

CITY OF FREEPORT
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
200 West 2nd Street, Freeport, Texas 77541

MEETING MINUTES

STATE OF TEXAS)
)
COUNTY OF BRAZORIA)
)
CITY OF FREEPORT)

BE IT REMEMBERED that the Economic Development Corporation of the City of Freeport met on Tuesday, March 22, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. in the Freeport Police Department Municipal Court Room, located at 430 North Brazosport, Freeport, TX, for the purpose of considering the agenda items.

FEDC BOARD MEMBERS: Quorum Present

Directors:

Mingo Marquez	President
Josh Mitchell	Vice-President
David McGinty	Secretary
Jeff Pena	Treasurer
Shonda Marshall	
Melanie Oldham	
Sandra Loeza	

Tim Kelty: City Manager
Chris Duncan: Attorney
Jerry Cain: Council Liaison
Kaytee Ellis: EDC Assistant

Visitors in Attendance:

Alfred Aguirre
Sarah Paul
Leah Stasney
Kelly Angus
John Varner
Gina Aguirre Adams
Landis Adams

Viewers via Live Stream:

Margie Fernandez	Cindy Cain
Paul Crow	Bob Cramer

Laura Cramer
Jimmy Kervin
Jul Arev

James McDonald
Octavio Tijerina Jr.

I. Call to Order

Mingo Marquez called the meeting to order at 6:05 PM. A quorum was present.

II. Invocation and Pledge

Shonda Marshall led the invocation and David McGinty led the pledge.

III. Citizens Comments

There were no citizen comments.

IV. Executive Session- Adjourn into Executive Session

Executive Session Disclosure Statement: The FEDC Board of Directors reserves the right to adjourn into executive session at any time during the course of this meeting to discuss any of the matters listed above, as authorized by the Texas Government Code, Section 551.071 (Consultation with Attorney), 551.072 (Deliberations about Real Property), 551.073 (Deliberations about Gifts and Donations), 551.074 (Personnel Matters), 551.076 (Deliberations about Security Devices) and 551.087 (Economic Development).

It is now 6:12 p.m. and I hereby recess the regular session of the Freeport Economic Development Corporation March 22, 2022 meeting and do hereby convene an executive session, said executive session authorized under the following sections of the Texas 551.071 (Consultation with Attorney.)

**In Accordance with the Texas Government Code:
Section 551.087 (Economic and Community Development Matters)**

1. Discussion on EDC Project 2022B

Reconvene into Open Session

Board President's statement:

It is now 7:26 p.m. and I hereby close the executive session of the Freeport Economic Development Corporation and do hereby reconvene the regular open session.

V. Presentation

1. Gensler Architecture Firm

Gensler Architecture Firm gave a presentation.

Chris Duncan told the board that Gensler is a big name in the architecture world and they have a very good world-wide reputation.

Josh Mitchell said a concern that was brought up is that after plans are done, what is the process for breaking ground and seeing visual changes.

Gensler responded that it is very important for the community to see infrastructure in place and work being done at the site. The next step would be guiding the EDC through investments and funding.

Chris Duncan asked what comes first, the developer reaches out and makes a plan or the city making the plan and how do they get the investors to really come in. How does this process work?

Gensler responded that a lot of the development starts with residential. Then creating a vision of what people can actually picture being developed and then implementing that in terms of construction. Developers will see that and know that they can make a worthy investment in the City.

Chris Duncan said hypothetically if a boardwalk comes in, all of the retail and mixed use will come. If the EDC invests and builds a portion of the boardwalk, will that be a way to attract developers and investment or is that a waste of time?

Gensler responded that this would be a worthy investment if that is the vision the city has. If you create a space to draw people into, that would drive numbers and in turn attract development.

Melanie Oldham mentioned the LGA development plan which included public input and years of planning. Melanie Oldham said EDC and City paid \$250,00 for the boardwalk plan and asked if Gensler had an opportunity to review the plan that was already created. Melanie Oldham said there was no need to reinvent the wheel when the people within the city have already spoken and said this is what they want.

Gensler said that part of the process is to do this research and if they money has already been spent on this plan; they are here to help implement this and include the public's valuable input.

David McGinty asked what Gensler would be giving the City to drive this home so that it would not become just another plan.

