

City of Rowlett
Economic Development Advisory Board

Tuesday, September 20, 2022
8:30 A.M.

Meeting Minutes

1. CALL TO ORDER.

Chairman Mick Donnelly, called the Rowlett Economic Development Advisory Board meeting to order at 8:30 A.M. on September 20, 2022. In attendance: Chairman Mick Donnelly, Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Debra Shinder, Larry Glick, Sheila Hair, Chris Kizziar, Mark Hall, Michael Gallops, Michael Weaver and Paula Allen. Staff: Charles Mazarakes and Claudia Frausto. Absentees were Blake Margolis, Brian Funderburk and Libbey Tucker.

2. CONSIDER APPROVING THE MINUTES FROM THE AUUGUST 18, 2022 MEETING.

A motion was made by Michael Weaver and seconded by Mark Hall to approve the August 18, 2022 minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

3. PUBLIC INPUT ON ANY AGENDA ITEM.

Larry Glick spoke about the need for more public art and landscape art around the city.

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

None.

5. City Knowledge and Learning Items

a. Economic Development Department Update: Charles Mazarakes, Assistant Director, provided the business retention update and new business information. There were 5 new business – Jomas Car Audio, Bella Rose Beautique, Kwench Juice Café and Napa Auto Parts with 20 jobs created. He highlighted Kwench Juice Café as a fresh juice bar made with no sugar; farm to blender to consumer. BRE visits for the month of August where with Resthaven Funeral Home, Winfield’s Cookies, Minced Meal Prep, Cheesesteak House and Drizle Coffee. Resthaven Funeral Home held an open house event that showcased their renovations and improvements. Winfield’s Cookies is still working with Dallas College SBDC to help them with their website, marketing plans and social media presence and has interest in small business grants. Minced Meal Prep is still looking for a location in Rowlett for a “ghost kitchen” operation to be able to share the kitchen with other users, as they have outgrown their current space. They are considering multiple places to expand in Rowlett, but the closet “ghost kitchen” is in Garland but has no openings currently.

Cheesesteak House reported a very good soft opening and are now officially open. They are excited and are wanting to become a part of the Chamber and participate in a ribbon cutting for the Rowlett location. Drizle Coffee opening date is pending due to their build out still in process. They are projected to be a refreshing sit-and-sip coffee shop business rather than only drive thru.

Charles continued with the update on sales taxes which showed 14% above forecasted amount by \$88,809, 10% more than the same month last year in 2021 by \$67,973. Relative to permits, Charles acknowledged the slowdown in new commercial building permits in Rowlett for the month of August, with seven existing commercial building permits pulled. Nine certificates of occupancy were issued for new business with 20 new jobs created. Website pages views are up at 2,432 with 295 website downloads and five BRE visits to local business for the month of August.

Charles spoke about the Downtown Manager position noting applications were received from many qualified candidates with downtown management experience. Interviews will soon be underway. The FY23 budget is to include a Downtown Strategic Plan in partnership with Community Development as well as \$60,000 in landscaping funds to be managed by Parks. The Downtown Manager will oversee the Strategic Plan process and provide input on the landscaping plan. The Texas Downtown Association tour shed a light on the need for elevated landscaping in the downtown area. Parks and Recreation in the process of taking bids and narrowing down to the best choice for initial cost, design, and upkeep cost.

Charles shared the departmental training and marketing opportunities. Libbey's absence was due to attending the International Economic Development Council Annual Conference in Oklahoma City. Charles is currently attending Leadership Rowlett and will be attending the Texas Economic Development Council Annual Conference in October. Claudia Frausto, Administrative Assistant will be taking the Basic Economic Development Course in November.

In providing the marketing update for Economic Development, Charles spoke about EDOiQ and Wavteq as new partners with the department. EDOiQ will be our new CRM to help us manage business, commercial realtor and prospect contacts. It can also track project status and has other functions to improve our work flows. They will also be building a new web site for us. We are transitioning from using Executive Pulse for the CRM function.

Charles addressed the transition from using the company Underpinned, Inc. for economic development marketing services to Wavteq, which was selected as part of a competitive bid process. The primary representative from Wavteq will be the same person we have been working with at Underpinned and they have a much larger staff to support our needs.

Flyer View is a company who will be updating the community profile and the large Rowlett maps with updated business. We hope to have updated community handouts in time to use at the NTCAR Expo in November.

Newsletters sent out in the month of August showed the available properties update and was the most popular newsletter to date. It generated a lot of interest with developers calling in about the properties. LinkedIn was the most used social media platform from reported interactions. Updates on Facebook included the reminder of the Downtown survey, Salad and Go opening and the availability of land sites. The Downtown social sites showcased the Farmers Market, Movies on Main Street and the giveaway which featured a \$25 Visa gift card for the winner to spend at the Rowlett business they left a review for.

