

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

Tuesday, September 19, 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 8:30 A.M. on September 19, 2023. In attendance: Chairman Mick Donnelly, Vice Chair Eva Hummel, Larry Glick, Michael Gallops, Tori Owens, Blake Margolis, Jeff Winget, Michael Weaver. Staff: Charles Mazarakes, Melinda Bartram, Claudia Frausto, and Munal Mauladad. Absent was Chris Kizziar and City Manager David Hall.

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

None.

**3. CONSIDER APPROVING THE MINUTES FROM THE AUGUST 15, 2023 MEETING.**

A motion was made by Michael Weaver and seconded by Blake Margolis to approve the August 15, 2023 minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

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

None.

**5. City Knowledge and Learning Items**

- a) **Laura Tschoerner – Library Card Sign-Up Month** – Laura promoted Library Card Sing-Up Month for the [Rowlett library](#) and provided detailed information of all the services and offerings provided through our Library.
- b) **Knowledge Topic** – Knowledge Topic – Oncor
- c) **Economic Development Department Update:**

Charles Mazarakes, Interim Director, provided the business retention update and new business information. New businesses listed for Majestic Enterprises, LLC reporting one new job, Auto Sales Point reporting two new jobs, and AquaFirst Sprinkler Repair with six new jobs. New jobs reported created for the month of August is at 11 new jobs total. BRE visits for the month of August were with Car-O-Liner Southwest Co., Planet Fitness (Connor Cox), Curran Collision Equipment, Franco Company, Al Lewis Kustom Cabinetry, and Mad Depot.

Sales tax report showing \$775,627 YTD, which is \$55,265 or 9.3% above forecast and \$47,029 for the previous month or 6.5% more than the same month last year. Four Certificates of Occupancy were

granted with one existing commercial building/remodel permits pulled for the month of August coming in with a \$400,000 value. Website page views reported 4,687. Ended the month with seven total business retention and expansion visits.

Charles moved on to the active projects for the department with five engaged prospects (active projects), seven prospects engaged (a mix of developers, realtors, business leads) and five outreach opportunities which are defined as speaking engagements and networking events. The department is planning to meet with the City Council on the visioning and outreach methods that would be favorable for Rowlett as a whole.

Melinda Bartram, Downtown Manager, gave the Downtown Rowlett updates, noting the complication of the RFP for the Downtown Rowlett strategic plan. Many bids received on September 14, narrowing focus on five proposals, and working on the evolutions with interviews in the upcoming week. Hoping to have a selected vendor by the second week in October to move forward on the strategic plan. Presenting resolution for Film Friendly Texas certification at council meeting September 19. A Master fee schedule, material supplements, application and guidelines for the production companies that would be interested would be used to film in Rowlett. Interest in filming Rowlett is already evident as an independent GemStar Studios LLC will be filming a horror series "Cyber-Psycho Chronicles", board encouraged to apply as area actors and crew are needed. Melinda mentioned that with Dallas County being the number one location with filming across the nation, Rowlett is in the prefect position as a nearby city to handle or offer overflow filming needs. Kicked off Friday Night Grooves on Friday, September 1 and the Taste of Fall Farmers and Craft Market is Thursday, September 22.

Charles provided the department news for the month of August. He spoke at the Metro Tex Assn. of Realtors meeting in Rockwall about projects coming online in Rowlett, including Sapphire Bay and an overview of the full "state of the city". Spoke briefly about the search to fill the last remaining retail space in the building Five guys burgers is set to go into on Lakeview between Panera and Applebee's. Rowlett Economic Development department hosted the quarterly East Side Allies meeting in the month of August with a noteworthy 50 in attendance. Cities in attendance were Wylie ED, Bates ED, Royse City ED, Fate and Dallas Regional Chamber to name a few with David Hall and Munal Mauladad making an appearance. Arlington ED also made a special appearance as they are on the West side of the DFW. The meeting was to discuss multiple topics such as approach ideas, best practices, area challenges and city happenings, all benefits of being a part of the East Side Allies. Team Texas Economic Summit in New York future trip already showing major potential leads as virtual meetings with Oncor hinting New York companies showing large Texas state move interest. The team sees the need to make the trip to take advantage of meeting leads face to face to make an impression for Rowlett but will see if team availability allows.

Charles continued with the LinkedIn ad campaign, which was created in partnership with WavTeq, our economic development marketing firm, that is a carousel-style ad targeting specific groups and professions that the team designates. 106,798 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. Emphasizing that the .1% click though rate is a great percentage. Talked about our presence in FDI Alliance (Foreign Direct Investment International) which featured a full one-page ad for Rowlett at the

very beginning of the "Texas" section. This is a publication we were asked to join that also represented four other Texas cities, eight US states, as well as Switzerland and Canada.

With the marketing updates, Charles noted that Rowlett Chamber Luncheon speaker Angie Chen Button, Chair of International Relations & Economic Development Committee will also be a featured speaker for the Rowlett Economic Development Summit in September. Board attendance was highly encouraged, valuable economic development information and networking will be a highlight.

