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**CITY OF FOREST PARK
DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY REGULAR MEETING**

Wednesday, September 29, 2021, at 5:30 PM
City Hall-Council Chambers, Virtual Meeting Via Zoom

Website: www.forestparkga.gov
Phone Number: (404) 363.2454

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
745 Forest Parkway
Forest Park, GA 30297

MINUTES

Lois Wright, Chairwoman
Pamela Lake, Vice Chairwoman
Eliot Lawrence, Secretary
Hector Gutierrez, Member
Alvin Patton, Member
Trudy Smith, Member
Felicia Davis, Member

MEETING NOTICE:

*This meeting is accessible to the public or media via web or teleconference.
For in person attendance CDC requirements of Masks and Social Distancing will be adhered.*

CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME:

Chairwoman, Lois Wright, called the Regular Meeting for the Development Authority to order at 5:30 PM

ROLL CALL:

Present:

Lois Wright, Chairwoman
Eliot Lawrence, Secretary
Hector Gutierrez, Member
Alvin Patton, Member
Trudy Smith, Member
Felicia Davis, Member

Absent:

Pamela Lake

Also Present:

Bruce Abraham, Economic Development Director
Kirby Glaze, DA Attorney
Kisha Bundridge, Economic Development Coordinator

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

1. Felicia Davis made a motion to approve the Development Authority Regular Meeting Minutes from August 25, 2021, as is.
Trudy Smith seconded.
Roll call for approval. Approved unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS:

Lois Wright talked about the progress being made on the Main Street properties. She said they would like to have signage for the businesses but were informed that no signage is allowed on Main Street.

2. Economic Development Department Report

Bruce Abraham, Economic Development Director, shared that the Economic Development Department has canvassed the eligible properties on Main Street to inform them of the Façade Grant opportunity. The Façade Grant Program provides up to \$25,000 in matching funds toward improvements to small businesses along Main Street. Trudy Smith said she would like to see some of the really bad looking buildings apply for the grant. Eliot Lawrence asked about some of the businesses who have said they will apply. Bruce Abraham explained that eligible businesses have been made aware of the opportunity to apply for the grant.

Bruce Abraham said that the Rateree Road extension project has begun. We received \$1.3 million from TAD money to extend Rateree Road down to Forest Parkway.

Eliot Lawrence asked if there were any plans to set up charging stations for cars. Bruce Abraham explained that projects like that would not come through the Economic Development Department.

Felicia Davis asked about job fairs. Bruce Abraham explained that the Economic Development Department has been working tirelessly and closely with employers in Forest Park, as well as the ARC to bring access to job opportunities and resources to Forest Park residents.

Bruce Abraham explained that a hold up on the completion of Main Street properties renovation project is that the dirt is too soft to be approved for a deck permit. The plan is for the deck to serve as a food pavilion with a guard rail and furniture bolted to the deck. Due to the unexpected condition of the soil where the deck will go, they will need to first redo the footing.

Hector Gutierrez asked if there might be someplace else to put the deck. Bruce Abraham explained that the Model Mile will pass through and turn towards Starr Park. The deck placement is consistent with the bigger design for that area.

Bruce Abraham said that Zaxby's is still opening soon but has been struggling with their business design. We expect it to be a nice building, but they recently sold to someone else and have a new architectural team. Additionally, the fact that the drive thru may not be off of Main Street has caused some additional delays.

Bruce Abraham announced that the Downtown Development Authority is working with the Economic Development Department on a small business coalition with programs to teach financial literacy (loans) to people wanting to start small businesses. Most small business incubators are digital now. Seventy percent of job growth comes from small businesses, but eighty percent of small businesses fail within five years. This program would work to improve those statistics.

In Ft. Gillem, Amazon will have 900 job opportunities by January 2022, and Kroger will have 500 job opportunities by December 2021. We have just begun working with a hydroponics farm that uses water on shelves to harvest produce for Kroger and recently signed a contract for another big business coming to Forest Park with many highly skilled jobs that will be good for the community.

Felicia Davis asked if there were any projects the Economic Development Department is working on dealing with renewable energy. Bruce Abraham explained that economic development departments don't typically deal with renewable energy projects and that Ft. Gillem is not feasible for those types of projects because of the lay of the land there.

NEW BUSINESS:

3. Discussion: Retreat Options

Kirby Glaze, DA Attorney shared that our purpose or vision is two- fold: 1-to make sure that everyone is on the same page, working to set goals, and 2- to incorporate training to ensure that we are meeting state requirements. Kirby Glaze stressed the importance of being clear about what we want to accomplish with a board retreat. He suggested that we combine the boards into one retreat but not combine the visions.