During the tour of downtown Fate, they showed a report that gave insight to the value per acre of Terra Lago Apartment Complex, as it is the highest taxable value in Rockwall County. This inspired a need to begin working on a similar model showing true taxable amount per acre for locations in Rowlett. UT Dallas is providing help with this research. This will help us to know where the high value businesses/residences are located and where the highest value locations are in Rowlett for future business.

Other new businesses coming soon is Cheesesteak House, Drizl Coffee-with no hard date to open, Planet Fitness is hoping to open at the end of November and Crumbl Cookies is also opening in November. Staff discussed upcoming outreach opportunities for the Committee which include the DiversCity Event on October 15 and the NTCAR Expo on November 3. It was decided that the Committee would not participate in the DiversCity event.

b. Rowlett Chamber/Chamber Foundation Update:

Mark Hall, Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce, gave the Chamber update. The Chamber welcomed seven new members. Mark announced the ongoing success of series of eight classes that are catering to small business owners or aspiring entrepreneurs that will be hosted throughout the remainder of the year. Classes cover topics like marketing, financing a business, budgeting, and paying taxes, etc. A How to Maximize your Membership event will be held for current members to use their membership to raise awareness for their business in Rowlett. Rowlett Area Chamber 32nd Annual Golf Classic to be held on September 29 with sponsorship, marketing, and volunteer opportunities still available. The Make a Connection events every Thursday morning are showing steady numbers as it is a great networking event for Rowlett Business owners. Ribbon cuttings for the month of August were for Home2Suites and Kwench Juice Café. The Chamber Luncheon was very successful as many of the Garland school district teachers and personnel attended, including the featured speaker Superintendent Dr. Ricardo López. The position for membership coordinator is open and they plan to hire soon as great candidates applied. The Board finalized the Chamber's three-year strategic plan and will be

presented to City Council during their annual update later today to showcase the Chamber objectives and upcoming plans and projects. Rowlett Leadership Class of 31 is ongoing with good representation from the city. Sheila Hair stated there was nothing to report from the Chamber Foundation.

c. GISD Update:

Larry Glick, GISD Board member, gave the update on school district. GISD superintendent Dr. López came to speak about the state of the district at the Chamber Luncheon. He noted the Texas Education Agency (TEA) rating for the district is 87 (out of 100), which the Board feels is good given the challenges the District has faced throughout COVID and the socioeconomic makeup of the district. Goals and strategic planning are underway as the Garland district was very close to becoming an A district.

A Bond Committee was formed that will discuss the needs for the district on the potential May ballot if that's what the trustees call for. They are hoping to have a presentation ready in January for the school board for the May Ballot due dates. The Bond will help with schools that are aging and bring new technology for the benefit of the students, while keeping in mind inflation and the cost of building supplies. The district's population of in-school students is increasing vs. online student numbers. Garland schoolteacher vacancies are down district-wide compared to the national teacher shortage. A higher starting pay at \$60,000 a year and better benefits helped greatly in filling positions as it showed that the Garland district cares for their teachers. Bus driver shortages are still an issue.

d. Knowledge Topic:

Knowledge Topic – Future DART plans and community projects - Rob Smith

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.

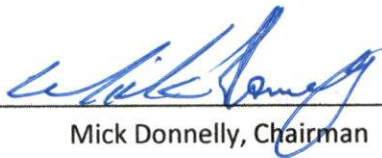
- Charles informed members of Celebrate DiverseCity Event-Saturday, Oct. 15, 4-7 p.m.-Downtown, and all committees are being encouraged to host a table at the event.
- Charles also informed members of N. TX Commercial Association of Realtors Expo (NTCAR), November 3, 2:30 – 4:30, Sheraton Downtown. He encouraged attendance.
- Reminder of the new City hours of operation that have been posted and shared throughout the city effective September 29, 2022.
- Reminder that the City Council will have their City Council Meeting later that night, a few highlights included: Fiscal Year 2023 Adopted Budget, amending the Master Fee Schedule and Jackson Shaw for incentives related to the Lakeview Business District.

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.

Request for Arts and Humanities Commission representative to speak about the plans for more public art in the city.

8. ADJOURNMENT.

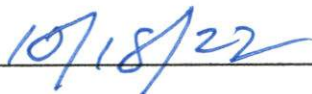
The meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:05 A.M.



Mick Donnelly, Chairman



Charles Mazarakes, Assigned City Staff



Date Approved