CITY OF FREEPORT
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

430 North Brazosport, Freeport, TX
Tuesday, January 9, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

FEDC BOARD MEMBERS: Quorum Present

Directors:	
Josh Mitchell	President
Sandra Loeza	Vice-President
Ken Tyner	Treasurer
David McGinty	Secretary
Shonda Marshall	
George Matamoros	
Mark Parker	

Robert Johnson: Executive Director
Lance Petty: City Manager
Loren Smith: EDC Attorney
Kaytee Ellis: EDC Staff

I. Call to Order

Josh Mitchell called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. A quorum was present.

II. Invocation and Pledge

Ken Tyner led the invocation and Mark Parker led the pledge.

III. Citizens Comments

There were no citizen comments.

IV. Consent Agenda

1. **Approve Meeting Minutes for December 19, 2023**
2. **Approve Financials**
3. **Approve Quarterly Investment Report**

George Matamoros made a motion to approve the consent agenda. Sandra Loeza seconded. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

V. Public Hearing:

CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION OF THE FREEPORT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION, AUTHORIZING AND APPROVING THE DEMOLITION OF A PROPERTY LOCATED AT 208 W. PARK, FREEPORT, TEXAS

77541, TO BE PERFORMED BY TURBEVILLE CONSTRUCTION, LLC; CONTAINING OTHER PROVISIONS RELATING TO THE SUBJECT; AND PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY.

Josh Mitchell opened the Public Hearing at 6:08 p.m.

Melanie Oldham stated that she had seen a pocket park in West Columbia and wondered about the possibility of Freeport creating a pocket park in the vacated space after demolition is completed.

Shonda Marshall inquired about the plan for the empty lot.

Josh Mitchell replied that plans about what to do with the lot are still open for discussion. He also mentioned that the idea of putting in a pocket park had been brought up multiple times.

Shonda Marshall asked about the tentative date for demolition and the timeline of the demolition project.

Robert Johnson replied that Turbeville Construction stated that they could have the project completed in one week. He then mentioned that the contract was being drawn and that the EDC funds could be expended within 60 days of the public hearing.

David McGinty asked if the demolition project would disturb the walls of the building next to 208 W. Park.

Robert Johnson stated that the appropriate walls would be protected so as to not damage 210 W. Park. He also noted that the final bid was awarded to Turbeville Construction for a total of $18,120.00

Mark Parker commented that 208 W. Park is freestanding and the 6 x 6 beams that are inside are schedule 40 on a flange on the bottom. He continued by stating that, basically, what Turberville Construction will do is take down all of the substructure in the middle and the building will be freestanding because the building does not tie into the other structures. Mark also noted that he liked the idea of a pocket park for the space that will be created when the building is demolished.

David McGinty discussed the possibility of installing side doors at 210 W. Park to create more access in case we wanted to pursue a business incubator for multiple shops in the building.

Shonda Marshall inquired about the historical status of the buildings and if they needed to be protected.

George Matamoras called Ana Silbas, Main Street Coordinator, to the podium and asked her if tearing down 208 W. Park would jeopardize Freeport's Main Street status or if it would negatively impact the Main Street program.

Ana Silbas stated that it would not adversely impact that Main Street program. She continued by saying the idea of a pocket park was brought up by Kacey Roman and Melanie Oldham.

She continued that if the EDC came up with ideas of how to utilize the space, Main Street should be involved in the process.

Josh Mitchell closed the Public Hearing at 6:17 p.m.

VI. Discussion and Action Items

1. **Discuss and take possible action on Mist Lounge Grant Extension Request**
   Roddy Gaons requested that Mist Lounge receive an extension due to problems with getting water connected at his establishment.

   Robert Johnson stated that he had reviewed the matter and recommended a three-month extension to the extant performance agreement with Mist Lounge.

   Ken Tyner made a motion to allow a three-month grant extension through March 2024 for Mist Lounge. Shonda Marshall seconded the motion. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

2. **Discuss and take possible action on promotions for the Fishin' Fiesta**
   Landis Adams and Roddy Gaons, representing the Brazoria County Hispanic Lions Club, presented the budget for the 2024 Fishin' Fiesta. Mr. Adams requested $25,000 from the EDC to support the Fishin' Fiesta.

