



CITY OF EAST PROVIDENCE
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Open Session Minutes February 18th, 2021

Held through Zoom Virtual Meeting Conference Session

I. Call to Order

The open session of the meeting was called to order by Chairwoman Botelho at 7:02 pm. Those identified present in open session were Chairwoman Botelho, Mr. Radway, Mr. Killian, Mr. Corria, Mr. Leonardo, Mr. Brun, Mr. Lis, Mr. Moran (staff) and Mr. DeCosta, legal staff. Also in attendance was Laura McNamara from the East Providence Area Chamber of Commerce.

II. Executive Session

On a Motion by Mr. Radway and Seconded by Mr. Killian, the Commission in attendance at the open session unanimously voted to enter into Executive Session pursuant to RIGL 42-46-5(a)(7) to discuss the investment of public funds where the premature disclosure would adversely affect the public interest.

The Executive session commenced to deliberate on New Business Item A. - Roots Lacrosse – Covid-19 Business Assistance Loan Request

Reconvening of Open Session

Chairwoman Botelho re-convened the Commission into open session at 7:44 pm through a roll call vote. The Commission unanimously voted to re-convene in Open Session with the following attendees voting:

Voting: Chairwoman Botelho – Aye

Mr. Leonardo - Aye

Mr. Radway - Aye

Mr. Killian –Aye

Mr. Corria -Aye

Mr. Lis - Aye

Mr. Brun - Aye

Mr. Moran –Aye

On a Motion by Mr. Radway and Seconded by Mr. Killian, the Commission unanimously voted by roll call vote to seal the Executive Session meeting minutes.

Voting: Chairwoman Botelho – Aye

Mr. Leonardo - Aye

Mr. Radway - Aye

Mr. Killian –Aye

Mr. Corria -Aye

Mr. Lis - Aye

Mr. Brun - Aye

Mr. Moran –Aye

IV. Reconvene In Open Session

Under Open Session Mr. Moran provided a summary of the Roots Lacrosse loan vote as follows:

The Commission voted to table the Roots Lacrosse decision pending Mr. Sean Murray being able to answer several questions raised by the Commission and that in order to answer these questions, Mr. Murray would need to attend a future Commission meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

B. Economic Development Self-Assessment Survey Discussion

Chairwoman Botelho thanked Commission member Melissa Linhares for preparing an excellent report for the Commission's use. She indicated that she would eventually like to discuss all 14 duties that are listed in the ordinance, but this evening she wanted to focus on the three duties that the Commission indicated in the survey were the least successful of the Commission's duties. These three were identified as duties 6, 7 and 14. The Commission discussed duty number 14, which covered the Commission's review of extended tax stabilization applications for an advisory recommendation to the City Council. Mr. Moran indicated that the Commission does not review standard five year stabilization applications as this is an administrative action under the ordinance. Extended stabilization applications are only rarely submitted to the City and that may be the reason why the Commission is of the opinion that they are not completing this duty effectively. Mr. Moran indicated that the last extended stabilization application received and reviewed by the Commission was the University/Brown Medicine extended stabilization application back in 2015. Only projects with an estimated value in excess of \$5,000,000 are eligible to seek extended stabilization. As a result of the discussion Chairwoman Botelho indicated that the Commission does review these applications but doesn't do it on a frequent basis. Mr. Moran agreed.

Relating to duty number 6 Chairwoman Botelho read the duty which states: "To encourage the proper zoning and orderly development of areas suitable for commercial development of the city." Chairwoman Botelho felt that the Commission does not have any authority over zoning administration and therefore is not sure how much the Commission can really contribute to this duty. Mr. Lis said that the Commission is, in his opinion, has more of a reactive role as it relates to policy issues such as zoning and as such was in agreement with Chairwoman Botelho's opinion. The Commission was generally of the opinion that it was not their role to generate independent opinion on issues like zoning and that opinions might be provided only if the city Council were to seek an opinion from the Commission and the opinion would only be provided if the opinion of the members was unanimous. Mr. Radway felt that this issue should not really be

the Commission's role and that the Commission's primary duty is to review and approve loans that are submitted under the City's Commercial loan program.

Chairwoman Botelho felt that the one area the Commission may be able to focus more on is the marketing of the City for economic development. Mr. Brun asked that perhaps the Commission could receive more information at each meeting that explains the economic development activity that is occurring on the City to keep them informed of the activities. Mr. Killian agreed.

The last duty Chairwoman Botelho wanted to discuss was duty number 7 which states "To aid the city administration, city council and mayor in the attraction of new businesses and encouraging the expansion of existing industries and businesses".

Chairwoman Botelho said that this seems to point back to marketing the City for economic development. Mr. Killian said that if the Commission is informed on the current economic development activities, it should be possible for the Commission to more effectively market the City for economic development.

Chairwoman Botelho suggests that perhaps the Commission might establish subcommittees within the Commission that would deal with marketing or perhaps Comprehensive Plan preparation. Mr. Killian suggested that the Commission may also want to set up a loan application vetting sub-committee to review loans before they are forwarded to the full Commission. The Commission agree that a vetting sub-committee was an excellent idea. Mr. DeCosta said as long as the sub-committee did not constitute a quorum, then they could deliberate on the vetting of loan applications.

Chairwoman Botelho indicated that the Commission can discuss additional duties as ranked in the survey, at future Commission meetings.

Mr. Moran encouraged all Commission members to visit the City's Comprehensive Plan webpage and fill out the survey that is currently online.

Mr. Moran indicated that he would have a staff report at the next meeting indicating the latest economic development activities going on in the City. Vice-Chairman Leonardo said that he would also have some information on the research he has completed on waterfront development activities.

V. Adjournment

On a Motion by Mr. Killian and seconded by Mr. Leonardo, the Commission unanimously voted to adjourn.

The meeting adjourned at 8:42 pm
Respectfully submitted,

James Moran

Recording Secretary