Claudia Frausto, Economic Development admin researched Rowlett establishments that specialized in after school care, activities and tutoring and featured those businesses in many separate social media posts for the start of school year. Many vacancy sites are shown to stimulate interest of potential future business gained traction. Focus is on the Sprouts Center on Lakeview as there are already many established businesses in the same location. Slight pushback as interest is heavier for locations with high space counts in a parking lot and large bay doors for deliveries. Buffalo Wild Wings Go opening date was also a traction gaining post, Claudia being present at the Chamber Ribbon cutting on behalf of the Economic Development department and as a member of the Rowlett Chamber Ambassadors.

Blog post updates featured building and supporting a strong manufacturing, retail, and service community which are important to the residents and our local economy. In the blog article there are highlighted factors that are key in attracting new business development, and supporting the health, growth and expansion of existing business and industry, resulting in quality jobs, a healthy economy, and a strong community.

Melinda continued with the Downtown Rowlett blog post on the reveal of the official Downtown Rowlett Logo to be implemented downtown, all social media outlets and print along with many other things to come.

Embracing Texan Pride: Rowlett Teams Up with GO TEXAN Program blog post featured a podcast interview with Texas Agriculture Commissioner Sid Miller, who sheds light on the essence of the program. The Texas Department of Agriculture's GO TEXAN program has been dedicated to showcasing products and businesses made right here in the Lone Star State. The GO TEXAN program is all about harnessing local talent, creativity, and craftsmanship. Wisp and Willow Boutique blog post inspires local fall shopping diverse collection that can fit any style.



Special events are one of the top 3 reasons locals come to Downtown Rowlett. The "Taste of Fall" Farmers and Craft Market, the Fall 2023 Lunch on the Lawn Series and the Friday Night Grooves Concert Series are weekly events that are returning soon. As well as Barks, Brews and Brats, and Harvest Market on Main Street which are one day events that, in the past, have had high attendance. Marketing the events in Downtown helps the local restaurants as many people come for the events and dine downtown, dining in downtown is the number one reason locals come downtown. Discussion of future blog posts with many different topics were discussed with the site handler for Civic Brand and will be distributed in the future.

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

Tori Owens, Chairman of the Board for the Chamber of Commerce, gave the Chamber and Chamber Foundation updates. 33rd Rowlett Area Chamber Golf Classic will be September 21<sup>st</sup> and the Chamber is accepting last-minute sponsors, players, volunteers, and items to raffle for donations.

The Rowlett Chamber, together with the Rowlett Economic Development team, will be hosting the first ever half-day event, Rowlett Economic Development (RED) Summit on September 27 which will be held at the RCC. Michael Gallops, President/CEO of the Rowlett Chamber added that the event will present a panel of speakers including a commercial lender, developer, commercial realtor, and a representative from the Dallas Chamber. 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 speaking is Megan Mauro from the Texas Association of Businesses. The Chamber and the ED team gathered other individual speakers with the goal in mind to have a large regional presence to share and exchange economic development information. More than 50 people are expected to attend the event, both Rowlett chamber and Rowlett ED are working hard to finalize details as the date approaches. Michael also encouraged attendance to the October Luncheon as ED and GISD board member Larry Glick will be speaking on his world travels and wildlife photographs as an inspiring adventurer.

**e) GISD Update:**

Larry Glick, GISD Board member gave the GISD update starting with the progress of using the lakeview centennial school Planetarium location for the next board meeting. Larry is working hard to see if the board would have a space to conduct a meeting. The 60,000 pairs of eclipse glasses were allocated for the entire district to celebrate a Total Solar Lunar Eclipse event that will take place April 8th, 2024, that will cover Rowlett. The Science department is working on a curriculum from Pre-K to 12<sup>th</sup> graders about the special event. Anticipating good news from the Department of Education on the possibility of a Rowlett school earning a Blue-Ribbon Award. The National Blue-Ribbon Schools Program is a United States Department of Education award program that recognizes exemplary public and non-public schools on a yearly basis. GISD last held a Blue Ribbon in 2015, emphasizing the importance of the Blue Ribbon as more than 20,000 schools apply, and only 28 in the state of Texas are granted. Garland ISD joining the legal fight to push for a temporary injunction with multiple districts, lawsuit is against Texas Education Commissioner Mike Morath.

**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.**

- Larry Glick gave recognition to the city on the Fire Station #2 event
- 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.

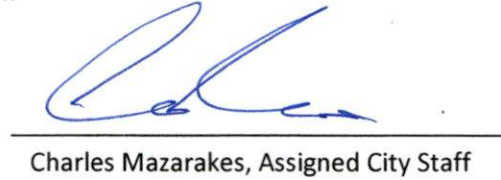
**7. MEMBERS OF THE BOARD MAY REQUEST TOPICS FOR FUTURE AGENDA MEETINGS. NO MEMBER OF THE BOARD OR COMMISSION MAY DISCUSS ANY OF THE REQUESTED SUBJECTS UNTIL SUCH MATTER HAS BEEN PROPERLY PLACED ON A POSTED AGENDA.**

- 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 a future agenda.
- Board requested Planetarium tour, Staff to coordinate date with Larry Glick.

8. **ADJOURNMENT.**

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:02 A.M.

  
Mick Donnelly, Chairman

  
Charles Mazarakes, Assigned City Staff

  
Date Approved