



CITY OF EAST PROVIDENCE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Minutes of January 20th, 2022 7:00 pm

Held through Zoom Virtual Meeting Conference

The meeting was called to order by Chairwoman Botelho at 7:02 pm. Those identified present through roll call vote were Chairwoman Botelho, Mr. Radway, Mr. Corria, Mr. Leonardo, Mr. Brun, Mr. McNelis, Mr. McManus, Ms. Bateman, Ms. McNamara (East Providence Area Chamber) and Mr. Moran (staff).

I. Call to Order

a. Approval of Minutes of December 16, 2021

On a Motion by Mr. Leonardo and Seconded by Mr. MacManus, the Commission unanimously voted to approve the December 16, 2021 minutes as submitted.

II. New Business

A. Approval of 2022 Meeting Calendar

The Commission accepted through unanimous vote, the 2022 Calendar as submitted.

B. Open Discussion on Economic Development Issues in East Providence

The availability of ARPA funds to fund our loan program was discussed. Mr. Leonardo explained that due to federal restrictions the ARPA fund couldn't be used for revolving loan fund purposes. He did indicate that in speaking with the Rhode Island EDA representative that we could apply for revolving loan funding assistance through the Economic Adjustment Assistance program. The application was due at the end of March and that due to the City's experience administering a loan program, we would likely score highly to receive funding assistance. It was indicated that ARPA funding could fund a façade improvement program and that it was the intention of the City to re-start this program.

Mr. Moran discussed a loan request that will be coming to the Economic Development Commission at its February meeting. The application is from Enotap, a wine distributor who is leasing space in the Phillipsdale Landing property. They will be applying for funding to establish a tasting room at their facility. Mr. Moran indicated it was his intention to forward all application materials to members via Dropbox. Commission members all agreed that this was an acceptable format to submit materials to them.

Mr. Leonardo discussed the new economic development GIS map that he was developing that would highlight new economic development projects in the City. The mapping tool was displayed as part of the discussion. The map would be placed on the City's economic development page: www.eastprovidencebusiness.com. Mr. Leonardo said that the map was a work still in progress and that he would report back to the Commission as the map tool develops. He would welcome any feedback from the Commission on how the map could be improved. It was noted that the City of Providence and the Town of South Kingstown uses this mapping tool to publicize projects in their community.

Mr. Leonardo discussed the tourism, outdoor recreation and open space EDA grant application that was due at the end of January. The City will be applying for funding under this program and will be focusing the application on recommendations that were made in the Beta study for the short and midterm improvements including wayfinding signage and other physical improvements that were described within the report.

Mr. Brun asked about the apartment complex that was approved on Waterman Avenue and when construction was expected to begin. Mr. Moran said that he expected construction would begin in March or April of 2022.

Ms. McNamara inquired about the status of the Wampanoag Meadows apartment complex development. Mr. Moran indicated that the project is moving forward and that they will be applying for tax stabilization under the City's ordinance as apartments are now eligible to apply under the program. At this time they have received approval to install foundations and should be starting on that aspect of the development in February or March as the weather breaks.

Chairwoman Botelho asked about the status of the Platt Watters School property bids. Mr. Moran indicated that the City received back 17 responses with price bids anywhere from \$55,000 to \$111,000. Several bidders submitted multiple bids. The bids will be tabulated and a decision on any action will be taken shortly. It would be expected that construction on these properties could commence in 2022 and perhaps 2023.

Chairwoman Botelho asked if it was possible to place projects on the map and break it down by sections of the City, such as Riverside and Rumford. Mr. Moran brought up the South Kingstown map as an example that showed all projects within the town. Chairwoman Botelho asked if the projects could be synced with the Assessment records. Mr. Leonardo stated that at his time this capability is not possible. Perhaps at some point in the future this option could be investigated.

C. Discussion on funding request of Stephen DeMello

Mr. Moran discussed an inquiry by a Mr. DeMello who was interested in requesting funding from the Commission to purchase a trailer truck rig. The inquiry was brought to the Commission to seek feedback from the group as the City has not typically funded vehicles under our program. After discussion the group agreed that this type of purchase was not eligible under the City's policies for funding vehicles. Mr. Moran said that he would speak to Mr. DeMello. The Commission did indicate that if Mr. DeMello was interested in applying for a microloan to fund operating costs, that he could potentially seek funding through the microloan program.

III. Staff Report

A. Based on discussion under Agenda item II (C) above there was no staff report provided.

IV. Adjournment

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:48 pm

Respectfully submitted,

James Moran

Recording Secretary