

City of Rowlett
Economic Development Advisory Board

Tuesday, February 20, 2024

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 8:30 A.M. on February 20, 2024. In attendance: Chairman Mick Donnelly, Mayor Blake Margolis, City Councilmember Debra Shinder, GISD Board Member Larry Glick, Chamber Board Chair Stephen Causey, Chamber Foundation Chairperson Tori Owen, Chamber President & CEO Sharon Mayer, City Designees Michael Weaver, Rhonda Wolfe and Tim Abrams. Staff: Assistant City Manager Kristoff Bauer, Director of Economic and Community Engagement Brittney Farr, Assistant Director of Economic Development Charles Mazarakes, Downtown Manager Melinda Bartram, and Senior Administrative Assistant Claudia Frausto. Absent was 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 members Stephen Causey and Tori Owen.

3. PUBLIC INPUT ON ANY AGENDA ITEM.

None.

4. APPOINT VICE CHAIR FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD

A motion was made by Mick Donnelly and seconded by Tori Owen to appoint Michael Weaver as Vice Chair for the Economic Development Advisory Board. The motion carried unanimously.

5. CONSIDER APPROVING THE MINUTES FROM THE OCTOBER 17, 2023 MEETING.

A motion was made by Tori Owen and seconded by Tim Abrams to approve the October 17, 2023 minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

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

Larry Glick wanted clarification on candidate John Wiley Price involvement with the Miller Rd bridge project, Rowlett Mayor Blake Margolis giving positive confirmation that the Dallas County Commissioner is doing everything he can to move the project along.

7. City Knowledge and Learning Items

- a) **Rowlett Chamber/Chamber Foundation Update:** Chamber Board Chair Stephen Causey sharing his excitement to finally fill the Chamber President & CEO chair filled, Sharon Mayer bringing a lot of experience. Chamber Foundation Chairperson Tori Owen reported the kick off five \$1,000 student scholarships for students that live and attend one of the seven schools in Rowlett.
- b) **GISD Update:** Larry Glick, GISD Board member gave the GISD update starting with the announcement that all armed security officers' positions are now filled per mandate from the state. Many retired police officers, some even with ex-military background that will be serving the schools. March 20th 9:00am – 11:00am will be the celebration for Herfurth Elementary School for receiving a National Blue Ribbon, becoming the first Rowlett school to receive it. GISD board of trustees has been selected as one of the top five districts in the state of Texas by HEB. Outcome of the results to come, if won GISD board will travel to Austin to receive award.
- c) **Economic Development Department Update:** Brittney Farr, Director of Economic and Community Engagement, provided an overview of departmental happenings, plans and vision. FY25 work plan highlights developing a diverse and sustainable economy based for the city, upgraded methods for business retention and expansion with Chamber Ambassador Partnership, while being highly focused on Downtown Rowlett. Downtown strategic planning with large efforts from the Olsen Group is going smoothly, recently holding a productive public open house with design charette and visioning session. The Downtown survey brought in over 800 responses showing growth possibility of downtown exist. Plans of switching to a data driven approach to fill in the gaps and identify leakage of business with the help of technological software are underway. Marketing and branding redo with outdated marketing materials to find consistency between the City of Rowlett's brand, Rowlett's Economic Development's brand, and the Downtown Rowlett's brand. Standardizing the voice of the City of Rowlett, how we speak to our residents, how we speak to our stakeholders, how we speak to our businesses and building a strong unified brand. Looking towards other highly successful economic development websites and what they present to site selectors as a base for our own site. Brittney concluded with the goal to have renewed emphasis on customer service as a city over all to improve resident interaction and city image.

Brittney continued with the business retention (BRE) update and new business information. Urban Value Harmony Hill opened as a new business with a total of three (3) new jobs were reported for this location for the month of January. There were four (4) BRE visits for the month at Kick'em Training Facility, Catfish Connection, H&S Manufacturing and 100% Chiropractic. She mentioned Nothing Bundt Cakes and Five Guys delays and projected openings.

Brittney informed the board that the latest month shown, December, indicates sales tax is has reported \$1,093,554, which is \$147,698, or 16%, above forecast and \$14,442 below the same month last year. In the year 2023 there were ninety-three (93) Certificates of Occupancy worth with twenty-two (22) new commercial building permits worth \$124,460,057 and fifty-one (51) existing commercial building/remodel permits worth \$13,836,891 that were granted. The economic development website totaled 70,933 hits for the year. The city welcomed forty-seven (47) new businesses while creating 437 new jobs and performed fifty (50) BRE visits.

Ms. Farr asked the board for a better understanding of what information would be useful for future adversity meetings, the board shared thoughts on new current information given, capturing departing

business data and current wage information requested. BRE visits data will be used to breakdown reasons business came into the city either by invitation or organically. Request to show year-over-year growth charts of data information gathered as well. Brief discussion on the need for more affordable living as the Rowlett area is a large service industry for the workers who cannot afford to live in the city. As well as permitting processing difficulties and saturation of the market in target areas.

Ms. Farr followed with the first quarter to date in FY24 with seven-teen (17) new business, thirty-One (31) certificate of occupancy, two (2) new commercial building permits worth \$15,500,000 and eleven (11) existing commercial building/remodel permits worth \$4,262,554.79. The economic development website totaled 11,213 hits while creating 68 new jobs and performed six (6) BRE visits.

Ms. Farr gave the downtown updates. Downtown Strategic Plan is scheduled to host another public house on April 22 at the RCC 5:30pm-7:30pm. Ms. Farr notified the Board that the city is working though a few Film Friendly permits to be completed soon. Ms. Farr encouraged attendance at the oncoming Lunch on the Lawn that will take place every Monday in March from 11:00am-2:00pm on the Downtown Rowlett Green. Rowlett Total Eclipse Watch Party also happening on the Downtown Green partnering with the Rowlett Library to enjoy the wonders of totality, handing out free solar eclipse glasses (while supplies last). Also an honorable mention on the treat-filled eggs that will be hidden for Pup-A-Palooza held at Scentral Bark Dog Park (4601 Centennial Dr. Friday, March 22 6:00pm -9:00pm and Easter Eggstravaganza held at Pecan Grove Park (5300 Main St.), Saturday, March 23, 10:00am-12:00pm.

8. 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 noted the State of the City address will be 7:00PM February 20, 2024
- NTMWD annual maintenance begins March 4th-April 1st.
- General concrete work done now thought Public Works
- I30 progress is on timeline track.
- Dalrock and 66 intersection expansion progress is on timeline track.
- Miller Road Phase II project is making progress.
- May 4th Bond Election will be held, information to be posted on the city website.

9. 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.

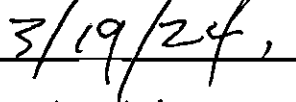
- Larry Glick gave details of future Planetarium tour to Board.
- Brittney Farr listed persons of beneficially strong economic and chamber value for possible speakers for future EDAB meeting
- North Shore update/tour requested previously by Chairman Mick Donnelly at the June 2023 meeting which team is working on.
- Incentives policy updates and changes to be added to a future agenda.

10. ADJOURNMENT.


The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:44 A.M.



Mick Donnelly, Chairman



Date Approved



Brittney Fary, Assigned City Staff