

**City of Rowlett**  
**Economic Development Advisory Board**

**Tuesday, November 16, 2021**  
**8:30 A.M.**

***Meeting Minutes***

**1. CALL TO ORDER.**

Chairman Mick Donnelly called the Rowlett Economic Development Advisory Board meeting to order at 8:38 A.M. on November 16, 2021. In attendance: Brian Funderburk, Chairman Mick Donnelly, Michael Gallops, Chris Kizziar, Eva Hummel, Mark Hall, Michael Weaver, Sheila Hair, Paula Allen, and Larry Glick. Staff: Erika Saracho, Jennifer Stewart, and Libbey Tucker. Absent was Jim Grabenhorst and Council member Whitney Laning.

**2. PUBLIC INPUT ON ANY AGENDA ITEM.**

There was no public input.

**3. CONSIDER APPROVING THE MINUTES FROM THE OCTOBER 19, 2021 MEETING.**

A motion was made by Michael Weaver and seconded by Eva Hummel to approve the October 19, 2021, minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

**4. BOARD MEMBERS SHARE TOPICS AND IDEAS RELATED TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.**

**5. CITY KNOWLEDGE AND LEARNING ITEMS.**

**a. Economic Development Department Update:**

Erika Saracho, Economic Development Specialist, provided an update on BRE activity. She shared information on new businesses, business visits and outreach. There were six assists and check-ins that included Signature Nail & Spa, Marco's Pizza, Liberty Hair Stylists, Rowlett Country Mart, The Rowlett Dentist and Arboledas. Libbey noted that Wisp and Willow had recently opened on Main Street, they had an online store and decided to go brick and mortar.

Also discussed was the job fair in October, the event was successful. We had 100 people walk through and it was well attended. The high school had their career fair that day, so we had students come over for our job fair. We shared the list of people who registered for the job fair with the businesses that attended.

Next, Libbey Tucker, Assistant Director of Economic Development, shared that we have a full year to report on sales tax revenue, for the year we were 15.6% over what was forecasted. The monthly sales tax revenues continue to come in above what we forecast. This month is 13% over forecasted amount and 6% more than the same time last year by \$43,805. For the quarter year over year, it was up 18.82%.

The monthly "By The Numbers" statistics showed there were seven new businesses and twenty-eight new jobs created for the month of October. For the month there were ten Certificates of Occupancy some were relocations or moves, with over \$3 million in commercial building permits. We had two new commercial building permits and five existing commercial building permits. Website views and downloads continue to increase as we do more marketing. Our newsletters going out are getting attention and people are clicking on the website. Erika had six Business Retention & Expansion visits this month. Taxable sales for the previous quarter were up 18%.

Erika discussed the year over year changes, for new businesses they were at a steady increase in 2017 and declined in 2018. We saw an increase again in 2021. Jobs created we had a high of 515 in 2016, then we saw a decrease and this year we saw numbers close to what we had in 2016. We had a peak of estimated value of construction-existing buildings in 2018 at \$22 million, then there was a drop in 2019, at our lowest of 5.6 million and steadily increasing. Libbey noted that the spike in 2018 had to do with the hospital and the renovations that were done, Brian noted that they had added a new wing to the hospital and had renovated the existing building. Erika then discussed new commercial construction had a peak in 2018 but is steadily decreasing into 2021. Libbey noted that we will see a spike with Sapphire Bay construction, but we think the spike in 2018 was the multi-family projects.

Libbey discussed general prospect engagement and the interest. We have been meeting with Avalon Development, Peloton Land Solutions and Peinado Construction. Avalon Development reached out to us; they are based in Phoenix but opened an office in Dallas. They have an interest in a commercial piece at Bayside. There are ten acres on the corner of Dalrock and the frontage road. They are reworking their plan for that space and Libbey asked if they have control of the property and they said they are getting close. Regarding North Shore Libbey has been going to events with Site Selectors. She attended the Site Selectors Guild in Dallas and there were twenty-one site selectors in attendance. They presented what they are working on, what they are looking for, and what are the trends.