   George Matamoras asked if the Brazoria County Hispanic Lions Club had received any sponsorships to date. Landis Adams answered that the Freeport EDC was the first sponsorship that they had requested funds from.

   Sandra Loeza asked why the budget was at $85,000. Landis Adams explained that the budget had been modified that day and the new total was $75,021. Sandra continued her question by asking if the previous event planners had shared with Mr. Adams exactly how much it would cost to put the event on. Mr. Adams answered that they had and it was the amount that he budgeted. Sandra Loeza asked where the (line item) for the carnival would be in the budget. Mr. Adams explained that it was not in the budget because it does not cost anything to put the carnival on. Sandra asked what happens if the Brazoria County Hispanic Lions Club falls short in reaching their goals for sponsorships. Mr. Adams answered that Brazoria County Hispanic Lions Club have money in reserves.

   Ken Tyner asked if Cat. Awards meant Captain's Awards. Mr. Adams responded that it did mean Captain's Awards.

   George Matamoros asked Loren Smith if this agenda item could be moved to executive session. Mr. Smith replied that it could be moved under "consultation with attorney".

3. **Discuss and take possible action on marketing the Main Street Mardi Gras Festival.**

   Ana Silbas stated that the Mardi Gras Festival would be February 10th. She noted that this year the Freeport Main Street program is not looking to the FEDC for financial support, just for use of the EDC logo for marketing purposes. Ana also asked for a parade entry.

   Sandra Loeza asked if there were other local events that observed Mardi Gras.

   Ana Silbas responded that on February 17th the Junior Service League of Brazosport will host a 5k run in observance of Mardi Gras. Ana reiterated that Main Street was not asking for money, just for collaboration and the opportunity to put the EDC logo on marketing materials such as t-shirts for the occasion.

   George Matamoros stated that we needed to consider a trailer as we no longer have access to the trailer used by the Lion's Club. Lance Petty stated that we could use a city trailer for the occasion.

   David McGinty suggested forming a decorating committee. Josh Mitchell, David McGinty, and Sandra Loeza volunteered to be on the decorating committee.

   George Matamoros made a motion to allow Freeport Main Street program to use the FEDC logo for marketing purposes along with having a float in their Mardi Gras parade. The budget for decorations and candy for the float is to be set at $1,500.00. Ken Tyner seconded. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

4. **Discuss and take possible action on Downtown Building Renovation and Engineering Quotes**

   Robert Johnson presented the construction estimates for 210 W. Park and 212 W. Park as follows:

   Brazosport Construction
   210 – $276,500
   212 - $373,500

   Tra-Con
   210 - $237,700
   212 – $189,300

   Turbeville Construction
   210 - $284,000
   212 – $385,000

Mark Parker stated that he did not think that the FEDC needs to be in the property management business. He further stated that there is a possibility of the FEDC putting a price tag on those buildings and letting developers take on the project. Mark continued by stating that the EDC would have the proper claw-back agreements in place when this occurred. Some requirements with regards to claw-back agreements could be the number of employees, a timeline on when the project should be finished. Mark observed that we could protect ourselves quite a bit without being property managers.

David McGinty stated that Main Street needs to be involved in the building design of development projects.

George Matamoros added that he would prefer to have someone else's funds go into the buildings, even if we give the buildings away and give developers an incentive to fix them up to spur job growth and build a further tax base in the downtown.

Josh emphasized that the Main Street program needs to be involved in the process in order to retain a certain look in the downtown.

Shonda Marshall asked if there was a vision for this area of the downtown.

Ana Silbas responded that the FEDC and the Main Street program are working with the University of Texas San Antonio (UTSA) to develop a downtown masterplan and design guidelines. She further explained that right now the Main Street program is working to identify their transformation strategies and are looking at selective foundation building as well as business activation and development. The Main Street Board will look at a work plan at their January 18th meeting. Ana stated that she can share the information from the work plan with the FEDC Board.

Shonda Marshall stated that we need to work together and avoid a long delay in the process of revitalizing the downtown.

