

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

**Tuesday, October 17, 2023**

**at the Rowlett Chamber**

**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 October 17, 2023. In attendance: Chairman Mick Donnelly, Vice Chair Eva Hummel, Mayor Blake Margolis, Larry Glick, Michael Gallops, Chris Kizziar, Rhonda Wolfe and Tim Abrams. Staff: Brittney Farr, Charles Mazarakes, Melinda Bartram, and Claudia Frausto. Absent was Micheal Weaver, Tori Owens, Assistant City Manager Munal Mauladad, City Councilmember Jeff Winget and City Manager David Hall.

**2. ADMINISTER THE OATH OF OFFICE AND THE STATEMENT OF APPOINTED OFFICERS TO THE NEWLY APPOINTED MEMBERS.**

Notary on staff Claudia Frausto, administered the Oath of Office and the statement documents to sign for new members Rhonda Wolfe and Tim Abrams.

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

None.

**4. CONSIDER APPROVING THE MINUTES FROM THE SEPTEMBER 19, 2023 MEETING.**

A motion was made by Chris Kizziar and seconded by Eva Hummel to approve the September 19, 2023 minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

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

None.

**6. City Knowledge and Learning Items**

**a) Knowledge Topic** - North Texas Small Business Development Center, Executive Director Mark Langford

**b) Economic Development Department Update:**

Charles Mazarakes, Assistant Director of Economic Development, provided the business retention (BRE) update and new business information. Four (4) new businesses with a total of twenty-seven (27) new jobs were reported in the month of September, including Sukoon Med Spa and Wellness Center, All Star

Audiology, Rowlett Automotive and Buffalo Wild Wings Go. There was one (1) BRE visit for the month of September at Golden Rule Auto Care.

Mr. Mazarakes informed the board that the monthly sales tax report was delayed from the State Comptroller but would be emailed to the board once released. The latest month shown, July, indicates sales tax is on the rise going into the holidays with a total sales tax of \$62,049.89, \$10,586.86 less than the highest month in FY23, December, at \$72,636.75.

In the month of September nine (9) Certificates of Occupancy and seven (7) new commercial building permits were granted totaling an estimated value of \$2,181,632.27. Eight existing commercial building/remodel permits pulled for the month of September totaling \$2,915,146.80 in value.

Mr. Mazarakes moved on to the active projects for the department with Four engaged prospects (active projects), three prospects engaged (a mix of developers, realtors, business leads) and one outreach opportunity (speaking engagements and networking events).

Melinda Bartram, Downtown Manager, gave the Downtown Rowlett updates. Mrs. Bartram began by discussing the selection of the Downtown Strategic Plan consultant which will be brought to council for a final decision later this month. Mrs. Bartram notified the Board that the recent Film Friendly Texas certification will require photography of public areas and private businesses located in Rowlett. Mrs. Bartram noted the recently completed Friday Night Grooves series saw a high attendance rate since kicking off in September and encouraged attendance at the ongoing Taste of Fall Farmers and Craft Market.

Mrs. Bartram noted she and Mr. Mazarakes have been working with the planning department for storefront businesses in downtown to have a dedicated patio, however, with current public right-of-way restrictions, a possible presentation might be shown at a future Council meeting to help address any issues that may arise.

Mr. Mazarakes provided the Economic Development Department's news for the month of September, beginning with a recap of the Rowlett Economic Development Summit a.k.a. R.E.D Summit. The summit was considered successful with many speakers featured, including the Honorable Angie Chen Button, Chair of International Relations & Economic Development Committee for the Texas House of Representatives were just over 50 participants signed up from locations such as Rockwall, Wylie, and other neighboring cities.

Mr. Mazarakes continued with the wrap up of the LinkedIn ad campaign, created in partnership with WavTeq, the City's economic development marketing consultant. The ad campaign featured a carousel-style ad targeting specific groups and professions that the team designates. Data collected from the campaign indicate more than 107,000 views, generating data regarding who is looking at the ad and for how long. The click-through rate for the campaign was .1% which indicates a relatively successful rate. Separate land and quality of life ads were shared to attract future residents and showcase available properties, as were social media post over Labor Day, Buffalo Wild Wings Go grand opening, and the 9/11 memorial ceremony. Vacant sites and storefronts were also shared to stimulate interest of potential future business. Staff noted that each time a vacant site or storefront is posted, at least one phone call is made to the economic development department for more information.

Mr. Mazarakes also shared that a new blog post on the Economic Development website was featured with information on attracting new businesses and supporting the current ones in Rowlett.

Mrs. Bartram shared a recap of the Downtown Rowlett social media posts including the Girlfriends Boutique release of their specialized line for men and boys, Scarecrows on Main kick off, and the upcoming DiverseCity event on Saturday. Mrs. Bartram noted that special events are one of the top 3 reasons locals come to Downtown Rowlett. Ms.

A follow-up email containing all economic development social media links and newsletters will be provided to all EDAB members.

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

Michael Gallops, Chamber of Commerce, gave the Chamber and Chamber Foundation updates. Mr. Gallops also summarized the Rowlett Economic Development (RED) Summit, previously mentioned by Mr. Mazarakes. Mr. Gallops noted that the Chamber and the ED team held the event with the goal in mind of having a large regional presence to share and exchange economic development information. Mr. Gallops also noted that the Chamber Golf tournament had 94 golfers attend, the highest in the event's history. He also encouraged attendance at the upcoming October Luncheon as EDAB and GISD board member Larry Glick will be speaking on his world travels and wildlife photographs as an inspiring adventurer. Mr. Gallops also informed the board that the Chamber will be holding a candidate forum at Freedom Place Church and encouraged attendance to meet the candidates running for office. Mr. Gallops added "The Best of Rowlett" competition will be starting after the Thanksgiving holidays, and participating in casting votes on favorite local places is encouraged. Finally, Mr. Gallops noted that an email was sent out to primary chamber membership holders that there are five new board members being nominated for the Rowlett chamber.

**d) 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. Mr. Glick is working to identify a space to conduct a meeting. Mr. Glick also highlighted an editorial published by the Dallas Morning News showcasing GISD's middle school math program as one of the best in the State of Texas. Mr. Glick noted the annual convention of educators held in Dallas and added that Garland ISD had recently joined several other school districts for a temporary injunction lawsuit against Texas Education Commissioner Mike Morath regarding school financing. Mr. Glick shared Herfurth Elementary, a Rowlett Montessori school, earned 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. Emphasizing the importance of the Blue Ribbon as more than 20,000 schools apply, and only 28 in the state of Texas are granted. News video of Herfurth Elementary student interview shown to board on the success of the unique educational style.

**7. 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.**


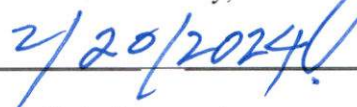
- Mayor Margolis mentioned the upcoming election being held November 7, which will include constitutional amendments and City Council vacant seat. Mayor Margolis also noted the capital improvement task force is currently in process for May 2024 Bond election. Mayor Magolis encouraged board attendance for the Trunk-or-treat event happening at the end of October and public safety preparation Expo which will be held on Saturday, November 4 at the RCC. He also noted the opening and ribbon cutting of the new Rowlett Utility Billing building, located in the old Chase Bank location on Dalrock and Lakeview Road, on ribbon cutting November 9. Finally, the mayor spotlight Mayor Margolis went over the FY 24 city budget.


**8. 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 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.

**9. ADJOURNMENT.**

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

  
 Mick Donnelly, Chairman  
  
 Date Approved

  
 Brittney Farr, Assigned City Staff