



**CITY OF FRIENDSWOOD
COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 4, 2021 - 4 PM**

Minutes

**MINUTES OF A FRIENDSWOOD REGULAR MEETING HELD AT 910 S. FRIENDSWOOD
DRIVE, FRIENDSWOOD, TEXAS,**

STATE OF TEXAS
CITY OF FRIENDSWOOD
COUNTIES OF GALVESTON/HARRIS

1. Call to Order

THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE WAS CALLED TO ORDER ON WEDNESDAY, JUNE 2, 2021, AT 4 PM AT 910 S. FRIENDSWOOD DRIVE, FRIENDSWOOD, TEXAS WITH THE FOLLOWING PRESENT CONSTITUTING A QUORUM;

CHAIR JENNIFER WHITLEY
VICE CHAIR BLAISE GUZETTA (VIRTUAL)
COMMITTEE MEMBER SUSAN ASIMAKIS
COMMITTEE MEMBER DEREK BROWN
COMMITTEE MEMBER JUDY WIGGINS
ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER STEVEN RHEA
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AUBREY HARBIN

ABSENT: COMMITTEE MEMBER PAULINE MOORE

ALSO PRESENT: SALLY BRANSON, MICHELLE THOMAS, KIM DINGLE (FISD)

2. Communications from the Public

None

3. Approval of Minutes

- A. Consider approving the June 2, 2021, Community and Economic Development Committee meeting minutes

Derek Brown motioned to approve the minutes, seconded by Susan Asimakis. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Discussion and Possible Actions

A. Discussion and take possible action regarding the creation of a business tool kit program.

Tool Kit Subcommittee members Wiggins and Moore met to discuss the tool kit idea and Committee Member Wiggins provided an update from that meeting. She explained that they discussed ideas on what CEDC can do to help businesses in Friendswood such as who to call lists. Historically CEDC has supported incoming businesses, not necessarily existing businesses, so changing that focus would be a significant change for CEDC. Further discussion was had about how to help businesses if they are moving from one location to another and still attract businesses, ultimately, retention and acquisition.

Rhea explained that City Council discussed similar ideas at their last retreat. He explained that Council would be supportive of CEDC establishing guidelines for programs to assist businesses and present to Council.

Asimakis stated that one thing she learned from Sugarland's tool kit was the purpose of their marketing plan targeted small businesses, such as ways that the city can help small businesses with communications, alerts, and social media.

Wiggins explained that they have ideas of hosting a business symposium with guest speakers to educate business owners. She said that they met with Carol at Chamber of Commerce to ensure that CEDC does not replicate what the Chamber is doing.

Wiggins also stated that the CEDC FB page could be used to promote all businesses, not individual businesses. She stated that she has learned that it is not the City's job to market businesses for the owners, but we can provide tools to assist them. Whitley supported that statement by saying that it may be beneficial to some business owners knowing that they have a support system.

Wiggins did explain that the Sugarland model contains a lot of expenses such as gift cards for incentives, which we don't have.

There was discussion about the purpose of CEDC and ultimately Asimakis explained that the classic world of economic development is a three-prong approach – attract new businesses, retain businesses, and help to expand or grow existing businesses.

Whitley stated that she would like to hold off for now on updating the economic development strategy plan (Vision 20/20). She explained that the tool kit should be the focus for now and more time is needed to see how the committee strategies are evolving.

The Tool Kit Subcommittee will continue work on their product. Committee members can communicate to Committee Member Wiggins any ideas they have. Wiggins also pointed out that one more person can join the subcommittee. Rhea stated that he would like to meet with the subcommittee before next regular CEDC meeting.

5. Reports

A. Receive the Friendswood Independent School District (FISD) Update

Kim Dingle, Business Coordinator, reported that school is starting back. Teachers start on Monday, August 9. Under the Oaks event will be held on Thursday, August 12 at 7pm. New teacher appreciation will take place at the Lone Star Flight Museum. On

August 23, the Board will determine the final tax rate. Regarding the bond program, Friendswood High School projects will be starting soon which will include demolition of the residential homes and construction of new tennis courts. On Monday, a presentation by General Contractor will be provided to the Board and final plans for the new Cline Elementary School will be presented at the December Board meeting.

- B. Receive a report regarding the Friends of Downtown Friendswood (FDFA) McKinney, Texas discovery trip.

Presentation by Asimakis and Councilmember Sally Branson

Discovery trips provide opportunities to observe what other cities are doing and learn best practices. These types of trips are common in the economic development industry.

Asimakis explained that McKinney was selected because it has a lot of similarities to Friendswood. McKinney is 30 miles north of a metropolitan area, Dallas, and Friendswood is 30 miles south of a metropolitan area, Houston. Other similarities include professionalism, highly educated residents who live work and raise families, strong school systems and pride in the community. Discovery trips help us to learn what others are doing that we could also do to keep our community thriving and moving in the right direction.

Asimakis made the following points about the trip and provided more details in who they met with...

Discover: learn what they are doing

Focus: economic development – keeping tax base strong and keeping business and non-profits in harmony

Marketing/communication: harmonious connections with groups and how they communicate that focus their efforts in one direction; very smooth

How to Gather your community: Friendswood does a great job but learned great ideas of how to expand and do better.

Take-aways: lots of takeaway, but maybe only use a portion; they were very generous with their time. One of the biggest take-aways is to look for a way to say, Yes!

In summary, key take-aways for Friendswood include formulate a refocused effort on an effective Economic Development Strategy, leverage Friendswood's significant intellectual capital, focus on innovation and entrepreneurship – recruit startups and tech entrepreneurs, leverage city's ties to NASA and Space, successful business community and our history, focus on and enhance collaboration between City, Chamber and numerous non-profits, ramp up communications and marketing all things Friendswood (city, events, non-profits) and explore the Main Street Designation and a central HUB entertainment and cultural venue.

- C. Receive the Staff Business Report

Harbin reported for the month of June – 2 new businesses obtained CO's; 8 commercial addition/alterations permits were issued; zone change for a PUD for another 4-story building which will contain professional offices behind Virgatta Commons approved by City Council; several ordinance amendments in process such as building height exceptions, tree preservation ordinance and changes to zoning regulations in Industrial zoning district; zone changes Industry Park 2, Avalon at Friendswood PUD amendment, Friendswood High School and Fire Station No. 2; also TXDOT sidewalk project is in process, as well as the Leisure Lane traffic signal

Steven Rhea reported that there will be a ribbon cutting for the extension of Friendswood Lakes Blvd.

6. Comments

- A. Receive staff comments
None

7. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 5:15PM.