

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ZONE COMMITTEE MINUTES
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2016 10:00 A.M.
CITY HALL, COUNCIL CHAMBERS, VERO BEACH, FLORIDA**

PRESENT: Scott Chisholm, Vice Chairman; Members: Jessica Hawkins, Gary Rooney, and Mike Williams
Also Present: Tim McGarry, Planning and Development Director and Tammy Vock, City Clerk

Unexcused Absence: Mr. Terry Torres

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Vice Chairman called today's meeting to order at 10:02 a.m.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A) January 25, 2016

Mrs. Hawkins made a motion to approve the January 25, 2016 minutes. Mr. Rooney seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

3. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

A) Chairman

Mr. Chisholm made a motion to elect Mrs. Jessica Hawkins as Chairman. Mr. Williams seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

B) Vice Chairman

Mr. Rooney made a motion to elect Mr. Terry Torres as Vice Chairman. The nominations were closed and Mr. Torres was unanimously elected as Vice Chairman.

4. NEW BUSINESS

A) Address the Sandwich Board Signs in the Downtown area – Requested by Mayor Jay Kramer

Mrs. Hawkins commented that there have been a few people fined for having sandwich board signs in front of their businesses within the downtown area. She noted that sometimes on the corner of 14th Avenue there are three sandwich board signs displayed on that one corner. She wondered if the Code could be rewritten to allow sandwich board signs to be placed outside of the City right-of-way during business hours only.

Mr. Tim McGarry, Planning and Development Director, explained that sandwich board signs are allowed now in that area without a permit.

Mrs. Hawkins expressed that there is a tenant in her building that has been told exactly how near to the building that the sandwich board sign must be placed.

Mr. McGarry stated that he was not in favor of making changes to the Code for these sandwich board signs. He said that the signs needed to be kept out of the right-of-way. He said he will do what he is told to do, but professionally this is a bad thing to do. The sandwich board signs are geared for walking traffic. He knows that Mayor Kramer has some ideas on this matter. Again, he said that he does not support this, but will do what he is told to do.

Mrs. Hawkins explained this would be for the economic development zone only.

Mr. McGarry explained if they do this it would be for the whole City. He said the downtown area is already allowed to put up sandwich board signs. He reiterated that the sandwich board signs are geared towards walkers and not as a billboard sign.

Mr. Chisholm understood Mr. McGarry's concerns. He said when 14th Avenue was all tore up he was allowed to put up a sandwich board sign in the front of his store so that people would know that the store was there.

Mr. McGarry commented that people displaying these signs need to sign some sort of indemnification. He would hate to see the City held liable if someone was to fall over one of these signs.

Mr. Williams who owns "Mr. Smokes" said he has been in the same location for 35 years and that he has not been allowed to display a sandwich board sign there. Mr. McGarry told Mr. Williams that he should be able to put a sign there. He said he would look into that.

Mr. Rooney said that after listening to the comments there seems to be some issues relating to the speed of traffic in this area. He asked what is the likelihood to slow traffic down from St. Helen's church to the railroad tracks.

Mr. McGarry recalled that they will be going to the TAC meeting to request some changes with their signal crossings. He said as far as the speed limit being reduced that will happen when the work on the Twin Pairs is completed. He said the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) is talking about getting rid of one lane to the north and one lane to the south. He understood that the State has agreed to eliminate these lanes.

Mr. Chisholm recalled that they discussed having kiosks downtown to display where different businesses are located. He said this might solve some of those problems.

Mrs. Hawkins agreed that it would help along 14th Avenue, but not along the outside area, which she briefly explained. She said it might be some time before the kiosks are in place and wondered what do in the meantime.

Mr. Rooney recalled that he volunteered to go before the MPO/TAC and speak about the signal crossings on 14th Avenue. However, his calendar is so full that he would like someone else make that presentation.

Mr. McGarry noted that Mr. Torres has volunteered to attend the meeting. He would make sure that Mr. Torres is provided with the date of the meeting.

Mr. Jay Kramer, Mayor of the City of Vero Beach, commented that the sandwich board signs seem to be a bone of contention. He recommended relaxing the guidelines for these sandwich board signs just in the downtown district. The whole idea is to come up with a sandwich board sign that works for the businesses in the downtown area that does not look overly obtrusive. It would allow the businesses to use their frontage and have these signs displayed there.