She would then meet with them at a discussion table, and they were interested in Sapphire Bay then she would let them know about what we have at North Shore. Holt Lunsford Commercial are still the developer working on the interior part of North Shore. Altered Construction Group was another site selector interested in North Shore. The submittal for the Jackson Shaw property is due on November 22, after submittal they will be working through our process.

Erika Saracho discussed information from Underpinned, our PR marketing firm. She noted that we are trying to expand and be more intersectional and reach all capacities we can. The past month we worked on targeting different segments such as manufacturing day, women owned businesses and diversity. We showcased the award from the International Economic Development Council for Excellence in Economic Development. We received the Bronze Rank Honor for the Village of Rowlett Downtown Pitchbook. The press release was distributed to twelve media groups, regionally and nationally. For October we focused on the events downtown such as Harvest Market on Main, Barks, Brews, and Brats, always popular and Main St. Festival and Holiday Parade. She noted these pages are always popular on our website. Our October Marketing Update showed we had over one thousand visitors to our Village of Rowlett Downtown site and the top locations were from Dallas, Garland, and Rowlett. Our followers on Facebook are predominantly Rowlett, same with our Instagram followers.

Erika discussed what's coming to Rowlett, same businesses discussed previously along highway 66. Libbey mentioned we have had more interest in drive thru coffee shops. Dutch Brothers have shown interest and have had information meetings with staff. 151 Coffee has also shown some interest in opening a store in Rowlett. Chris Kizziar spoke with the owner of La Hacienda; he is interested in putting a steak house in downtown at the Cotton Gin. Chris referred him to speak with Libbey regarding the Cotton Gin.

Libbey gave an update of The Big Picture, Commercial Real Estate vacancies have gone up a little since September. We have each category that has some space under construction.

Regarding Sapphire Bay, Libbey showed the new drone video of the progress at Sapphire Bay.

**b. Rowlett Chamber/Chamber Foundation Update:** Mark Hall provided the Chamber updates; they added five new members for the month. They had a couple ribbon cuttings, Wisp and Willow and Momentum Wealth Strategies. The monthly luncheon was held at the Luxe, next month the luncheon will be back at the Rowlett Community Center. The Golf Tournament was a success.

Mark Hall and Michael Gallops attended some training for chair and chair elects. The Chamber did receive accreditation with four stars. Mark mentioned they need a part-time bookkeeper. Sheila gave update for the Chamber Foundation. They voted to sponsor Santa's Workshop and Tinsel & Trivia this year. They have two checks to deliver that have been previously approved. She mentioned November 27, was Shop Small Saturday and they have the Sunset Santa 5k that day.

**c. GISD Update:** Larry Glick gave update for GISD. Larry attended the State Marching Contest, this was Sachse first time going for the state marching contest. They have a meeting November 16 and will be approving their comprehensive annual financial report which will show their highest fund balance savings account. Libbey discussed a meeting with the Superintendent of Garland, Principal of Rowlett High School and Larry Glick about how they are preparing students for our workforce. Garland ISD has 321 CTE courses and they offer industry-based certifications. The students can get certifications through GISD paid for by the district. Last year they issued 3,800 certifications. Larry mentioned they are getting some backlash from a few parents regarding masks, Trustees around the state are resigning.

**d. Knowledge Topic — Fire Station 2 Tour:** Chief Neil Howard gave a brief overview of the Fire Station. Members of the board took tour of Fire Station 2.

**6. PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT. MEMBERS OF THE BOARD AND/OR STAFF MAY MAKE ANNOUNCEMENTS OF LOCAL CIVIC EVENTS. NO MEMBER OF THE BOARD OR COMMISSION MAY DISCUSS NOR TAKE ANY ACTION WITH REGARD TO THE ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

**7. MEMBERS OF THE BOARD MAY REQUEST TOPICS FOR FUTURE AGENDA MEETINGS. NO MEMBER OF THE BOARD OR COMMISSION MAY DISCUSS ANY OF THE REQUESTED SUBJECTS UNTIL SUCH MATTER HAS BEEN PROPERLY PLACED ON A POSTED AGENDA.**


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**10. ADJOURNMENT.**

The meeting was adjourned by Chairman Mick Donnelly at approximately 10:36 A.M.



Mick Donnelly, Chairman

1-18-22

Date Approved



Libbey Tucker, Assigned City Staff