Kisha Bundridge shared that the design of the retreat was totally up to the board. There is a \$2300.00 daily fee plus expenses, mileage and lodging for the facilitator from the Carl Vinson Institute. The content of the sessions is based on what we tell them we would like to learn/ experience. The board(s) would need to determine if they want separate or joint retreats, if they want the facilitator to come to COFP or if we want to make it a destination retreat.

Felicia Davis said we are missing a coordinated effort- a better way to execute our goals.

Hector Gutierrez suggested we aim to do the retreat next year since members will likely change at the end of this year.

Felicia Davis made a motion to invite the Downtown Development Authority and Urban Redevelopment Authority board members to join and share costs for a vision retreat/ training in early 2022.

Alvin Patton seconded.

Roll call for approval. Approved unanimously.

4. RFP for Main Street Lots

Bruce Abraham reminded the board that during the last meeting, they discussed the 4 lots on Main Street and a strategy to follow the LCI plan to develop office, residential and retail spaces. To do this, Planning, Zoning & Building Director, James Shelby suggests an RFP to get experienced developers to look at the LCI plan and propose what they will do with the lots to bring the LCI plan to life. Bruce Abraham feels that in order to get real quality developers you need an RFP which casts a wide net. Using a real estate company is one way to go, they can list and market the property and bring offers, but that would not necessarily follow the LCI plan. A real estate

company would charge a 6% fee for their services, around \$60,000.00. One of the companies that put in a bid, Haddow & Company put together RFP's and find developers and charge \$20,000.00 for their services. One of the other companies to bid asks for \$12,000.00 but they don't find developers.

Felicia Davis asked Bruce Abraham to consider the options without considering the cost and recommend who he feels would best suit our needs and has the most experience. Bruce Abraham explained that we would definitely want the RFP because you can better target what you want them to do. Haddow & Company work with the largest developers in Atlanta, and they can bring them to us. Felicia Davis said she feels that when you can afford to go with the biggest and the best, you do. When you look back later, you never regret it. Lois Wright agreed and added that you get what you pay for.

Felicia Davis made a motion to engage Haddow & Company to prepare and solicit an RFP to develop Main Street lots (old theatre, parking lot and house).

Eliot Lawrence seconded.

Roll call for approval. Approved unanimously.

Bruce Abraham added that one of the properties belongs to the city, not the DA. Kirby Glaze suggests we go before the city to get an Intergovernmental Agreement to empower the DA to enter into a contract on their behalf for this property.

5. Event for 771 - 775 Main Street

Bruce Abraham recommends the DA host an event to commemorate the grand opening of the renovated 771 – 775 Main Street properties. He suggests we invite the other board(s), city council and residents and do a ribbon cutting, etc. The project is almost complete, and it would be nice to celebrate and bring attention to it.

Lois Wright said that since we are not allowed to put signage on Main Street, perhaps we can put signage around the back- on Forest Parkway.

Trudy Smith said that not allowing signage is a bad idea. She said that she would not want to have a business someplace and not be allowed to have signage.

Felicia Davis asked if we could recommend that signage be allowed with strict rules about their placement and design.

Bruce Abraham said that we have a conservative Main Street, but he has pushed for a little more flexibility.

The contractors working on the lots are working on ideas for signage. They are going to make sure there is consistency in signage and numbers. They must consider the maintenance (considering that the businesses are likely to change often) and they will get back to us with an answer soon.

Bruce Abraham said it would be nice if they could use the billboard over the properties to say Welcome to the City of Forest Park Food Pavilion, with an arrow pointing down.

6. By Laws

Kirby Glaze, DA Attorney, presented his draft of the new Bylaws but said it is not for action, just review. He shared that he was going to meet again with the City Attorney to discuss the Intergovernmental Agreement and will bring

that to the board at the October meeting. Mr. Glaze said he would like to create a binding agreement between the board and the city as the current IGA is not enforceable.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

(Executive Session may be called for issues concerning Personnel, Litigation or Real Estate)

Felicia Davis made a motion to enter Executive Session at 6:43 PM.

Alvin Patton seconded.

Roll call for approval. Approved unanimously.

Trudy Smith made a motion to end Executive Session and resume the Regular Meeting at 6:56 PM.

Alvin Patton seconded.

Roll call for approval. Approved unanimously.

Based on the discussion in Executive Session, Trudy Smith made a motion to have Bruce Abraham negotiate the terms of Kisha Bundridge's proposed contract.

Felicia Davis seconded.

Roll call for approval. Approved unanimously

ADJOURNMENT:

Trudy Smith made a motion to adjourn the Regular Meeting for the Development Authority at 6:57 PM.

Felicia Davis seconded.

Roll call for approval. Approved unanimously

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, those requiring accommodation for meetings should notify the City Clerk's Office at least 24 hours prior to the meeting at 404-366-1555.