Mr. McGarry asked if what he was hearing was that they want to allow these sandwich board signs throughout the whole district, which would include all of U.S. 1. He thought they were just talking about from the Twin Pairs out to 20th Avenue. He said if they are going to allow this then some specifications need to be in place for these signs. He said as much as he doesn't want to do this, he will come up with some standards.

Mayor Kramer wanted to help the businesses in making sure this was effective.

Mr. McGarry expressed that sandwich board signs are for the benefit of walking traffic. He said anything they could do to reduce the look of these signs would help.

Mrs. Hawkins discussed some proposed sign size restrictions.

Mr. McGarry felt that they needed to require a permit to anyone wanting to display a sandwich board sign. He said for the area outside the downtown area they would need to do a sign overlay, which designates an area to allow these sandwich board signs. He needs to find the easiest way to do this without having to start changing the sign Ordinance.

Mr. Williams was astounded to learn that City Hall was not in the Downtown Zoning District.

Mr. Chisholm explained that the Economic Development Zone was for tax increment financing. He said that this is different than the Downtown District.

Mrs. Hawkins brought up that a lot of people are wrapping their cars with their business logo, which helps them when it comes to advertising. She knows that the Ordinance was written before the wrapping of the cars concept came out.

Mr. McGarry explained that these cars that are wrapped need to be parked where they are not seen as being a billboard. He said people need to show some common sense in where they are parking these vehicles. He reiterated that he doesn't want to have to change the sign Ordinance too much. He said when they do that they are opening it up for a challenge. He will bring back the changes for the sandwich board signs once he has developed them.

Mrs. Hawkins opened up the meeting for public comments.

Mr. Andres Moses, Owner of Moses Deli, stated that he would like to be able to put a sandwich board sign in front of his business. He said if it doesn't attract more business, then he will take it down.

Mr. McGarry reiterated that he will bring back something to the Committee to review.

Mr. McGarry brought up the discussion this Committee had some time ago about revising their proposed boundary and including more areas. He said that he did not think that was a good idea to do

at this time. He suggested holding off in doing that because they may get some pushback if they were to do it at this time. He said what they need to do now is get their Economic Plan approved by Council.

Mr. Chisholm agreed wholeheartedly.

Mr. McGarry expressed the importance of this Committee coordinating with the Cultural Council in the things that will be taking place for the Cultural Arts Village. He said he was not in favor of having an overlay district in downtown. The Cultural Council has talked about putting street lighting in the Cultural Arts Village similar to what this Committee has been discussing. Those are the kind of things that they need to be coordinating. He said representatives from that Committee should be attending these meetings so both groups can work together. He announced that the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council (TCRPC) will be going over their report/recommendations for the Cultural Arts Village on Wednesday, February 17, 2016 at 5:30 p.m. at the Heritage Center. Then the Cultural Council will make a report to the City Council on March 15, 2016. Mr. McGarry explained that the overlay district cannot be put into place until the City is in compliance with their Comprehensive Plan.

5. OLD BUSINESS

A) Discuss Updated Action Plan and Revised Boundaries

Mr. Chisholm referred to the minutes of their last meeting where they talked about the City doing an excellent job with landscaping. He said the City's maintenance program downtown is terrible. He has some trees located in front of his store that have not been trimmed in over three (3) years. He offered to pay to have them trimmed himself and was told by the City that they would handle it.

Mrs. Hawkins commented that the strip they were referring to was 14th Avenue, south of the Twin Pairs. She was told that MainStreet maintains that area.

Mr. McGarry said that he would mention Mr. Chisholm's concerns to Mr. Falls.

Mrs. Hawkins brought up the berries that fall off of these trees. Mr. McGarry explained that if the berries are on the sidewalk in front of a merchant's building the merchants usually handle sweeping them off of the sidewalk and keeping their sidewalks clean.

Mr. Chisholm noted if the trees were trimmed then the berries would not be dropping.

The members welcomed Mr. Williams as their new member to the Economic Development Zone Committee.

6. NEXT MEETING DATE

A) March 21, 2016

The next meeting will be held on March 21, 2016.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Today's meeting adjourned at 10:55 a.m.

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