

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

**Tuesday, August 15, 2023**

**at the Village of Rowlett**  
**8:30 A.M.**

**Meeting Minutes**

**1. CALL TO ORDER.**

Chairman Mick Donnelly, called the Rowlett Economic Development Advisory Board meeting to order at 8:32 A.M. on August 15, 2023. In attendance: Chairman Mick Donnelly, Vice Chair Eva Hummel, Paula Allen, Larry Glick, Michael Gallops, Tori Owens, Chris Kizziar, Blake Margolis, Jeff Winget, Michael Weaver. Staff: Charles Mazarakes, Melinda Bartram, Claudia Frausto, Munal Mauladad, and Libbey Tucker. Absent was City Manager David Hall.

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

None.

**3. CONSIDER APPROVING THE MINUTES FROM THE JULY 18, 2023 MEETING.**

A motion was made by Michael Weaver and seconded by Eva Hummel to approve the July 18, 2023 minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

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

Chairman Mick Donnelly wanted to recognize the development changes specifically in the downtown area. Libbey mentioned an RFP for the Downtown area is being prepared for board review, plans to present the final review to council will be in September.

**5. City Knowledge and Learning Items**

**a) Economic Development Department Update:**

Charles Mazarakes, Assistant Director, provided the business retention update and new business information. New businesses listed for July are Hunt Regional Physical Therapy with three new jobs and Chick-Fil-A East with ninety new jobs and announced Buffalo Wild Wings To Go is coming soon. BRE visits for the month of July were with Southwest Scaffolding, C & D Commercial Services, Dallas Ladder, Bounce N' More, Beacon Harbor Health and Rehab, D-Bat Lakeside.

Libbey Tucker, Director of Economic Development continued with the sales tax report showing \$877,919 YTD, which is \$63,223 or 7.8% above forecast and \$153,696 for the month of June or 21.2% more than the same month last year. Three Certificates of Occupancy were granted with three existing commercial building/remodel permits pulled for the month of July coming in with a \$854,752 value. Website page views reported 2270. Ended the month with six total business retention and expansion visits.

Staff will now be reporting the number of active engaged prospects, prospect outreach (developers, realtors, business leads) and outreach opportunities (speaking engagements and networking events). Staff wanted to share metrics on data regarding business attraction efforts and how it all comes together. Engaged Prospects are the active projects that staff is working on as a direct liaison for questions or concerns in Rowlett. Prospect Outreach is a metric of one-on-ones with developers, realtors and leads that could be from the state or any form of leads including cold calls. Staff has had increasing opportunities for networking and speaking engagements regarding development updates and outreach. For example, in August Libbey presented at the Urban Land Institute on a panel with Grand Prairie ED. She spoke about the Sapphire Bay and North shore projects which resulted in five individual leads.

Melinda Bartram, Downtown Manager, gave the Downtown Rowlett updates, noting Rowlett hosted the first meeting of the Northeast DFW Downtown Managers Consortium which included four other communities. Next meeting to be scheduled in October in Plano. The group's purpose is to connect and share information and discuss what is coming up in the next quarter. They also shared ideas for grants, unique downtown events, tips for business retention and business recruitment. Melinda presented the Film Friendly Texas certification guidelines and application to the Mayor and City Council for review and discussion. Plans to present a Resolution to adopt the guidelines and fee schedule are underway in September as the action was welcomed. The Downtown logo was approved and will be followed up with branding strategies.

Libbey provided the marketing updates on the LinkedIn ad campaign, which was created in partnership with WavTeq, our economic development marketing firm, that is a carousel-style ad that targets specific groups and professions that the team designated. 86,000 people have seen the campaign so far, generating interesting information regarding who is looking at our ad and how long they are looking at it. Charles gave a breakdown of the impressions of the ad data, including location and industry insights, with New York being the lead.

The department had a great opportunity to visit and network with Sulphur Springs ED learning about programs they are doing, touring the industrial park and the downtown, and learned about their recruitment efforts. The Sulphur Springs city manager Marc Maxwell talked about the EB5 investment program and how communities could join their efforts.

Regarding social media efforts, Libbey noted that an article promoting Rowlett's top 15 restaurants was highlighted, as well as property locations in Rowlett that are available. Many other posts also gained traction. Melinda continued with the downtown Rowlett blog post on the many ways individuals can support local businesses and celebrate independent retailers' month in Downtown Rowlett.

Libbey mentioned how the Village of Rowlett development came to be and noted that plans to fill the vacant spaces are ongoing. The Skyview development is set to be underway soon, bringing a mixed-use development to Downtown.

