

Economic Development Retail Sales Tax Board
Minutes
April 16, 2019
6:00 p.m.

The Economic Development Retail Sales Tax Board (EDRSTB) held a at the Heman Park Community Center (HPCC), located at 975 Pennsylvania Ave, University City, Missouri on April 16, 2019. The meeting commenced at 6:00 pm.

Voting Members Present

Brendan O'Brien
Traci Moore
Matthew Erker
George Lenard
Kathleen Sorkin
Robyn Williams

Voting Members Absent

Bob Kuhlman
Byron Price
Kristine Hendrix

Council Liaison (Absent)

Mayor Terry Crow

Non-Voting Members Present

Joe Edwards, Loop Special Business District

Staff Present

Gregory Rose, City Manager
John Mulligan, City Attorney
Libbey Tucker, Director of Economic Development
Adam Brown, Planner

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Lenard moved to approve minutes from March 19, 2019. Mr. O'Brien seconded. Minutes were approved unanimously.

New Business

Ms. Tucker presented on the Request for Proposal for the Economic Development Strategic Plan. She said she would be sending the RFP out on Monday, April 22. She expected to get proposals back by May 10. A staff committee would be formed with Economic Development and Planning and Development to select top three proposals, which will then be presented to the EDRST Board. A recommendation will be made to City Council at the June 17th meeting, and work on the plan is anticipated to begin on July 1, to be finished in six months, which would include time for community engagement and stakeholder input. The board felt that this timeline was good, and no vote was needed to approve.

Ms. Tucker presented the updated Matrix for rating applications for EDRST funds. She noted that staff had added a column for referencing the part of the state statute that the project complies with and a column for whether the applicant had received funds in the past and how often. Mr. Rose commented that he would like to modify column 8 to be Job Creation and Number of Jobs Created, as well as salary range of those jobs. Ms. Sorkin asked if it could distinguish between temporary and permanent jobs, and Mr. Rose confirmed that it could. Ms. Tucker said she would update it with these changes.

Ms. Tucker presented the timeline for the EDRST application process for 2019. She proposed a spring and fall application window. The spring window would begin immediately and applications would be due by May 31. Staff would bring these to the board on June 18 for applicant presentations and Council would review for final funding awards in July or August. The same process would be repeated in the fall.

The board discussed how to publicize the process and timeline. Ms. Tucker said staff would notify past applicants, use social media and the City website, and also aim to use the City newsletter in the future. The Board discussed the need to promote this broadly and as soon as possible, and that social media tools should be used for this. Mr. Rose said the process is subject to final approval by Council, but he does not anticipate any major changes, so advertisement could start concurrently.

Public Comment

Joe Edwards spoke and said he was surprised that no one had called to notify him that he was no longer an ex-officio member of the board. He stated that he had been a member since the board's inception, and that some notification of this change would have been appreciated.

Mr. Rose said there is no ex-officio member in regards to the codes, but that the history of the EDRST Board has allowed for such a member, and there was no recommendation to change that practice. Mr. Rose said Mr. Edwards would be contacted in the future regarding participation meetings.

Setting Future Meetings

The Board discussed future meeting dates. It was noted that in the past two meetings were usually held for applications; at the first meeting applicants would present their application to the Board, and at the second meeting, the board would discuss the applications and vote on recommendations to Council. The Board feels that it would be better to have more applicants, and as long as materials are presented in advance of meetings there should be sufficient time to make informed decisions. The Board also said that reviewing the RFPs for the Economic Development Strategic Plan and having "pitches" from applicants in the same night would be feasible.

The next meeting was set for June 18 at 6pm at the HPCC, and the following meeting was set for July 8 at 6pm at HPCC.

Further Public Comment

Kevin Taylor, 7022 Canton, said that he was concerned with the lack of transparency with regards to the EDRST funds. He said he had received no email notification for this meeting although he is signed up for notifications through the City's website. He said that the EDRST Board has a reputation for being a "slush fund" and that different entities see it as an opportunity to receive funds.

Ms. Tucker said that staff would address how meetings are posted. She said the meeting had been posted on the City's Website and in public locations on Friday afternoon, and that staff would look into updating the City's calendar sooner and seeing if there is a problem with the notifications.

The board commented that it is not a slush fund and that they have worked to develop a rigorous and fair process for evaluating applications.

Mr. Lenard spoke specifically about the School Board's interest in job training high-tech and skilled jobs, and noted that this was an appropriate use of the funds according to the state statutes.

Deb Henderson, U City Farmer's Market, 6124 Victoria Ave, suggested that the new evaluation matrix could be posted on the City's website, as well as the application timeline. This would allow enough time and information for applicants to prepare their applications, which, she said, can take up to twenty hours. Mr. Lenard noted the link between the Farmer's Market products and the value-added farm products referenced as an appropriate use of funds in the state statute.

A motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Moore and seconded by Mr. O'Brien. The meeting was adjourned at 6:33pm.

Prepared by Adam Brown, Planner