

CITY OF ISSAQUAH
Economic Vitality Commission

6:00 PM
January 15, 2025

MINUTES

Tibbetts Manor, 750 17th Ave.
NW, Issaquah

COMMISSION AND ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL PRESENT

Commissioners:

Chris Reichley, Chair
Anuradha Tadepalli, Vice Chair - virtual
Shalini Bansal
Christy Garrard – excused absence
Landon Halvorson – virtual
Kymberly Lee
Jennifer Larson
Nicoleta Mocanu – excused absence
Barb Pexa

Administration/Staff:

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

Adam Levensohn, Alternate – excused
absence
Jake Magill, Alternate
Kelly Richardson, Alternate

CALL TO ORDER

Jen Davis Hayes called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM. Commissioners MAGILL and RICHARDSON were called up to serve as regular members.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a) Minutes of December 18, 2024

RICHARDSON moved to approve the minutes. MAGILL seconded the motion.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No members of the public were present.

AGENDA ITEMS

- a) **Economic Vitality Commission Officer Elections (A)**

Presented by:

Jen Davis Hayes, Economic & Housing Development Manager

Jen Davis Hayes reviewed the duties of the Commission Chair and Vice Chair. At the last meeting, officer terms were changed from January 2025-December 2025. Over email, Chris Reichley was nominated for Chair. Jen Davis Hayes opened the nominations for Chair. No additional nominations were made. Through unanimous consent, Chris Reichley was nominated as Chair through December 2025.

Over email, Kelly Richardson and Anu Tadepalli were both nominated as Vice Chair. Jen Davis Hayes opened nominations. Hearing no additional nominations, each nominee spoke about their interest in the Vice Chair position and qualifications. A question was raised about if alternate members able to serve as Vice Chairs. The Commission's rules and regulations were

silent on this item. City Staff will inquire with the City Clerk and the election of the Vice Chair position will be postponed until the February meeting.

b) **Annual Work Plan (A)**

Presented by:

Commission Chair

The Commission discussed the draft workplan and make a few additional notes to consider in 2025 including preparation for the 2025 Club World Cup and the 2026 FIFA World Cup, destination stewardship update from Visit Issaquah, WSDOT construction projects including culverts and HWY 18 updates. Another idea would be to talk with a similar city's economic vitality commission or related business commission. This could be a joint meeting or a research project. This collaboration could be based around an overlapping topic like outdoor recreation, light rail, development incentives. If Multifamily Tax Exemption Program comes before Council again, EVC would like to have an opportunity to weigh in on it. Also, the Development Panel project could be a joint meeting with PPC.

MAGILL made a motion to adopt the 2025 Work Plan. LEE seconded the motion. No further discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

c) **2024 Annual Report (A)**

Presented by:

Chris Reichley, EVC Commissioner

The Commission reviewed the Annual Report as drafted by LARSON and REICHLEY. LEE suggested edits to the annual report to include a note that EVC consulted on the Pioneer Plan and Comprehensive Plan. EVC worked on the Business Loss Prevention. The Commission discussed that the Business Loss Prevention meeting item could be included in the ED Informational Update. Commissioners discussed adding hyperlinks and including our EDAP to demonstrate the EVC's priorities in 2025. The Commissioners also discussed adding Commissioner's workplaces on the signature line of the letter.

Bansal made a motion to approve the 2024 Annual Report as discussed. MAGILL seconded the motion. No further discussion, the Commission approved the motion unanimously.

All Commissioners are invited to the February 3 City Council meeting at 7:00 p.m. The time for the informational update is not yet known.

Commercial Space Committee Update (I)

Presented by:

Committee members

RICHARDSON gave an update on the Committee's work. Monica Wallace is an Issaquah broker and top real estate broker with significant experience in commercial displacement policies in other cities. For example, Bellevue is rolling back their commercial retention policies. Bellevue had a property that was required to have commercial space on the ground floor that could not be leased for over three years, which was immensely challenging for the property owner. Bellevue does have an adjustment in their code so that if the property cannot be leased for a commercial use, it can be used for other purposes. Redmond has also recently implemented commercial retention policies but it is too soon to see the results of these policies.

Monica hasn't yet seen other meaningful incentives that work in our region. Monica recommended that one of the strongest mechanisms to maintain commercial space is to retain and attract businesses to Issaquah.

The Committee has now heard from several speakers, and will convene in February to determine what, if anything, Issaquah should do to change policies or incentives around commercial space.

City staff work with brokers and Greater Seattle Partners to attract businesses in Issaquah. One potential project of the Commission is to work on our PowerPoint presentation that we give to “pitch” to businesses that we are trying to attract here.

REPORTS

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

Presented by:

All Commissioners

Good Lazy Donuts opening soon in Issaquah Highlands.

Regent Bakery & Café opened over the weekend

Mayuri Foods International opening this week or next. Mayuri Foods was here in Issaquah back in 2013 or so.

A new daycare at fifth and locust behind Atlas Apartments- Stepping Stones Montessori.

Nick’s Magnificent Playground 18,000 playground for kids opening March 1. Will have grocery store, fire station, etc. It will have a retail area. Also, will serve wine and beer for the parents.

Barnes and Nobles opening next month.

Coho Café is closing.

96 Front Street Café closed.

Ross closed.

Gossypium closing.

How Not To moved into Cascade Business Park. Outdoor recreation, sells custom climbing rope.

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

Presented by:

Economic Development Staff

Juliana da Cruz gave an update about the Farmer’s Market program (name to be determined) and the mountain biking regional partnership idea.

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

Presented by:

Jen Davis Hayes, Economic Development Director

City Council agreed to put on hold the plan for a new fire station as Eastside Fire & Rescue is re-evaluating how they own and operate buildings. The City Court will still move to the District Court. But the City will now start to focus on renovating the current City Hall for Police Use and finding a new City Hall.

OTHER BUSINESS / ANNOUNCEMENTS

LEE noted that the State of the City will occur on January 30. LEE wanted to give a kudos to the police who had an immediate response to an incident at Lakeside.

Applications for Commissions (including EVC) open at the end of this month and interviews will take place in March. The Commission discussed that having representation from the creative, outdoor, and retail industries could be useful. City staff will send out blurbs for EVC to assist with recruitment but direct recommendations are the most powerful tool for recruitment.

ADJOURNMENT

01-15-25 Economic Vitality Commission Minutes

The meeting was adjourned at 8:07 PM.

The next meeting is currently scheduled for February 19, 2025.

INQUIRIES

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

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