**b) Rowlett Chamber/Chamber Foundation Update:**

Tori Owens, Chairman of the Board for the Chamber of Commerce, gave the Chamber and Chamber Foundation updates. The Chamber Foundation awarded two sign grants, (Contractsure and Counterculture). Leadership Rowlett Class 32 applications are now closed for the new year. The 33rd Rowlett Area Chamber Golf Classic will be September 21<sup>st</sup> and the Chamber is still seeking sponsors, players, volunteers, and items to raffle for donations.

The Rowlett Economic Development team together with the Rowlett Chamber will be hosting a half-day event, Economic Development Summit on September 27 which will be held at the RCC. Libbey added that the event will present a panel of speakers including a commercial lender, developer, commercial realtor, and a representative from the Dallas Chamber. Michael Gallops also added that State Representative Angie Chen Button will also be speaking on Texas Economic Development legislation updates from this last session. Another person that will be highlighted is Megan Mauro from the Texas Association of Businesses. The Chamber and the ED team are still gathering other individual speakers. The goal is to have a large regional presence to share and exchange economic development information.

Lastly, there are still a few openings for the Tuscany Trip in October; anyone in the community is welcome to sign up at the Chamber if interested.

Michael Gallops informed the group on the workforce & talent development program that helps young adults serve the business community by determining and meeting its workforce needs. The program is for high school seniors from eight area high schools. Each participant receives a certificate of employability after completing 10 hours of workshops focused on work ethic training, interview tactics, career exploration, and critical thinking; also known as "Soft Skills". This credentialing program will pave the way for career success by giving them transferable knowledge and skills they can actively demonstrate in the workplace. Each session will be led by a small business owner or leader in the business community. Students who complete the program become eligible to interview for internships and will receive a stipend to be used for professional clothing through grant funding. Donations are encouraged and information on how to do that can be found on the website or by simply calling the Rowlett Chamber. Overall, the program aims to empower high school seniors, bridge the gap between education and the workforce, and meet the needs of the community by fostering a skilled, prepared, and motivated future workforce.

**c) GISD Update:**

Larry Glick, GISD Board member: The first tranche of bonds from the recent Bond Election were successfully sold out in the first month. GISD continues to have the highest bond rating in the State of Texas with the best credit rating. As a member of the GISD security committee, Larry advised that they have been extremely proactive in meeting the State requirements of providing training for armed SRO's at almost every campus. Larry also mentioned that Dr. Lopez gave an inspiring speech to the teachers, and strongly encouraged them to share their professional achievements with their parents. This is to emphasize the talent that the district has hired, the best of the best. In the past, new teachers have gotten two days for training and with full staffing now they are receiving a week of training. Larry pointed out the kept promises/benefits from past 2014 Bonds as GISD was able to host the National

Long course swim meet at the natatorium where kids from all over the country participated. As well as the US Junior National water polo Championships holding the final at the natatorium. UIL water sports are now officially apart of Rowlett High school sports. Recognition was given of the economic impact by Vice Chair Eva Hummel of the influx of people coming into the city benefiting the local hotels, retail stores, and restaurants. Larry is working with GISD Planetarium for the entire district to celebrate a Total Solar Lunar Eclipse event that will take place April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2024, that will cover Rowlett.

d) **Knowledge Topic** – Knowledge Topic – Melinda Bartram presented the Downtown Survey Results.

**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.**

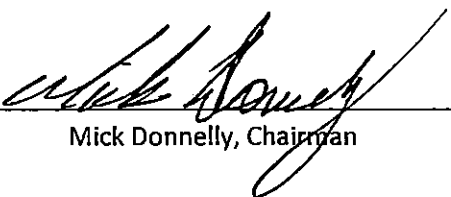
- Board and commissions applications are being accepted if any member needs to reapply or apply to join any board or commissions for Rowlett.
- Libbey encouraged attendance for the Economic Development Summit on September 27, 2023 and invited the board to attend the half-day event that will have speakers from several commercial developers, Texas Association of Business, Dallas Regional Chamber, and the Governor's office.


**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.**

- North Shore update/tour requested previously by Chairman Mick Donnelly at the June meeting which team is still working on.
- Incentives policy updates and changes to be added to future agenda.
- Board requested Planetarium tour, Staff to coordinate date with Larry Glick.

**8. ADJOURNMENT.**

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:36 A.M.

  
Mick Donnelly, Chairman

  
Charles Mazarakes, Assigned City Staff

9-19-2023

Date Approved