

CITY OF ISSAQUAH
Economic Vitality Commission

6:00 PM
 May 15, 2024

Tibbetts Manor, 750 17th Ave.
 NW, Issaquah

MINUTES

COMMISSION AND ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL PRESENT

Commissioners:

Shalini Bansal
 Christy Garrard
 Landon Halverson- unexcused absence
 Jennifer Larson- excused absence
 Kymberly Lee
 Nicoleta Mocanu
 Barb Pexa
 Chris Reichley
 Anuradha Tadepalli

Administration/Staff:

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

Adam Levensohn, Alternate – excused
 absence
 Jake McGill, Alternate – moved to regular
 member for 5/15
 Kelly Richardson, Alternate – moved to
 regular member for 5/15

CALL TO ORDER

Jen Davis Hayes called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a) Minutes of April 17, 2024
 Chris Reichley made the motion to approve the minutes. Anuradha Tadepalli seconded. The minutes were approved.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Christy Garrard provided a summary of Rachel Wright's written comments received by the Commission via email. Rachel Wright expressed her gratitude for the EVC's support of the performance arts center effort and provided an update of next steps and future discussions regarding the performance arts centers.

AGENDA ITEMS

- a) **Introductions & Welcome New Commissioners (D)**

Presented by:

Juliana da Cruz, Economic Development Coordinator

The Commissioners introduced themselves.

- b) **Chair & Vice-Chair Elections (A)**

Presented by:

Jen Davis Hayes, Economic & Housing Development Manager

Farel read the process for the election of the Chair and Vice Chair. Farel called for nominations for the Chair. Christy Garrard nominated Chris Reichley. Farel closed the nominations. Chris Reichley was declared Chair of the Economic Vitality Commission. Farel opened nominations for Vice Chair of the Economic Vitality Commission. Nicoleta Mocanu nominated Christy Garrard for Vice Chair. Christy declined. Anu Tadepalli nominated Anu Tadepalli. Chris Reichley nominated Jennifer Larson. Farel closed nominations and opened the discussion. Chair Reichley provided the Commission with a description of Jennifer Larson's professional background and time on the commission. The Commission discussed. Christy Garrard provided a brief description of Anu Tadepalli's professional background and expertise with data. The Commission discussed. Farel opened the votes for Anu Tadepalli: Christy, Shalini, and Anu, Barb. Farel opened the voting for Jennifer: Kym Lee, Chris Reichley, and Kelly Richardson. Abstentions: Jake Magill, and Nicoleta Mocanu. Anu Tadepalli was elected Vice Chair.

c) 2024 Business Survey Update (D)

Presented by:

Economic Development Team

Jen Davis Hayes provided an overview of the business survey that occurs every four years. The survey was launched April 2 and is online only. It is open until May 24. Postcards were mailed to every business license, social media, and the EVC committee went door to door to prompt responses. She provided an update on the current 2024 Business Survey numbers. 222 businesses have responded to the survey, the goal is 300 businesses, though there are a lot of surveys out in the environment right now. She reviewed some of the initial data from the responses, looking at years in business, business size, type, location, demographics, and ownership type. From initial results, the top challenges for businesses surveyed were: space, lack of advertising, and access to workforce. Barb Pexa and Jake Magill signed up for some additional outreach. In June the Economic Development team will analyze the data and conduct in-person interviews. In July the data will go to City Council for review.

REPORTS

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

Presented by:

All Commissioners

Barnes and Noble will open in the Bed Bath and Beyond location.

Foothills Mountain Bike rentals seems to be a new bike rental business in the Highlands.

Ohana is closing in September. There are many potential businesses interested in that space.

9-Round Kickboxing in the Highlands is closing. Highland Cleaners in the Highlands is also closing. Rent increase cited.

Planet Fitness will be in the Big 5 and part of Office Depot space.

Michaels renewed its lease.

Mirador/ Sorarra Outdoor Living opened in Rowley properties. Sells directly to Costco

b) Economic Development Action Plan Update (I)

Presented by:

Economic Development Staff

Farel provided an update on the Business Empowerment workshop series. Juliana provided an update on the LinkedIn workshops with Issaquah Arts and sidewalk use permits.

c) **City Council Report Out (I)**

Presented by:

Farel Otieno, Economic Development Coordinator

The City is looking to dispose of City Hall Northwest (which is over by Lowes and Michaels) and will be listed for sale. The City is looking for additional space for City staff to make room for Issaquah Police in City Hall South. The City also is looking to build a fire station. Jen Davis Hayes announced that the Central Issaquah Pioneer Program and MFTE has passed.

d) **2024 Schedule (I)**

Presented by:

EVC Chair

There is a training for new members coming up on June 25th from 5:30-7:30 p.m. at Pickering Barn. The next EVC meeting is on June 18 due to the City holiday.

OTHER BUSINESS / ANNOUNCEMENTS

Kelly Richardson raised the concern of shoplifting and crime in Issaquah and how the Commission could support police resources. Jen Davis Hayes reported out on some of the efforts taking place to hire and retain police officers.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 PM.

The next meeting has been rescheduled from the 3rd Wednesday to Tuesday, June 18. The location will remain at Tibbetts Manor.