

CITY OF ISSAQUAH
Economic Vitality Commission

5:30 PM

Virtual Meeting

November 17, 2021

MINUTES**COMMISSION AND ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL PRESENT**

Alternate Meeting Format: On March 6, 2020 the Mayor declared a civil emergency due to the outbreak of novel coronavirus (COVID-19). On March 24, 2020 the Governor issued Proclamation 20-28 relating to the COVID-19 emergency and open public meetings. The proclamation has been extended. Due to these factors, the meeting was held using a remote meeting platform.

Commissioners Present:

Kathy McCorry, Chair
 Jon Edwards, Vice Chair
 Theresa Garcia
 Thomas Brown
 Anjali Remme, Alternate (acting as regular member)
 Tom Rogers

Administration/Staff:

Jen Davis Hayes , Economic Dev. Mgr.
 Cynthia Carrillo, VP of Economic Development, Greater Seattle Partners

Members Not Present (Excused):

Joan Probala
 Christopher Beaudoin
 Art Freas, Alternate
 Chris Reichley, Alternate
 Ashwin Muthuvenkataraman

CALL TO ORDER

McCORRY, Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:37 PM.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOVED BY EDWARDS, SECONDED BY GARCIA that minutes of the October 20, 2021 meeting be approved as presented. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

AGENDA ITEMS**a) Greater Seattle Partners - Regional Recruitment Organization, (I)**

Presented by:

Cynthia Carrillo, VP of Economic Development, Greater Seattle Partners

Carrillo gave some information about her background in economic development, including her role with the Greater Seattle Partners (GSP). She explained GSP's purpose in expanding and maintaining the region's strong economic position. She also provided data on how the region ranks in terms of innovation and startups; high-growth industries in our community; region-wide and comparable data on real estate; and data on talent and workforce in the three-county region. She spoke about being recognized as a regional model for prosperity as a guiding principle for GSP.

She continued her presentation using a real-life case study in the City of Issaquah, "Project Psych." She described the e-track system GSP uses to engage and assist a prospective business in

locating in the region. She also described startup activities this year in the Seattle area, as well as contacts made for potential future partnerships.

REMME asked does GSP need anything from the City's Economic Development Department or related activities to help GSP identify or assist a business wanting to come to Issaquah. Carrillo said any materials the City has that show key factors or reasons why your community is a great place to live, or do business, is welcome. She encouraged sending any such materials to GSP.

EDWARDS asked how is GSP funded. Carrillo explained GSP has both private and public investors, including Snohomish, Pierce, and King counties, a few cities, Virginia Mason, Microsoft, Amazon, UW, Puget Sound Energy, and others. Our board of directors are investors as well, she continued. She explained GSP's budget process. Davis Hayes noted the City does contribute to GSP. She said some of the City's marketing materials from 2015 are a bit out of date but the concepts are still relevant, and she will forward them to GSP.

Davis Hayes said the Commission is undertaking a SWOT analysis that focuses on business retention and attraction. She asked Carrillo for her perspective on the City's position from a business standpoint. Carrillo replied the Seattle core is becoming somewhat saturated, and new businesses will need to look at other communities that are in close proximity to Seattle but not in its core. She said providing housing for the talent working in the Seattle business community is also an asset, as is being in a good position to provide distribution, logistics, and transportation. She continued industrial availability, the ability to offer clean technology, and proximity to the Eastside are also big assets that businesses would find attractive.

b) Business Retention & Recruitment SWOT, (D)

Presented by:

All Commissioners

McCORRY thanked FREAS for his work on the SWOT matrix, and asked for comments for the next iteration.

Strengths:

- Strengths need to focus on business-related strengths.
- The "quality of life" bullet items can be consolidated into a single bullet.
- Marketing materials from 2015 that focused on attracting new business may offer some good language.
- Different businesses are interested in different qualities, but this exercise is intended as a look at the City as a whole and not targeted to certain industries. That would be a good future exercise, however.

Weaknesses:

- A "lack of local higher college-level facility" isn't really a weakness as the UW is located very close by. On the other hand, having no in-City presence of a higher-college level facility is a weakness as a potential source of innovation.
- Eliminate the reference to "undefined value proposition."
- Reword "transitioning economic maturity" to something like "aging commercial properties in Central Issaquah."

Opportunities:

- Remove the two bullets that begin, "Remove..."
- Consolidate the remaining bullets.

Threats:

- Competition from building taking place all around the City, such as Bellevue, in terms of competition and increased traffic from commuting.
- Inability of the City to address traffic problems such as Issaquah-Hobart Road.

McCORRY suggested giving the SWOT matrix one more look when FREAS returns.

REPORTS**a) Business Openings, Closures, & Industry Trends, (D)**

Presented by:

All Commissioners

Davis Hayes reported on a restaurant closure as well as closure of the Big Lots retail space, which will be used by Costco. She also said vaccination requirements are putting pressure on some small businesses, and the City is trying to assist them with some tools to deal with that. The Commission also discussed widespread problems with shoplifting and theft of catalytic converters from vehicles, and the leakage of businesses leaving Seattle due to homelessness and other social problems.

Davis Hayes noted the police are aware of the theft problems and are taking steps to address them.

b) City Council Report Out, (I)

Presented by:

Jen Davis Hayes, Economic Development Manager

Davis Hayes noted the Council passed the 2022 budget last Monday, and said multiple staff positions were restored and/or added. The sign code is undergoing some corrections and updates. She noted the Storm and Surface Water Master Plan is moving forward, and will be the subject of a Council study session next Tuesday. McCORRY noted the stormwater update in the agenda packet is for Commissioners' information.

c) 2021 Schedule, (I)

Presented by:

Jen Davis Hayes, Economic Development Manager

The next EVC meeting is tentatively scheduled for December 15, 2021. Davis Hayes noted that McCORRY, EDWARDS, and PROBALA have volunteered to participate in joint meetings with the Transportation Advisory Board in 2022.

OTHER BUSINESS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Davis Hayes and McCORRY gave additional details about upcoming events including the November 18 virtual Job Fair, Small Business Saturday, Artist Sunday, and the Chamber's holiday Shop Local giveaway.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to conduct, McCORRY adjourned the meeting at 7:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Lowe
Recording Secretary