Director, leading to the expected appointment of a successful candidate in January. She continued with an update on the status of establishing a DMO website, including identifying a suitable website e-address.

- **Sports Medicine Conference**

Dutter gave an update on the Sports Medicine Conference logo, establishing the date for the Sports Medicine Conference, and the kinds of activities that will be represented at the conference, with a goal of getting around 1,000 participants of all ages. He said progress on conference planning is moving quickly.

- **Parking Study**

Wright displayed a summary of the Issaquah Olde Town Parking Study—Draft Options Review prepared by the consultant, Fehr/Peers, and explained the process leading to presentation to the full Council in mid-February. He said tonight he will just focus on downtown parking, specifically public or on-street parking only in Olde Town. His presentation included an introduction and background; comparable peak-hour parking occupancy of other downtowns as compared to Olde Town; how the consultant collected data; the importance of reaching “85 percent occupancy” in assessing whether action on parking is warranted; and the results of the consultant’s data collection.

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He continued with a presentation of four options (Option 1: defer for two years; Option 2: use time limits and enforcement; Option 3: paid parking; and Option 4: building parking structures). He noted the consultant is not recommending Options 3 or 4 at this time. The cost of Option 2 would be about \$150,000 a year for enforcement. The Commissioners discussed their personal experiences in seeking parking in Olde Town, and their impressions of the experience for first-time visitors to downtown Issaquah who are seeking parking. McCORRY asked whether the consultant felt that signage for available parking downtown is adequate. Wright said the consultant indicated they see room for improvement in terms of signage.

**b) NW Gilman Project Letter of Support (R)**

*Presented by: Christopher Wright, Economic Development Manager*

The Commissioners discussed the draft letter of support from EVC to Council for the NW Gilman Project. HOWLETT suggested the issue of getting on and off Gilman is the primary problem and should be emphasized in the letter, either by moving that reference up in the narrative and/or adding emphasis to clearly state that it is the most important issue. LEIGH suggested putting the reference right after, “First and foremost...” HOWLETT and the other Commissioners agreed. Wright will also add emphasis as suggested by HOWLETT. Staff will forward the signed letter to Brianne Ross, project manager for the NW Gilman Project, for presentation to Council.

**c) Council Committee Presentation (I)**

*Presented by: Christopher Wright, Economic Development Manager  
Tim Dutter, Economic Development Manager*

Dutter gave an update on the annual year-end presentation to be made on December 11 to the City Council Services and Safety Commission on the 2015-2018 Economic Development Strategic Plan, specifically the goals, objectives and actions (past, present and future). He described the information that staff is planning to present, including metrics and the distribution of Port of Seattle grant and City funding. He invited feedback from the Commissioners of the information to be presented about EVC’s activities in 2018 and projected activities for 2019. Commissioners made suggestions.

**d) Economic Development Strategic Plan Action Steps**

*Presented by: Jeff Howlett, Chair*

- **Review for Annual Plan and Strategic Plan Update**

McCORRY noted the City’s Strategic Plan, once it is in place, will help EVC focus its efforts in ways that will be most valuable for the City and Council. LEIGH spoke in favor of prioritizing or at least highlighting the most important activity in each objective. HOWLETT suggested adding that the Commission’s recommendation is to support and retain businesses, and make it easy for business to do business here. The Commission discussed the need to create an environment where businesses can thrive and grow, so that jobs can be created. They also discussed the importance of supporting existing businesses, which will create 85 percent of new jobs. Wright said Council will be providing more detail in the coming months on how they perceive the City can best create jobs.

HOWLETT and McCORRY said there would be value in summarizing the EVC’s thoughts and feedback on the Citywide Strategic Plan as discussed at the last EVC meeting in the presentation to the City Council Services and Safety Commission. Staff made a note of it.

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- **Narrow List to 3-5 Items for EVC to Focus On**

Wright referred to the list of items that EVC could focus its efforts on in 2019 as its top priorities, which were displayed around the room. The Commissioners used stickers to vote for their first priority as well as to indicate interest in pursuing other items. Items in red received the least votes or were otherwise folded into other items. The primary discussion items are noted below.

<b>BRE (Business Retention and Expansion) Visits (5)</b>	Partnerships with Brokers	Relationship of Public and Private Organizations
<b>Research ideas to create tools to attract high-skilled, quality jobs (2)</b>	<b>Market Redevelopment Opportunities (properties to be sold or redeveloped)</b>	Partner with School District
History Museum Capacity	Rec. Opportunities and Rec. Businesses	Tourism Plan/Wayfinding (3)
Analyze Utility Needs	<b>Compare Fees, Taxes and Cost of Doing Business (4)</b>	Create Website/City Welcome Wagon
<b>Create Brand Marketing Plan (combine) (1)</b>	Retail Recruitment	Recruit Colleges/Workforce Development Providers
New Arts/Music Venue		

1. “Create Brand and “Marketing Plan” could be combined as one item, and should “tell the story” of doing business in Issaquah.
2. “Attract High-Skilled, Quality Jobs” received the most priority votes. The Commissioners expanded the wording to “Research ideas to create tools to attract high-skilled, quality jobs.”
3. It was the general consensus that “tourism plan/wayfinding” was important, but that the new DMO would take the lead in developing such a plan.
4. “Compare fees, taxes, and cost of doing business [in Issaquah]” should also address ways to offset or mitigate the costs of doing business in the City, including the use of incentives.
5. “Business Retention and Expansion Visits” are important but are part of the item to “attract high-skilled, quality jobs.”

Wright said staff will analyze the results of the voting and, together with the Economic Development Director, discuss how the City can best use the EVC to accomplish the Council’s goals. He said the results of this exercise will be forward to EVC for their comments before being added to the presentation to the Council’s Services and Safety Committee on December 11.

#### 4. AUDIENCE COMMENTS

None.

#### 5. OTHER BUSINESS/ANNOUNCEMENTS/SCHEDULE

Wright said two high-school students have indicated interest in joining EVC in the New Year as youth representatives through the Youth Advisory Board. He said he and HOWLETT will interview both students and report back to EVC.

Wright also noted EVC will be reviewing the sign code update in 2019.

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After a short discussion, it was the consensus of all Commissioners present to cancel the regular EVC meeting scheduled for December 19. The next EVC meeting will be January 16, 2019. HOWLETT invited all Commissioners to attend the Council's Services and Safety Committee meeting on December 11 if they are available.

**6. ADJOURNMENT**

With no additional business to conduct, HOWLETT adjourned the meeting at 7:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Lowe  
Recording Secretary

***These minutes are a brief summary of the Economic Vitality Commission meeting. For more information or clarification, please contact the Economic Development Department at 425-837-3444.***