

CITY OF ISSAQUAH
Economic Vitality Commission

6:00 PM
 March 19, 2025

MINUTES

Tibbetts Manor, 750 17th Ave.
 NW, Issaquah

COMMISSION AND ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL PRESENT

Commissioners:

Chris Reichley, Chair
 Anuradha Tanepalli, Vice Chair - excused
 Shalini Bansal
 Landon Halvorson
 Kymberly Lee - excused
 Jennifer Larson - excused
 Barb Pexa

Administration/Staff:

Jen Davis Hayes, Economic & Housing
 Development Manager

Jake Magill, Alternate – REGULAR
 Kelly Richardson, Alternate - REGULAR

CALL TO ORDER

CHAIR REICHLEY called the meeting to order at 6:03 PM. MAGILL and RICHARDSON were called up to regular seats for this meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a) Minutes of February 19, 2025

HALVORSON moved to approve the minutes. RICHARDSON seconded the motion. The minutes were approved as provided.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments from Commission Vice-Chair LEE who was unable to attend the meeting were shared with the members prior to the meeting. These are her comments:

I am disappointed to miss the conversation tonight about affordable housing. I have some thoughts on the topic if you are willing/able to pass them along to the Commission.

As everyone is likely aware, today's economic conditions make it very challenging to make new housing projects work. The only exception might be townhomes, which are targeting high income / high demand areas with very little supply like Issaquah. That said, there are generally no requirements for townhome developments to incorporate affordable units in their developments in Issaquah.

I believe that our Commission should support the increase of housing supply - be it townhomes, apartments, single family homes or otherwise – for the benefit of our local businesses and their employees. The most powerful tool that the City has right now to convert a housing project that does not work into a housing project that does work is MFTE. In most cases, the temporary property tax exemption makes a project financeable that wouldn't otherwise be financeable without it. The added benefit to MFTE is that you are incorporating affordable units in with market

rate units, eliminating any stigma and creating a mix of unit options within the same project. With more housing supply and carefully crafted City programs, affordable housing should come with it!

AGENDA ITEMS

a) **Affordable Housing Introduction (I)**

Presented by:

Jen Davis Hayes, Economic & Housing Development Manager

The presentation was intended to provide a high-level overview of affordable and workforce housing to better general definition and Issaquah-specific data and programs. Commissioners posed many questions and discussed many aspects of affordability. As an informational presentation, no specific action has requested by staff.

b) **EVC Committees + External Meeting Updates (I)**

Presented by:

All Commissioners

RICHARDSON updated the group on her attendance to the Greater Seattle Partners export accelerator event.

RICHARDSON and BANSAL volunteered to participate in the City's Equity Assessment conducted by UW's Evans School of Public Administration. They have not attended initial interviews with the students, but are planned for the coming week.

The Commercial Space Retention Committee's next meeting will be the next day, March 20.

c) **Commissioner Recruitment Update (I)**

Presented by:

Jen Davis Hayes, Economic & Housing Development Manager

Chris Reichley & Kym Lee, Commission Leadership

We received 22 applications, including re-appointment applicants and four from Costco. Seventeen selected EVC as the first choice (option to select up to 3 Commissions). All 17 have been contacted to complete a follow-up survey and to schedule an interview on Friday, March 28.

REPORTS

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

Presented by:

All Commissioners

- Good Lazy Donuts has been a great success – selling out within hours.
- Dan Gui Chinese Cuisine had a grand opening last Friday.
- JoJo's Café will locate in the former Subway on the corner of Front St N and Alder. They will provide coffee and pastries.

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

Presented by:
Economic Development Staff

- Homegrown Retail program applications closed February 28. We received 23 applications and a panel selected 8 home-based businesses to participate in the program. All 23 applicants will be invited to the workshop to learn best practices. Thanks to Chair REICHLEY for participating in the panel.
- Village Theatre has contacted us to host a business reception in April. Commissioners will be invited once a date is set.

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

Presented by:
Jen Davis Hayes, Economic & Housing Development Manager

d) **2024 Schedule (I)**

Presented by:
Chris Reichley, Chair

OTHER BUSINESS / ANNOUNCEMENTS

- HALVERSON inquired about a youth position on the EVC. DAVIS HAYES responded that while the EVC does not have a specific youth position, we have piloted a youth position in the past and can explore future collaboration. Youth are also eligible to apply for any open position on any City board or commission.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 PM.

The next meeting is currently scheduled for April 16, 2025.

INQUIRIES

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

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