Gensler responded the implementation would depend on the City but they are an architecture firm and will design and carry out the whole process, they are not just a planning group.

Chris Duncan asked if Gensler would provide a cost as well as the plan so the EDC can have a general estimate.

Gensler responded yes. They can create a project and budget that is malleable and they can change to fit within the city budget.

Mingo Marquez said he likes what he is hearing but agrees with Melanie that the EDC has already paid for conceptual ideas and does not want to go back on that work but he is

looking for pricing and how to move forward. Mingo Marquez said he would like to develop the EDC property first and then reach out to others. Mingo Marquez said the board has voted to proceed with the boardwalk.

David McGinty said he would like to see the implementation as well.

Gensler said they would set up a design guideline so the EDC has a set aesthetic the developers would need to follow. Gensler said they would like to review the existing plan to see what the EDC still wants and what is still relevant or if there are any holes. They would use this to provide a foolproof plan.

Josh Mitchell asked if the plan Melanie brought had what the people would actually like to see.

Melanie Oldham responded yes. It was a long process that involved a lot of research an input, most importantly of which was maintaining public access to the river. Melanie Oldham said she would like to see Gensler help the city take this to the next step.

Mingo Marquez agreed with Melanie Oldham.

Josh Mitchell asked if the concept designs were included in the boardwalk plan.

Gensler referred the board to the proposal sheet which included planning and design. They would create the images and concept designs. Then, create an implementation plan on what the EDC would start with.

Melanie Oldham referred to the Freeport Harbor Vision Plan and said it shows potential businesses such as an oyster bar. Melanie Oldham asked Gensler if they would be able to help the EDC fill these spaces with the types of businesses listed.

Gensler responded that this would be the job of the EDC or whoever owned those buildings.

Chris Duncan said you often see that a developer has a list of business that would occupy these spots before they even start building and said this would be a great plan to start with. Chris Duncan asked what kind of person the EDC would need to find these tenants.

Gensler responded that the EDC would need a real estate or retail broker and they can provide contacts. Gensler said you do not need all to be leased but to at least have a major one on the books. You can use the one to attract others and foot traffic to the development.

David McGinty asked for a timeline to get the most out of Gensler.

Gensler said this depends on the first major aspect and finding out what the market supports. Gensler said they would first like to look at the previous studies.

Jeff Pena said a common misconception with development on the river is that it will block public access and asked Gensler to just ensure public access remains available.

Melanie Oldham asked how Gensler can offer something different from Kending Keast.

Mingo Marquez responded that Gensler can offer actual renderings of what the boardwalk will look like here in Freeport.

VI. Consent Agenda

1. Approve Meeting Minutes for March 08, 2022

2. Approve Invoices

David McGinty presented an additional invoice for Gerardo's Remodeling. David McGinty said this is for the repairs to the fence at Western Seafood.

Mingo Marques said this invoice is for \$900.00

Melanie Oldham asked Jeff Pena to explain the invoice for the dock repair. Melanie Oldham said she thought David McGinty was over this project and somehow Jeff Pena has taken it over. Melanie Oldham questioned the cost of labor at \$110/hr.

Jeff Pena said the subcommittee was tasked with repairing the dock for Outriggers Grand Opening. Jeff Pena said this was the contractor that was available and could get the work completed in time.

Melanie Oldham said it was not a ramp that was built; it was a box that is more dangerous. Melanie Oldham said the railing was also too high and the children could not even fish from it. Melanie Oldham said that if the EDC is going to spend this much money, she wanted to make sure they were getting their moneys worth. Melanie Oldham asked David McGinty for his thoughts.

David McGinty said he felt the platform was fine and served the intended purpose of getting people on and off the dock. David McGinty said he may have done it differently but it was efficient for the time frame. David McGinty said he however is also curious about the cost. David McGinty said it did seem like a lot of money for a 12x12 foot box.

Melanie Oldham asked Jeff Pena if he has ever used this company before.

Jeff Pena responded yes. They have been used by the City and for personal projects. Jeff Pena said the subcommittee was told to fix the dock and this is what they did.

David McGinty said he would have chosen to repair the dock himself.

Mingo Marquez said he did not believe it was David McGinty's responsibility to fix the dock himself. Mingo Marquez said this was a lot to ask of a board member and David McGinty is already keeping up with the 8.8 acres and western seafood properties. Mingo Marquez said he suggested hiring a contractor to perform the work.

