

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ZONE COMMITTEE (EDZC) MINUTES  
MONDAY, JANUARY 22, 2018 10:00 A.M.  
CITY HALL, COUNCIL CHAMBERS, VERO BEACH, FLORIDA**

**PRESENT:** Joseph Cataldo, Chairman; Charles “Mike” Williams, Vice Chairman; Members: Garry Rooney, Terry Torres, Jessica Hawkins, Alternate Member Bob DelVecchio and Alternate Member Nick Novak  
**Also Present:** Tim McGarry, Planning and Development Director; Kira Honse, Assistant City Attorney; Tammy Bursick, City Clerk and Heather McCarty, Records Retention Specialist

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Today’s meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m.

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**A) October 17, 2017**

**Mrs. Hawkins made a motion to approve the October 17, 2017 minutes. Mr. DelVecchio seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.**

**3. ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

- A) Chairman**
- B) Vice Chairman**

Mr. Cataldo asked for nominations or volunteers for the Chairman position.

Mr. DelVecchio volunteered to be Chairman.

Mrs. Hawkins volunteered to be Chairman.

The City Clerk pointed out that Mr. DelVecchio could not be Chairman or Vice Chairman since he is an alternate member.

The Committee unanimously appointed Mrs. Hawkins as Chairman and Mr. Rooney as Vice Chairman of the Economic Development Zone Committee.

**4. PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

**5. NEW BUSINESS**

- A) Appointment of a member from the Committee to attend the Centennial Committee Meetings – Requested by Jessica Hawkins**

Mrs. Hawkins said that she would like to see someone from their Committee helping with the City’s Centennial Committee.

Ms. Honse said that this Board does not need to appoint anyone, but if someone would like to voluntarily attend the meetings, they can do that.

Mr. DelVecchio commented that he has been attending the meetings.

Mrs. Bursick said that the Centennial Committee meets monthly and their next meeting will be February 7<sup>th</sup> at Dodgertown at 10:00 a.m.

Mrs. Hawkins commented that she wanted to make sure that someone representing their Committee would attend the meetings to help if they need to.

Mr. DelVecchio said that he would keep attending the meetings and if he couldn't attend, Mr. Williams could go in his place.

**B) Rotary Fountain**

Mrs. Hawkins explained that the fountain is the responsibility of the Rotary Club to maintain and not theirs. She said Rotary has a contract with a pool company to maintain that fountain.

Mrs. Suzy Feeney said for the last couple months, they have been working with the Rotary Club and the City to figure out a way to solve this and to make it a thriving and an active fountain. She added that it is clean for the first time in months.

Mrs. Hawkins said that it is not their Committee's responsibility. She asked if she is handling this through Thrive. Mrs. Feeney said that Thrive stepped in because there was a breakdown in communication and they are working together to find a solution.

Mr. DelVecchio read a prepared statement (see attached). He said they are trying to come together with all the issues downtown and it does not seem to be working too well.

Mrs. Hawkins referred to the article that was sent this morning (on file in the City Clerk's office). She said it is not for them to tell the City how to build their roads.

Mrs. Feeney said they have never been in the position of wanting to tell the City what to do with their streets.

Mr. Torres asked what group Mrs. Feeney is referring to. Mrs. Feeney said they are a downtown property and business owners group who has recently filed as a 501C organization. They are here today to look at needs that aren't being fulfilled downtown. She talked about an article from The Brookings Institution, Turning around Downtown: 12 Steps to Revitalization (on file in the City Clerk's office). She talked about the roles of the public and private sectors in the downtown. She said the New Year's Eve celebration was a breakdown, but they are trying to use it as a breakthrough. She talked about how the downtown has evolved. She said they all care about downtown. She talked about what has happened in the City of Stuart.

Mrs. Hawkins commented that each individual business has their right to do whatever event they want to do as long as they get the permits and conform to regulations.

Mr. Torres said that this Committee has an agenda and they have the support of the City Manager and the City Council. He feels that their meetings are always being hijacked. He said he resents Mrs. Feeney obstructing the business of this Committee. He added that if the businesses in the City of Vero Beach feel like they're being slighted, he wants to hear from them directly.

Mrs. Feeney said they formed as a group because business's needs weren't being addressed. They were encouraged to do this. They are more than willing to sit down and talk, but she said the businesses have a right to have a place at this table.

Mrs. Hawkins said then those businesses should come and talk at these meetings. She said they are not getting anything done. She said they are talking about lighting that would be paid by an individual business owner. They are talking about traffic calming that they cannot afford to do. They are talking about things that are too far in advance for what their budget is. She added they can't make these changes overnight. Also, they cannot alienate non-profit or for-profit businesses that are holding events that are best for their business and they cannot tell them they are doing things wrong.

