

**CITY OF ISSAQUAH  
Economic Vitality Commission & Arts Commission**

6:00 PM  
August 16, 2023

Tibbetts Manor, 750 17th  
Ave. NW, Issaquah

**MINUTES**

**COMMISSION AND ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL PRESENT**

*Economic Vitality Commission*

*Commissioners:*

Chris Reichley, Chair  
Ashwin Muthuvenkataraman, Vice Chair  
(excused absent)  
Thomas Brown  
Joan Probala  
Kymberly Lee  
AJ Taylor  
Christy Garrard  
Landon Halverson (Absent)  
Jennifer Larson

*Administration/Staff:*

Jen Davis Hayes, Economic Development  
Manager  
Farel Otieno, Economic Development  
Coordinator  
Juliana da Cruz, Economic Development  
Coordinator

Art Freas, Alternate  
Anuradha Tadepalli, Alternate (excused  
absent)  
Nicoleta Mocanu, Alternate (excused  
absent)

**CALL TO ORDER**

REICHLLEY called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

a) Minutes of July 19, 2023

Commissioner Probala moved to approve the minutes.  
Commissioner Brown seconded the motion.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Connie Marsh stated the comprehensive plan excludes residents and says very little about small businesses, indicating the need for a broader comprehensive plan with a strategic focus. She addressed how Issaquah has a highly educated workforce and how we can keep them motivated. According to him, the language used in the comprehensive plan is a proxy for the government rather than the community language. The comprehensive plan lacks some terminology, such as maintenance and administration.

Corby Casler, Executive Director of the Downtown Issaquah Association, stated the government may rely on some Nonprofit Organization. Nonprofit organizations are an extension of economic vibrancy.

**AGENDA ITEMS****a) Comprehensive Plan- Economic Vitality Element (D)**

*Presented by:*

*Stephen Padua, Long Range Planning Manager*

The comprehensive plan's components were outlined by Stephen Padua, Long-Range Planning Manager, who also described what a comprehensive plan is. He noted that the aspects of the comprehensive plan now include environmental considerations and that human services and cultural considerations are not necessary. Compliance and coordination among all components are the main objectives.

The element structure, which comprised a strong business climate, a diverse business community, a vibrant community, partnership, and results and accountability, was examined by both the Commissioners, ED staffs and Long-Range planning Manager. The commissioners discussed the comprehensive plan's aspect and suggested revisions, pointing out the need for language changes as well as the insertion of some crucial terminology.

**b) Economic Development Plan Update (I)**

*Presented by:*

*Jen Davis Hayes, Economic Development Manager*

*Farel Otieno, Economic Development Coordinator*

*Juliana da Cruz, Economic Development Coordinator*

Jen Davis Hayes, Economic Development Manager, provided an overview of the vision statement. All Commissioners were requested to complete a poll about the vision statement and some essential elements that should be included in the vision statement. Jen shared and discussed the MentiMeter results and indicated that the next step would be to form three subcommittees.

Juliana da Cruz, Economic Development Coordinator, provided a quick outline of the Economic Development Action Plan's engagement component. She discussed what had been completed and what was still in the works.

Farel Otieno, Economic Development Coordinator, talked about economic data profile. He mentioned the ED team is still in the process of verifying some data with a view of creating comparisons to 2015 economic profile. The goal is to be able to tell a story from the economic profile comparison.

Three subcommittee was formed to include.

1. Vision statement subcommittee with an aim to further refine the statement.
  - a) Jen Davis – Staff
  - b) Christy Garrard
  - c) AJ Taylor
2. Engagement subcommittee to review the engagement report and plan next steps for feedbacks to first draft of ED Action Plan
  - a) Juliana da Cruz – Staff
  - b) Jennifer Larson
  - c) Chris Reichley
3. Data subcommittee to review data report and ensure alignment with ED Action Plan
  - a) Farel Otieno– staff
  - b) Kym Lee
  - c) Thomas Brown
  - d) Arts Freas
  - e) Joan Probala

Staff stated that absent members will be contacted through email and asked to join any subcommittee.

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

*Presented by:*

*All Commissioners*

Commissioner Chair Reichley mentioned the opening of Crumble Cookies in Highlands. People used to make hotel reservations at least two weeks in advance, but today reservations are made just one day in advance, according to Commissioner Garrard. The staff indicated that Dirty Dough Cookies had chosen Issaquah as the location for their first branch in Washington. The episode of Traveling while Black that highlighted the Issaquah community was referenced by Commissioner Garrard.

**b) Reports – City Council Commission Committees (I)**

*Presented by:*

*All Commissioners & Staff*

The city has agreed to collaborate with the State of Washington's ecological prevention program.

On September 27th, there will be a business leadership forum.

**c) 2023 Schedule (I)**

*Presented by:*

*Chris Reichley, Chair*

The Commission reviewed the Schedule.

**OTHER BUSINESS/ ANNOUNCEMENTS****ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:59pm

The next meeting is currently scheduled for September 20, 2023

**INQUIRIES**

Please contact Jen Davis Hayes at (425) 837-3414 or [jenh@issaquahwa.gov](mailto:jenh@issaquahwa.gov).

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*(A) Action, (D) Discussion, (I) Information*