Ana Silbas stated that she agreed and also pointed out that the Texas Historical Commission Main Street program provides technical assistance in the form of conceptual design so that the FEDC-owned buildings are sensitive to the overall look of the historic downtown district.

Josh Mitchell stated that we need to set up a joint meeting between Main Street and the EDC.

Jerry Cain wanted the board to be aware of claw back agreements and make sure that someone does not just come in and take over the buildings but that the EDC has some control as to what type of development goes into the buildings.

5. **Discuss and take possible action on Business Recruitment and Retention Program**

Robert Johnson discussed the business development breakfasts, the business development journals, the small business social media campaign

Shonda asked about feedback on the ED journals.

Robert Johnson stated that the feedback has been positive especially for the How Do I Write A Business Plan? Journal. He continued by stating that the business development grant program requires a business plan so this particular journal is helpful to applicants who may not have a written business plan.

David McGinty added that he felt it was very important for local businesses to take ownership in the beautification of Freeport.

6. Discuss and take possible action on Girouard's Hardware Store

George Matamoros stated that Girouard's Hardware Store is celebrating their 100th year in business, 1924-2024 and he commented that this is a huge accomplishment. He continued that he would like to see some type of event to mark the occasion and wanted to see how the board felt about this.

Ken Tyner stated that he had encouraged Trey and his wife to contact Bob Phillips with the Texas Country Reporter about their 100th year anniversary. Bob Phillips travels all over Texas highlighting places, people, and businesses for Texas County Reporter and could do a special on Girouard's.

Shonda Marshall agreed that we should recognize Girouard's.

Sandra Loeza also agreed that we should recognize Girouard's and do some kind of meet and greet.

David McGinty observed that the key to their longevity is because they have been able to reinvent themselves. He added that this fact should be celebrated.

Michael Labezma commented that the local news channels sometimes do reports on stores and anniversaries of this type. He also observed that the store had reinvented itself over time.

George Matamoros stated that Girouard's did not know the exact date (month and date) that they went into business but it is the year that marks their 100th anniversary.

6. Discuss and take possible action on Mowing Contract

Robert Johnson discussed the lack of mowing bids and the impending date. He requested that bids be accepted through March of 2024.

Gina Aguirre Adams asked how one applies for a bid. Robert Johnson stated that it was on the EDC web site. Gina Aguirre Adams stated that members of the Brazoria County Hispanic Chamber do mowing and she could send the bid to those members.

Mark Parker asked who wrote the existing mowing contract.

Loren Smith replied by saying that the existing contract pre-dated him but he had written a new and updated contract that had some additions that Robert Johnson had suggested.

Sandra Loeza made a motion to accept mowing bids until February 29, 2024. David McGinty seconded the motion. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

VII. Board and Executive Director Comments

1. Robert Johnson presented a briefing on ongoing projects.

VIII. Executive Session- Adjourn into Executive Session

It is now 7:41 p.m. and I hereby recess the regular session of the Freeport Economic Development Corporation meeting and do hereby convene into executive session in compliance with Texas Government Code: Section 551.071 (Consultation with Attorney), 551.072 (Deliberations about Real Property), Section 551.074 (Personnel Matters)

1. **Update on Pending Litigation: Realty World and A&T**
2. **Deliberation on confidentiality/separation agreement with C. Holman**
3. **Deliberation regarding the appointment, employment, evaluation, reassignment, duties, discipline or dismissal of a public officer or employee, including, but not limited to, the Executive Director.**

Reconvene into Open Session

Board President's statement:
It is now 10:00 p.m. and I hereby close the executive session of the Freeport Economic Development Corporation and do hereby reconvene the regular open session and take possible action on items mentioned in executive session.

1. **Potential Sale of Hickory Street Property**

   George Matamoros made a motion to sell the Hickory Street property to JC Docks L.L.C. for the amount of $20,300.00. Sandra Loeza seconded. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

IX. Adjourn

George Matamoros made a Motion to adjourn the board meeting. This motion was seconded by David McGinty. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Josh Mitchell adjourned the board meeting at 10:03 p.m.