Melanie Oldham said she agrees with Mingo Marquez but David McGinty is a contractor by trade and could have chosen a better contractor. Melanie Oldham said she felt like the board should have been involved and they two board members even went and had a sign made stating "EDC property enter at your own risk." This sign was put up after the work was completed, but if the work was done correctly the sign would have not been needed.

Sandra Loeza said she did think the price was high, but the cost of material is high.

Jeff Pena said the cost of labor was increased due to the short time frame and the need to have extra staff. Jeff Pena said this is why we have to trust subcommittees to complete their jobs. Jeff Pena said the direction was given to get the work done and this is what they did. Jeff Pena said the sign was not meant to be a reflection of the work done, but was to be a reminder of the entire space being dangerous.

Melanie Oldham said certain people have been in discussion for two months on this space and the reason for the hurry and rush is because of the way the process went. Melanie said she is unsure of how the subcommittees work but David McGinty should have been over this with his background in construction.

Mingo Marquez called for a vote.

Jeff Pena made a motion to approve the consent agenda items with the addition of the invoice of \$900.00 to Gerardo's remodeling. Josh Mitchell seconded. **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

VII. Discussion & Action Items

1. Discussion and possible action on Barcadia Easter Sponsorship

David McGinty said this is for an Easter Egg hunt at Barcadia. Mr. McDonald is asking for a sponsorship of \$1500 for the event for marketing assistance.

Jeff Pena said the marketing committee met and set a budget for new business marketing. Jeff Pena said he thinks if the event is just asking for marketing this current package should be sufficient. Jeff Pena reminded the board of the City Easter event at the park.

Josh Mitchell said this is not a grand opening.

Jeff Pena said the amount of marketing for a grand opening should be sufficient for an event.

Shonda Marshall said guidelines need to be set because there are people asking for sponsorships for \$500-\$5000. Shonda Marshall said the board needs to be clear and consistent on what is a sponsorship and what are marketing funds.

Jeff Pena agreed.

Sandra Loeza asked if they provided a copy of their budget or said what the \$1500 would be for.

David McGinty said he did not have the details. Barcadia was present but had to leave during executive session.

Jeff Pena said he would like to see the EDC logo pronounced on each flier as either 1/4 or 1/8 of the page at a minimum.

David McGinty said there is a balance needed and the flier should not be about the EDC but should be about the event.

Mingo Marquez said the EDC can always have banners present. Mingo Marquez questioned where the \$1500 amount came from.

Shonda Marshall said maybe for future reference, when an organization is asking for a sponsorship, it be required for them to turn in a budget breakdown of the event.

Jeff Pena reminded the board of Mardi Gras and the EDC logo on the back of all the shirts.

Shonda Marshall said it is important to stay consistent and not show any bias to one organization or another.

Mingo Marquez said he feels like doing these events will draw people to Freeport.

David McGinty said it was for \$250 for fliers, \$250 for rack cards, \$500 for online promotion and \$500 for banners.

Josh Mitchell asked if the EDC could do half of the requested amount.

Sandra Loeza asked the board to set a standard.

Josh Mitchell made a motion to give a \$500 sponsorship to Barcadia for the Easter event. Jeff Pena seconded. **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

2. Discussion and possible action on Earth Day Sponsorship

Josh Mitchell said the Earth Day Festival has previously been held in Angleton but they are moving it to Freeport this year. Josh Mitchell said last year's event held about 60 vendors and they are asking for \$3500 from the EDC for a sponsorship.

Landis Adams said the Hispanic Lions Club felt Freeport was a valuable location for the healing festival aspect of the event. Landis Adams said a budget was provided and he thinks it is important to show transparency.

Jeff Pena asked if the flier provided in the packet, is the official flier.

Landis Adams responded no.

Shonda Marshall asked if there are other sponsors.

Landis Adams responded yes; they will be reaching out for other sponsors.

Jeff Pena asked how many of the 60 vendors are from Freeport.

Landis Adams responded that the vendors are from San Antonio, Austin, Houston, etc. not just within the City of Freeport.

Melanie Oldham said she love this idea of a health and wellness event and it is very unique.

