

CITY OF ISSAQUAH
Economic Vitality Commission

6:00 PM
 March 13, 2024

MINUTES

Steelhead Room, 235 1st Ave
 SE, Issaquah

COMMISSION AND ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL PRESENT

Commissioners:

Chris Reichley, Chair
 Ashwin Muthuvenkataraman (Excused)
 Thomas Brown (Excused)
 Jennifer Larson
 Joan Probala (Excused)
 Kymberly Lee
 Christy Garrard
 Landon Halverson (Excused)

Administration/Staff:

Jen Davis Hayes, Economic Development
 Manager
 Farel Otieno, Economic Development
 Coordinator
 Juliana da Cruz, Economic Development
 Coordinator
 Tisha Gieser, City Clerk

Art Freas, Alternate
 Nicoleta Mocanu, Alternate
 Anuradha Tadepalli, Alternate (Excused)

CALL TO ORDER

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a) Minutes of January 11, 2024
 The minutes of January 11, 2024, were approved. Motioned by Commissioner FREAS, seconded by Commissioner GARRARD.
- b) Minutes of January 16, 2024
 The minutes of January 16, 2024, were approved. Motioned by Commissioner FREAS, seconded by Commissioner GARRARD.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

AGENDA ITEMS

- a) **Virtual Attendance Policy (A)**

Presented by:

Tisha Gieser, City Clerk

Farel Otieno, Economic Development Coordinator

Tisha Gieser presented the current Virtual Attendance Policy and proposed rule changes to align the EVC with other boards and commission. The policy continues to emphasize on in person attendance. Recommendations was quorum can be achieved both in person and online.

Commissioners agreed to the changes to amend the EVC Rules & Regulation, section 7. Virtual policy as presented in the EVC packet with the change "If a member is unable to attend a meeting in person or requires an accommodation, they may notify the staff liaison of their intention to attend virtually."

Commissioner LARSON motioned, Commissioner FREAS seconded to accept the proposed changes to the EVC rules and regulations. The motion was approved unanimously.

b) **2024 Business Survey (I)**

Presented by:

Juliana da Cruz, Economic Development Coordinator

Juliana da Cruz, Economic Development Coordinator, provided information on the business survey, mentioning that it is conducted every 4 years. 13 of the questions remain the same, with four additional adjustments. We discussed the survey plans. The four supplementary questions were presented, along with additional optional supplementary questions for outdoor, creative industries, and home-based businesses.

The next stages will be to integrate current survey translations and launch the survey in April.

Commissioner MOCANU asked to be issued a paper survey and a postcard. Commissioners discussed the need to include a link to the pdf survey in the electronic survey. Commissioners agreed to form subcommittees to go out with staff to different businesses and distribute survey questions. Other commissioners were urged to present the projects at their meetings.

c) **2024 Commissioner Recruitment (I)**

Presented by:

Juliana da Cruz, Economic Development Coordinator

Juliana da Cruz, the Economic Development Coordinator, provided an update on the 2024 commissioner recruiting. She indicated that we had 16 candidates and would be called for interviews. Appointments are due on April 6th.

REPORTS

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

Presented by:

Economic Development Staff

Commissioner GARRARD briefed the gathering about community-based tourism leadership training, which will begin in April.

Staff mentioned the upcoming workshop series and regional business conference held by the City, Greater Chamber of Commerce, and Start-Up 425.

c) **City Council Report Out (I)***Presented by:**Farel Otieno, Economic Development Coordinator*

Farel Otieno, Economic Development Coordinator, informed the group about Lodging Tax Advisory Committee and mentioned 10 applicants were awarded funding for 2024 grant cycle.

Jen Davis Hayes, Economic Development Manager updated the group that on March 18th, City Council is will consider adoption of the Central Issaquah Pioneer Program.

a) **Industry Trends, Business Openings & Closures (D)***Presented by:**All Commissioners*

Burger master replacing Triple XXX Root Beer

Networking at night hosted by Fairfield inn May 14th, 2024.

Sola Salon open house and grand launch on 25th from 3-7pm

Crumble and flakes coming into Gilman village.

Mayuri Indian grocery store has signed a lease for former Pier 1 Imports.

Happy Time Studio moved from Work Lofts to Front Street.

ED Staff toured the Our Savior Lutheran Church space potential for arts project and childcare.

Swedish Hospital Issaquah sold a land lease to raise capital for Cherry Hill renovation and other systemwide investments.

Rhoadstone (Lakeside Industry's former development division) completed their master plan.

City has hired a consultant to look at the permit process and present in June at the City Council meeting.

d) **2024 Schedule (I)***Presented by:**Chris Reichley, Chair*

Mentioned the new format of the schedule.

OTHER BUSINESS / ANNOUNCEMENTS

EVC attend the mayor invite to the Village Theatre

Mayor started a taskforce to consider updates to the City's Strategic Plan.

Spring Business Open House next week. Push the message to your businesses out there.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:42PM.

The next meeting is currently scheduled for April 17, 2024.