Mrs. Feeney said there needs to be some oversight on what these organizations are doing. Mrs. Hawkins said that is not their business and it is not the City's business. Mrs. Feeney said the City can't give money to an organization that there is no oversight on. She added that they could take this to City Council.

Mr. Torres felt that would be the proper venue. He said if she wanted to have a voice on this Committee, then she should seek an appointment to the Committee.

Mrs. Feeney pointed out that there is a waiting list for volunteers wishing to serve on this Committee. She said all of the organizations need to be included, including the tax-paying businesses. She said there is an issue on the table and they are not going to go away. They want to work together with all of them. She said things are changing dramatically downtown. She said they all need to work together. She suggested they could talk to Stuart and see how they can help them with what they accomplished.

Mrs. Hawkins pointed out that Stuart is a lot different than Indian River County.

Mrs. Feeney said what happened in Stuart was because they had the support of the City. She said they need to learn how to become better neighbors with each other. She said there are businesses that would like to be able to have a seat at the table collectively.

Mrs. Hawkins said that the people who want to be a part of this Committee and are on a waiting list need to be present at these meetings to have their voices heard.

Mr. Torres commented that Stuart has a totally different funding mechanism than they do so therefore they can't compare the two.

Mr. DelVecchio commented that he and Mr. Novak got on this Committee because things weren't being done. He said this is just an avenue to have their voice heard and represent downtown businesses. He added that is what Thrive is about.

Mrs. Hawkins said that it seems like Thrive has become a separate avenue for businesses rather than coming to their Committee. Mr. DelVecchio said if they want to know more about Thrive, then they should come to a meeting. Mrs. Hawkins said that she cannot attend Thrive meetings because of the Sunshine Law.

Mrs. Honse reminded the Committee to follow the Sunshine Law. She said they cannot have multiple members attending multiple meetings and participating in multiple organizations. As a member of this organization, the Sunshine Law follows them everywhere and urged them to be careful. She added that the purpose of this Committee is to assist and make recommendations to the City regarding the Economic Development Plan for downtown.

Mrs. Hawkins said they can make recommendations to them and voice their opinions, but they are the ultimate decision maker. Mr. DelVecchio questioned what the purpose of this Committee is if not to be a voice. Mrs. Hawkins said they can make recommendations, but they cannot make change. Mr. DelVecchio pointed out that in purpose, this Committee is to help educate and inform the City Council and they are the ones who make the final decision.

Mrs. Hawkins said what is happening with Thrive is that they are going around this Committee and making direct recommendations to City Council.

Mr. Torres said he has been with the Committee since the beginning and it has been a long uphill climb to get where they are at. He said they have done a lot of work. They have a plan and they are trying to execute that plan. They welcome the comments from the public. He said they have a charge and they are trying to execute that charge, but it seems like every time they have a meeting, they can't get through their agenda to execute the action plan. He expressed his frustrations with that. He said they need to carry out their agenda. He said they need to look at what they're doing and if there is criticism of the specific role that they are doing, they are open to constructive criticism. But he feels they are getting off track every meeting.

Mr. Rooney commented that there is valid frustration on both sides of the Board. He said he has been to a Thrive meeting and doesn't know where those people go. He questioned why more people aren't here at their meetings. He pointed out there are three (3) people in the audience, but a 100 people out there complaining. He said they are a microphone to the City Council and they can pass along ideas they like. But some of their recommendations are falling on deaf ears. They have talked about all kinds of things, such as slowing down the traffic. He said they were told they couldn't put a cross walk in, but those have been done. He reiterated that there is no one in the audience.

Mr. Novak agreed. He said he wants to know what their agenda is and what they are trying to do. He wants to get cool stuff going downtown. He is a self funded business owner downtown. He joined this Committee because he wants to throw parties and do fun things and change the ambience of downtown.

Mrs. Hawkins commented that there have been some accidents since the MOT has been put in place starting at 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue heading west on SR60 and there have some instances where speed has been an issue. She asked Mr. McGarry how the City of Sebastian lowered the speed on US1 through the City. She asked if that was petition based or if that was something they could accomplish here. Mr. McGarry said that he did not know.

Mr. Cataldo said from his understanding, it was to help the business district in Sebastian. He said the business owners along US1 were upset that there was a highway with people zooming by and in order to encourage business growth, they did the traffic calming and reduced the speed. He added that part of reducing the speed was putting parking on either side of US1 and eliminating lanes. He commented that the wider the roads, the faster the speed. He feels downtown should be walkable. He pointed out Stuart is a good example because they don't have a highway running through their downtown. He feels there is a parking issue that is going to get worse. He knows there is a major budget issue. He thinks they need to focus on getting everyone on the same page. Also, they need the City Council to be in favor of it or it is not going anywhere.