Sandra Loeza asked if the event in Angleton last year was the first event and if it was successful.

Landis Adams said yes this was the first event and was very successful

Shonda Marshall asked if there were any health and wellness businesses in Freeport that could be invited.

Landis Adams said there are probably some in every city and any are welcome to join.

Josh Mitchell made a motion to sponsor the Earth Day Festival in the amount of \$3500. Melanie Oldham seconded. **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

3. Discussion and possible action on Caliente Cookoff Sponsorship

Landis Adams said this event is held by the Hispanic Lions Club. It is a crawfish cookoff and the largest fundraiser for the organization. The event is held in partner with Riverfest. Landis Adams said the event has about \$4000 in sponsorships already and 8 teams signed up.

Jeff Pena asked if it was a two-day event.

Landis Adams responded yes; Friday from 5:00 to midnight and Saturday 11:00am to midnight.

Jeff Pena asked what the anticipated sales revenue is for the cookoff.

Landis Adams said last years was \$7000.

Mingo Marques made a motion to sponsor the Caliente Cookoff in the amount of \$5000. Josh Mitchell seconded.

Sandra Loeza asked if the prizes are cash prizes.

Landis Adams responded yes.

Josh Mitchell asked to clarify if the sponsorship is for Riverfest as a whole or strictly for the Crawfish Cookoff.

Landis responded it was for the cookoff portion only.

Sandra Loeza abstained from voting as she is a member of the Brazoria County Hispanic Lions Club.

MOTION PASSED unanimously.

4. Discussion on Brazoria County Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Business Expo

Landis Adams thanked the EDC for the opportunity and their help with the business expo. Landis Adams said 342 people registered for the event throughout the day. There were 24 booths with a waiting list of 4 booths. The speakers were great and people left with the resources necessary for their business.

Jeff Pena thanked Landis and the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce for hosting the event and he was happy to see the business-to-business connections being made.

Gina Adams thanked the board as well. Gina Adams said the executive director for the SBA was present and he saved two businesses that were previously rejected.

5. Discussion and Possible action on La Huasteca Grand Opening

Josh Mitchell said this grand opening was brought to his attention and he suggests the EDC offer the grand opening sponsorship to this event.

Gina Adams said she thinks this is a great opportunity to partner the EDC and the Brazoria County Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. Gina Adams said the chamber already hosts a ribbon cutting and presents a gift and she would like to incorporate the EDC and allow them to do a gift as well.

Mingo Marquez made a motion to award La Huasteca with the \$250 Grand Opening Advertising Sponsorship. Josh Mitchell Seconded. **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

6. Discussion and possible action on Subcommittee Updates

PopBox-

Jeff Pena said he wanted to update on the PopBox. Jeff Pena said Explore More had their opening over spring break and he is very excited to be open. Jeff Pena said they will be putting a proposal together to extend the PopBox Program.

Mingo Marquez said Explore More is looking to have their grand opening the same weekend as Riverfest. Mingo Marquez said Explore More has been asked for handouts with “things to do in Freeport” and suggested the marketing committee to work on this.

Chris Duncan said one thing he has seen is a prepared script cities have where they recommend another business. Ex people at explore more say “when your done here you should go have lunch at ___ and ask for ___”

Kaytee Ellis said a way to expand on this idea is to make videos of this to post on Facebook or TikTok and make a video series.

Chris Duncan said to market these depending on what people are looking for.

Shonda Marshall said she is really glad to hear Kaytee speak up and she would like to see the marketing committee work with her more.

Melanie Oldham said she is not sure what committee is working on the website but she would like to have an update on this, especially the property locator option.

Mingo Marquez said Kaytee Ellis has been looking into the website. Mingo Marquez said the EDC paid about \$9000 initially for their website and it was a very basic plan but there are a lot of features not being used. To upgrade will be about \$8000 more. Kaytee Ellis would be looking in to the website options and reporting more to the Marketing committee.

Training:

Shonda Marshall said she has been meeting with Kacey Roman and Chris Motley and she has a training in the works. Shonda Marshall is wanting to have a 4- or 5-week training for the public with one class in the evening each week. Shonda Marshall said she would update as she has more information.

EDC Director Hiring:

Melanie Oldham asked Jeff Pena if he would like to give an update on the Director Hiring committee.

