

**CITY OF ISSAQUAH**  
**Economic Vitality Commission**

6:00 PM  
 January 16, 2024

**MINUTES**

Tibbetts Manor, 750 17th Ave.  
 NW, Issaquah

**COMMISSION AND ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL PRESENT**

*Commissioners:*

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

*Administration/Staff:*

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

Art Freas, Alternate  
 Nicoleta Mocanu, Alternate - absent  
 Anuradha Tadepalli, Alternate

**CALL TO ORDER**

EVC Chair Reichley called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- a) Minutes of December 13, 2023

The minutes were approved as read.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

No public members were present.

**AGENDA ITEMS**

- a)

**Economic Development Action**

*Presented by:*

*Jen Davis Hayes, Economic Development Manager*

Jen Davis Hayes provided a brief overview of the Economic Development Action Plan and next steps. The Plan is going before City Council the City Council Services, Safety, and Parks Committee on January 23. She opened the floor for the Commissioners for questions or final review comments on the plan. She invited Economic Vitality Commissioners to come to attend the presentation to the City Council Services Safety and Committee. The full City Council will consider adoption on February 5. Jen Davis Hayes inquired about how the EVC preferred to receive reports and updates on the Economic Development Action Plan. The updates and

reports on the Economic Development Action Plan will remain an item on the EVC meeting agenda moving forward.

b) **Quarterly Data Review (I)**

*Presented by:*

*Farel Otieno, Economic Development Coordinator*

Farel Otieno provided an overview of the data that we currently collect in the Economic Development Dashboard and in the Performance Measures Dashboard and the difference between the two dashboards. He provided a walk through of how to navigate the dashboards. The new data metrics to be captured as a result of the new Economic Development Action plan is the number of businesses served (sorted by type, sector, etc); number of new resources and relationships to support businesses; number of impressions and views in social media marketing; and number of new business licenses. Next, he showed the data that would be presented on the Issaquah By the Numbers webpage.

Farel asked for feedback from the EVC about the data that ED should include on the “Issaquah By the Numbers” webpage. Commissioner Muthuvenkataraman suggested the number of active construction permits and crime data be linked to on the “Issaquah by the Numbers” webpage. The Economic Development team displayed the dashboards for other departments that showed crime data and permit data. Commissioner Garrard suggested that we add some data specific to creative industries and outdoor recreation which would help to attract those businesses. Commissioner Tadeballi suggested adding the number of schools and school ratings being noted on the “Issaquah By the Numbers” data. Commissioner Freas suggested asking about adding disability data. Commissioner Brown suggested level of education be added to this website.

The Quarterly Data reports will start with the main data metrics identified in the Economic Development Action Plan. The Commission requested that this data be graphed so that trends are more obvious over time.

## REPORTS

### **2024 Committees (D)**

*Presented by:*

*Juliana da Cruz, Economic Development Coordinator*

*Chris Reichley, Chair*

**Outreach (BRE, Closed Business Survey, Business Leadership Forum)-** Christy Garrard, Jennifer Larson, Anu Tadeballi, Ashwin Muthuvenkataraman, Joan Probala

**Creative Industries-** Christy Garrard, Art Freas, Kym Lee

**Outdoor Recreation-** Christy Garrard, Jennifer Larson, Tom Brown

### **Industry Trends, Business Openings & Closures (D)**

*Presented by:*

*All Commissioners*

Fairfield Inn is open.

Bartells is closed. XXX is closed.

Now that Fed is slowing/pausing on interest rate hikes, tech hiring is up slightly.

Egg & Us coming end of Quarter 1.

Brown Bear construction underway.

Frasier Meats closed; desserts and sweets to come.

Costco IT and entry level folks invited to their first ever open house (workforce development).

Retail report from Art by Fire – average check out basket value was down, but number of

check out baskets was up. Fewer gift certificates, about 30% more sales online than last year.

Community based tourism initiative is launching at the end of January. Snoqualmie Valley is looking at starting a DMO.

Acquiring a banking loan is still tight; must have very detailed packets.

**City Council Report (I)**

*Presented by:*

*Farel Otieno, Economic Development Coordinator*

**2024 Schedule (I)**

*Presented by:*

*Chris Reichley, Chair*

**OTHER BUSINESS / ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Commission suggested reviewing the attendance policy again. The Commission suggested amending the Commission’s attendance policy to create exceptions for sickness and inclement weather.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The next meeting is currently scheduled for February 21, 2024.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:49 p.m.

**INQUIRIES**

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

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*Note: Times listed for meetings topics are approximate and items are subject to change.*

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