

CITY OF ISSAQUAH
Economic Vitality Commission

5:30 PM
 December 16, 2020

Virtual Meeting

MINUTES

COMMISSION AND ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL PRESENT

Commissioners Present:

Therese Garcia, Chair
 Christopher Beaudoin, Vice Chair
 Kristi Tripple
 Pavel Aprikian
 Ashwin Muthuvenkataraman
 Tom Rogers

Administration/Staff:

Jen Davis Hayes, Economic Dev. Mgr.
 Benton Coblentz, Economic Dev. Coord.

Commissioners Not Present:

Kathy McCorry (Excused)

CALL TO ORDER

GARCIA, Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:36 PM. Guidelines for virtual meetings, and how members of the public can provide public comment, were included in the meeting agenda.

AUDIENCE COMMENTS

Anthony Audino, Capri Cellars owner, asked what does EVC do for the City, and how does someone pursue possible EVC membership. Davis Hayes replied she can connect with Mr. Audino off-line to answer all his questions, and asked whether any Commissioners would like to reply directly now. TRIPPLE welcomed Mr. Audino as a local business owner and gave an explanation of the EVC's function.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. MOVED BY TRIPPLE, SECONDED BY BEAUDOIN that minutes of the July 15, 2020 EVC meeting be approved as presented. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

AGENDA ITEMS

a) 2021 Economic Development Activities (D)

Presented by:

Jen Davis Hayes, Economic Development Manager

Davis Hayes presented information summarized on pages 15-16 of 24 in the agenda. She said the top priority for 2021 efforts is to continue to support existing businesses.

MUTHUVENKATARAMAN noted the recent wave of Covid infections has hit people particularly hard, and asked whether that updated data is reflected in the recovery uncertainty information on page 15. Davis Hayes replied updated data is usually not available for about two months. It's a good point, she added, and there will be likely be some changes in the trend data as a result of the resurgence over the last few weeks.

b) Recommendations to Mayor's Recovery Task Force (D)

Presented by:

Jen Davis Hayes, Economic Development Manager

Therese Garcia, Chair

Davis Hayes presented information summarized on page 17 of 24, 2021 Efforts, and asked for Commissioner's thoughts. TRIPPLE said she agrees that business retention and supporting existing businesses is key, and that keeping the City's website and data current is also

important. She noted that one way for the City to help support businesses moving forward is to facilitate daycare and child care. APRIKIAN said his perception is that some daycare facilities have closed, and others are not operating at full capacity, because parents are hesitant to bring their children to daycare due to Covid-19. So the problem isn't necessarily lack of capacity but rather a lack of demand, he continued. He continued the biggest issue for daycare providers is rent, and the best way the City could help would be to provide some kind of financial assistance with rent. Davis Hayes gave some examples of how the City could create some financial incentives, but also noted that the City's options are limited. APRIKIAN also suggested the City be sure to provide information about assistance directly to business owners and not just to property owners.

BEAUDOIN asked whether the City can interact with the School District about reopening schools. Davis Hayes replied the Mayor speaks regularly with the School District Superintendent, although the City does not have direct responsibility for making reopening decisions. She noted that discussions are under way now at the state and local level about getting kids back in schools.

TRIPPLE spoke in favor of the City's newsletter, specifically for expressing support for businesses and telling success stories that instill hope in the business community.

c) 2020 Business Survey—Initial Results (I)

Presented by:

Bento Coblentz, Economic Development Coordinator

Coblentz gave some background on the 2020 Business Survey, including who responded and what comes next in terms of analyzing the data. He noted that full survey results will be available in early 2021.

d) Approve Draft EVC 2020 Annual Report (A)

Presented by:

Therese Garcia, Chair

MOVED BY TRIPPLE, SECONDED BY APRIKIAN that the draft 2020 Economic Vitality Commission to Mayor Pauly be approved as presented and forwarded to the Mayor. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

e) 2021 Commissioner Recruitment (D)

Presented by:

Jen Davis Hayes, Economic Development Manager

Davis Hayes explained that EVC has six total open seats for the term beginning in May 2021 (four vacancies and two positions up for renewal). She asked for any comments or suggestions from the Commission for configuring EVC membership. TRIPPLE suggested that expanding membership to 12 members, with three alternates, would increase the diversity of ideas within EVC and also increase the likelihood of reaching quorums at meetings. She noted that as business owners, EVC members tend to be busy, and including alternates could be helpful.

Davis Hayes referred to the skill-set list for potential EVC members on page 23 and asked for other suggestions to be reflected in the list. GARCIA suggested adding transportation. BEAUDOIN suggested restaurants. MUTHUVENKATARAMAN suggested law/legal. Davis Hayes briefly described the City's recruitment process and timeline for 2021.

REPORTS

a) Business Openings, Closures, and Trends

Presented by:

Commissioners

Commissioners exchanged information about businesses opening and closing in the City, including restaurants, food trucks, retail store closures and openings in Gilman Village and the Target campus, and retail stores converting to on-line only. The Commissioners indicated agreement to include this item as a regular agenda item for future EVC meetings.

b) City Council Report Out*Presented by:**Jen Davis Hayes, Economic Development Manager*

Davis Hayes said this item is being included on all Commission and Board agendas to strengthen the connection between Commissions and Boards and Council actions; in the case of EVC, actions that impact economic vitality. She described the Council's recent approval of the 2021 budget. She also noted that the County adopted a .1 cent sales tax increase prior to the City's budget adoption, which could result in an additional \$1 million for the City, depending on the amount of sales tax collected. She also described the Council's actions to extend regulatory relief for outdoor dining activities through June 2021, including a reduced permitting process and reduced fees.

TRIPPLE expressed appreciation to the Council for any and all actions supporting existing businesses, including assistance from the CARES program and the general fund. She noted that some City of Seattle actions like head taxes are not viewed as being business-friendly, and it might be useful to think about how that could be used by Issaquah as a competitive advantage. She also spoke of the importance of making sure Issaquah has adequate police to respond to events and situations, and said public safety is important as a way to support existing businesses as well as for the quality of life of the City's residents.

OTHER BUSINESS / ANNOUNCEMENTS

The next EVC meeting is scheduled for January 20, 2021; topics will include sign code changes and an update on the City's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) projects.

ADJOURNMENT

With no additional business to conduct, the meeting was adjourned at 7:04 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Lowe
Recording Secretary

NOTE: This meeting was held remotely. Participation and listening options were provided in the meeting agenda.