Jeff Pena said the subcommittee has been meeting with the committee but he wants to suggest in the meantime, having Mike Barnes on retainer as well as having him assist in the process of hiring a director.

Melanie Oldham said the committee is in the process of reviewing the resumes they already have.

Mingo Marquez encouraged the committee to send a proposal for Mike Barnes to the board.

Marketing:

Mingo Marquez said the marketing committee was approached by an organization, Bay Area on Drugs and Alcohol, that received grant money and they are wanting to come in and paint murals in Freeport. Mingo Marquez asked the board to send their suggestions on locations or mural ideas to promote Freeport.

Chris Duncan said his idea is a fishing pole with a line hanging and you can pose with it like a fish.

Melanie Oldham said West Columbia used this idea and sticks with a theme.

VIII. Board Comments

1. President Mingo Marquez:

Mingo Marquez thanked the board members for all of their hard work. Mingo Marquez said there is a lot going on but he would like to get some of the older projects completed before taking on new projects.

2. Vice President Josh Mitchell:

Josh Mitchell said Kaytee is like the fourth leg on the table of the EDC and thanked her for all of her work. Josh Mitchell said it will be a great thing for Freeport when all of these projects start happening.

3. Secretary David McGinty:

David McGinty said the Main Street Delegation will be here Monday April 4 and on Tuesday they would like to have a lunch with the EDC at 11:00.

Melanie Oldham asked if they are only here to focus on the downtown area.

David McGinty said yes downtown is their primary focus.

4. Treasurer Jeff Pena:

Jeff Pena said the Grand Opening for Outriggers was a successful event and suggested purchasing hardhats, shovels, and custom ribbon for future events. Jeff Pena asked the grant committee to present a sprinkler addition to the grant.

5. Shonda Marshall:

Shonda Marshall said she would like to see an update on the Fish Market and the downtown buildings at the next meeting. Shonda Marshall said there are a lot of events taking place downtown but the EDC building are empty.

6. Melanie Oldham:

Melanie Oldham said most of the board attended Outriggers grand opening and she felt it was a great event.

David McGinty said boosting the posts on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter about the event he got almost 6000 interactions.

7. Sandra Loeza:

Sandra Loeza said the ribbon cutting was a great event but she would like a bigger ribbon with the EDC logo.

IX. Executive Session- Adjourn into Executive Session

Executive Session Disclosure Statement: The FEDC Board of Directors reserves the right to adjourn into executive session at any time during the course of this meeting to discuss any of the matters listed above, as authorized by the Texas Government Code, Section 551.071 (Consultation with Attorney), 551.072 (Deliberations about Real Property), 551.073 (Deliberations about Gifts and Donations), 551.074 (Personnel Matters), 551.076 (Deliberations about Security Devices) and 551.087 (Economic Development).

It is now 9:43 p.m. and I hereby recess the regular session of the Freeport Economic Development Corporation March 22, 2022 meeting and do hereby convene an executive session, said executive session authorized under the following sections of the Texas 551.071 (Consultation with Attorney.)

**In Accordance with the Texas Government Code:
Section 551.087 (Economic and Community Development Matters) 551.074 (Personnel Matters),**

- 2. Discussion on Hiring Full Time EDC Office Professional**
- 3. Discussion on EDC Project 2022A**
- 4. Discussion on EDC Project 2022B**
- 5. Discussion on EDC Project 2022**

Reconvene into Open Session

Board President's statement:

It is now 10:07 p.m. and I hereby close the executive session of the Freeport Economic Development Corporation and do hereby reconvene the regular open session.

X. Discussion and Possible Action

1. Discussion and possible action on Hiring Full Time EDC Office Professional

Mingo Marquez made a motion to hire Kaytee Ellis as the EDC Administrative Assistant on a full-time basis starting April 1, 2022 and allow Shonda Marshall to do whatever necessary for the transition. Jeff Pena Seconded. **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

2. Discussion and possible action on EDC Project 2022A

No action

3. Discussion and possible action on EDC Project 2022B

No action

4. Discussion and possible action on EDC Project 2022C

No action

XI. Adjourn

Motion to close board meeting made by Shonda Marshall and seconded by Sandra Loeza. **Motion passed** unanimously.

It is now 10:09 p.m. and I hereby close the board meeting.