Mr. Williams said they have been talking about this for over a year and everybody knows they need to slow down traffic.

Mr. Cataldo thinks they are all in agreement here that traffic calming would be good for downtown.

Mrs. Hawkins said they can make recommendations to City Council, but Council doesn't have to accept their recommendations.

Mrs. Hawkins discussed the plan in place to begin work on widening the intersection of SR60 and 43<sup>rd</sup> Avenue.

Mr. Cataldo commented that all the traffic studies have indicated that they don't need four (4) lanes. He pointed out that the plan to widen SR 60 was to accommodate I-95 traffic.

Mr. Cataldo reiterated that downtown should be walkable. He thinks they can fix it if they can get the support. He said if there was money available, Florida Department of Transportation (DOT) would go along with it.

Mr. McGarry said that it does come down to money and the City Council has said that they don't support it at this time. He said this project would show up in the DOT's five (5) year plan.

Mr. Cataldo said it could be done if there was money available. He said right now it can't be done in this town because it is not politically viable. They need to educate the community and get support.

Mrs. Feeney said there are a lot of people who want to see the traffic calming. She said that is what Thrive was working on.

Mr. Cataldo said they could be the voice that gets it on the City Council agenda. He commented that the downtown has some beautiful characteristics and a lot of great things to offer.

Mrs. Hawkins said that traffic calming could be a topic for discussion when new people are up for election and they could invite them to be a part of their conversation. She feels the Council today is not going to change their mind or include it in the Comprehensive Plan.

Mrs. Feeney said they know the money is not here today, but they need to be able to show that the community is behind them. Mrs. Hawkins said SR 60 calming is in their Economic Development Plan. Mrs. Feeney added but it has been taken out of the Comprehensive Plan and that is what matters to DOT. They want to get it back in the Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. McGarry said they have received comments from the State on the Comprehensive Plan and there is one objection they have to respond to. He needs to get the Comprehensive Plan adopted. He said they can always make amendments to the Comprehensive Plan later on.

Mr. Cataldo said the traffic calming does not have to be in the Comprehensive Plan to be implemented.

**Mr. Novak made a motion to have City Council revisit traffic calming. Mr. Williams seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.**

**6. OLD BUSINESS**

**A) Update on Economic Development Plan**

Mrs. Hawkins asked the City Clerk to email the Economic Development Plan to the Committee members so that they could review it. She asked the Committee members to send the City Clerk any markups or questions they have on it so they can take those into consideration at their next meeting in February. Then it would go back to City Council to be readopted.

**B) State Road 60 Traffic Calming**

This item was discussed previously.

**C) Lighting for the Parking Area across from Scott's Sporting Goods**

Mrs. Hawkins asked for clarification on what parking areas they were talking about.

Mr. Novak said it is the lot right across from Scott's Sporting Goods. He explained it is not lighting for the parking, but more for ambient lighting to brighten things up downtown at night. He said some of the business owners have been putting lights out.

Mrs. Feeney referred to the quote that they received from Mr. Michael Naffziger and said they should all have a copy of it (on file in the City Clerk's office).

Mrs. Hawkins asked if there would be any way to change the lights. Mr. McGarry said that Mr. Monte Falls, Public Works Director, is going to go out and look at the area himself. Mrs. Hawkins asked if he could take a look at what they could trade out. She referred to the lights that Main Street did which were post lights and not real tall so they would be closer to the ground and would tie the look together.

Mrs. Feeney said that they worked with Mr. Fall's office to come up with the quote and coordinated with them. Mr. Novak asked if the quote was for the uplighting in the trees. Mrs. Feeney answered yes. She pointed out there are 18 trees in that parking area across from Scott's Sporting Goods. She said Mr. Naffziger has been out there and met with the City staff and knows where they can hook into and what they need to do.

Mrs. Hawkins said that the quote from Mr. Zaffziger was for \$12,000, but pointed out that it does not include additional subcontracted electrical costs. She said if it doesn't have the infrastructure there for the lights, that would be additional subcontracted electrical costs.

Mrs. Feeney said that Mr. Naffziger could meet with City staff out there and show them what needs to be done.

Mrs. Hawkins said that Mr. Falls is going out there and could update them.

**7. NEXT MEETING DATE**

**A) February 19, 2018**

The next meeting is scheduled for February 19, 2018 at 10:00 a.m.

**8. ADJOURNMENT**

Today's meeting adjourned at 11:08 a.m.

/hm