

Economic Development Retail Sales Tax Board
Minutes
May 19, 2022
6:30 p.m.

The Economic Development Retail Sales Tax (EDRST) Board held a virtual meeting on Thursday, May 19, 2022. The meeting commenced at 6:31 pm and adjourned at 7:16 pm.

Voting Members Present:

Brandon Bradshaw
Brendan O'Brien
Byron Price
Kathleen Sorkin
Cynthia Martin
Matthew Erker

Voting Members Absent:

Matthew Bellows

Council Liaison:

Mayor Terry Crow

Staff Present:

Brooke A. Smith, Deputy City Manager/Dir. of Economic Development
Gregory Rose, City Manager
Sinan Alpaslan

Others attending:

None

Public Comments

No public comments were received ahead of the meeting and there were no attendees.

Mayor Comments

Mayor Crow said the second school board meeting would be George Lenard, representing the two school boards. He suggested everyone go by and take a look at the Market at Olive development, noting that Costco was coming up quite rapidly and that an October opening is likely. Mr. Rose confirmed that Costco was still on schedule for a September/October opening. Mayor Crow said there would also be a music festival on May 28th in The Loop and the Memorial Day run was on May 30th.

Old Business

Administrative Cost Allocation

Deputy City Manager Smith noted that this was a follow up item and there is no action needed. She said the question was at the last meeting whether the 25% administrative cost allocation was based on the fund balance or the annual revenue. She said the City Attorney did do research and the 25% should be based on the annual revenue, so that would change the FY23 administrative cost allocation to \$188,000 and the long-term economic development planning would change to \$150,000. Smith said she did not have exact numbers, but research

has shown that in previous years the city has not always used the full 25% for the admin cost allocation. She said that would lead her to the next item.

Funding of Positions

Smith said that she was requesting two positions and because the city has not traditionally used the 25% cost allocation for admin fees, she would be requesting the funds from the reserves. She referenced the outline for the three positions for Economic Development, including the Director. Mr. Rose stated that the duties listed for the Director was not all of the job duties. Smith noted that as the team begins to work, some of the duties could shift and all staff would have other duties as assigned. She referenced the work plan that was presented and asked if there were any questions.

Byron Price asked if the positions were funded, will their activities center around the two specific areas in the Loop and Olive Blvd. Smith answered that they would focus on those areas but also Economic Development city-wide, specifically business retention and business recruitment. Mr. Rose confirmed this was the intention and noted the beauty of this structure is that the positions have to be justified each year since funding is not coming from administrative allocation, with the exception of the Director position.

Cynthia Martin asked what kind of workforce planning was done and if there is a percentage of time that would be anticipated in each of these areas, focused on each category of activity, and what skill sets are needed. Smith said it was not broken down per percentage, but that she can confirm these two positions would be 100% focused on economic development. She noted the Director position would have other duties, but not the two positions. She said the team would focus on the action items from the Economic Development strategy adopted. She said created and implementing a business retention program would take up a lot of time as it requires boots on the ground to interact with the business in the city. Smith noted that this is a very macro level outline, stating that the HR Director is working to create detailed job descriptions that the City Manager will review and edit as necessary. Cynthia Martin asked how staff came up with the need for two roles. City Manager Rose said what is identified here is just the tip of the iceberg for the Economic Development Strategy. He said there is a concern that we could have overloaded the positions, stating it really won't be known until the positions are in place if they are properly balanced. He noted that the city does not lack for other projects that can be performed and stated the concern may be that we put too many duties on the two positions. He said the approach is what can be afforded at this time, noting that as the University City economy improves, more funding will go into the EDRST fund, but until that time, the recommendation is based on what the fund can afford at this time. Cynthia Martin said she does not question the need for support, she wants to make sure the city gets the right staff with the right skill set. Deputy City Manager Smith said that comes out in the detailed job description as the HR Director will be able to tease out the exact skill set needed to get the duties accomplished. Cynthia Martin asked if Smith was confident she could ask for funding at a certain level without having the job description completed, nothing that more money might be needed. City Manager Rose said that staff looked at the market and the pay for these types of positions. Cynthia said she wanted to make sure that the city is getting the level of expertise that is needed for the deliverables. Mr. Rose said staff is doing what is prudent at this time and will reevaluate as they learn things once the new team members are on board. He said these are very basic steps and as the city gets more experienced, there will be more advanced things introduced. Kathy Sorkin asked how positions are advertised. Mr. Rose answered that there are organizations out there where these positions could be

advertised. Chair Sorkin asked if there is any action to be taken, Smith said yes, action is necessary and referred the Board to the memorandum in their packet. She noted that the ask was for \$180,000 to fund the two positions, to be taken from the reserve fund. Smith noted that this did include the benefits for the positions.

Chair Sorkin called for a motion.

Motioned by Byron Price, seconded by Cynthia Martin to allocate \$180,000 from the EDRST reserve fund to fund the two full-time Economic Development Specialist positions.

Motion carried by voice vote.

New Business

Expansion of Municipal Lot #4

Deputy City Manager Smith stated this item asks the board to receive a presentation on the proposed expansion of Municipal Lot #4. Public Works Director Sinan Alpaslan presented proposal.

Motioned by Brandon Bradshaw, seconded by Byron Price to approve the use of EDRST infrastructure funds to cover the cost of this project, not to exceed \$360,000.

Byron Price asked if the modification of the lot was for a hotel or if it was being modified for more spaces. City Manager Rose said he believes it is both issues, noting that the city wants to be able to accommodate more businesses in the Loop, the hotel being one. The expansion will enable the city to be more effective in recruiting businesses and allow those businesses to meet their parking space requirements. Chair Sorkin added that it was also one of the reasons metered parking was eliminated in the Loop.

Motion carried by voice vote.

Board Member Comments

Chair Sorkin said she was with a group of people that live in University City and none were aware that there was free parking. She said it was suggested that hoods be placed over the meters or other options to emphasize the free parking in the Loop. Deputy City Manager Smith said staff did explore the hoods, but they were very expensive. She said that was why the bright orange stickers were selected. Smith also said she could work with Jessica from LSBD to do another press release.

Deputy City Manager Smith said she wanted to follow up about the Façade Improvement Program. She mentioned previous discussions with the board of changing the requirement that the applicant have the full project amount available. Smith said she went through the current policy and that it is worded that way so there is no need to amend anything.

Chair Sorkin also noted that she saw a tv ad for Mannequins in the Loop and that it was nice seeing the EDRST Funds being put to good use.

Next Meeting Date – July 7, 2022 at 6:30 p.m.

Adjourn

Motioned by Byron Price, seconded by Brandon Bradshaw and carried by voice vote to adjourn at 7:16 p.m.