CITY OF FREEPORT
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

430 North Brazosport, Freeport, TX
Tuesday, February 13, 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

I. Call to Order
Josh Mitchell called the meeting to order at 6:16 p.m. A quorum was present.

II. Invocation and Pledge
Ken Tyner led the invocation and David McGinty led the pledge.

III. Citizens Comments
Gardner Campbell discussed infrastructure improvements on the 8.8-acre property. He stated that local businesses would move in if we cleaned up the infrastructure situation.

IV. Consent Agenda

1. **Approve Meeting Minutes for January 9, 2024**
2. **Approve Financials**

Ken Tyner made a motion to approve the consent agenda. Josh Mitchell seconded. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

V. Discussion and Action Items

1. **Discuss and take possible action on Mi Pueblito Grant Application**

Dora and Ivan Martinez, owners of Mi Pueblito, addressed the Board about the status of their restaurant and the status of obtaining documents for the grant application.

Mark Parker congratulated Mr. and Mrs. Martinez and emphasized that he wanted to see documentation of the drawings, permits, wind storm (WPI permit), and a plot plan. Mr. Martinez stated that his engineer was working on the plot plan and wind storm permits. He stated that this documentation should be in by the end of the week.

Ken Tyner asked if Mr. Martinez was the owner of the property or if he was simply leasing it. Mr. Martinez responded that he was leasing the property from Willie Garcia. Mr. Tyner then asked how much funding was Mr. Garcia putting into the project. Mr. Martinez stated that Mr. Garcia had put in funds for materials for flooring and hired a company to do remodeling. Mr. Tyner asked specifically how much Mr. Garcia had put into the project. Mr. Martinez stated that Mr. Garcia had contributed about 20% of the total cost of the project.

George Matamoros asked about the porch project and what exactly would those funds be used for. Mr. Martinez replied that the funds would be used to build an awning to keep people out of the rain. He also stated that he would have benches for people to sit while they waited on “to go” orders.

Sandra Loeza asked if the estimates from October were still accurate. Mr. Martinez said that he will have to go back to the contractor to find out but he did not see any problems with the current estimates.

George Matamoros asked that the issue be tabled until the EDC found out if the estimates are still valid. Mark Parker concurred and stated that he would also like to make the grant contingent upon Mi Pueblito producing documentation of the drawings, permits, wind storm (WPI permit), and plot plan.

Josh Mitchell made a motion to table the issue until the next meeting. George Matamoros seconded the motion. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

2. **Discuss and take possible action Rhombus Inc. MEGA Grant Application**

   Robert Johnson explained that Rhombus Inc. was the only applicant for the MEGA Grant for the present year. The total cost estimates for this project are $290,000. Mr. Johnson pointed out that Rhombus Inc. was perfectly suited for the MEGA Grant because most of their expenditures fell under one category and, therefore, maximizing the dollar amount of that singular category made sense.

   Roshan Wimalarathne gave an overview of his project. He indicated that he wishes to start the project located at 231 West 2nd Street on February 14, 2024.

   Robert Johnson pointed out that the MEGA grant project fit the timeline that was established in the grant rules. He further noted that we had awarded Marlin Marine Worx a MEGA Grant last year.

Sandra Loeza asked what the building was going to be used for. Mr Wimalarathne replied that it was going to be used for a Soul Food restaurant.

Ken Tyner asked if the establishment would be an indoor, air-conditioned establishment. Mr. Wimalarathne replied that it would be.

Sandra Loeza asked how many jobs would be created with the project. Mr. Wimalarathne responded that 9-10 jobs would be created as a result of this project.

George Matamoros asked if the building would be fully enclosed. Mr. Wimalarathne responded that the front of the building would remain open.

Robert Johnson explained that, due to the fact that the Rhombus Inc. application only fits two grant categories, and due to the total cost of the project, this application would be a viable application for the MEGA grant so that Mr. Wimalarathne can maximize his grant amount for a project that costs $290,000 and creates 9-10 jobs.

David McGinty commented that Mr. Wimalarathne has been planning these improvements for a long time. David further noted that these types of improvements go a long way to bring people back into the downtown and create some life in the downtown.

Robert Johnson reminded the Board that the MEGA Grant is to be reserved for those business that are within the defined Downtown boundaries as laid out by our Community Comprehensive Plans or at the discretion of the FEDC Board of Directors.

Shonda Marshall pointed out that, although she was going to vote for the grant application tonight, she felt that it may be better to, next year, push the deadline date back in order to give people more time to turn in applications for the fiscal year.

George Matamoros made a motion to award the FY2023-2024 MEGA Grant as presented by Rhombus Inc. Sandra Loeza seconded the motion. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

3. **Discuss and take possible action on Bryan Beach signage.**

Robert Johnson stated that the sign at Bryan Beach was completed but there is some additional landscaping needed for beautification and aesthetic purposes.

Gardner Campbell noted that the sign project went well but some landscaping was needed. This would be effective for people who want to take pictures while standing by the sign.

George Matamoros asked how much of a budget was needed. Gardner Campbell replied that $6,000 was needed for landscaping. George Matamoros indicated that he would like to see a quote for the pricing and scope of work.

Mark Parker made a motion to accept the proposal ($6,000 for landscaping) from Mr. Campbell. This motion is contingent upon the EDC receiving an itemized quote before work begins on the landscaping. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

4. **Discuss and take possible action on Girouard's Hardware Store**
George Matamoros indicated that he had asked for this item to be placed on the agenda. He stated that he had talked to Ms. Lisa Girouard and she had requested that the EDC hold off on any kind of celebration to commemorate Girouard's Hardware Store's 100th year in business.

George Matamoros made a motion to table the agenda item indefinitely. Sandra Loeza seconded the motion. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

5. **Discuss and take possible action on Gensler Project**
Robert Johnson indicated that he had spoken with Johnathan Mitchell about the Gensler Project. Mr. Mitchell stated that Gensler is ready to do the Community Workshop session. Mr. Johnson noted to the Board that people have had ample time to comment on the model that was created for the EDC and that the EDC is also ready to engage in the Community Workshop session. Mr. Johnson noted, however, that the EDC no longer has funds in the budget for the project so if the EDC wishes to proceed with the Gensler project, we need an additional budget for the Community Workshop session.

Josh Mitchell asked how much was needed for the Community Workshop session. Mr. Johnson indicated that at least $4,000 would be needed.

Mr. Mitchell said that he felt that the Community Workshop session was invaluable because it gave the public an opportunity to comment on the project and after those comments, Gensler would have the opportunity to make changes to the plans based on the comments from the public.

Shonda Marshall asked if the Community Workshop session was $4,000. Mr. Johnson indicated that it was that amount.

David McGinty added that he felt the Board needed to commit to the project if we move forward with the Community Workshop session. David also asked where the Community Workshop session would be held. Robert indicated that it would probably be held at Riverplace.

George Matamoros made a motion to approve the $4,000 request so that the Community Workshop session can be held at a date and time of Robert Johnson and Gensler's choosing. Mark Parker seconded the motion. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

6. Discuss and take possible action on the Parks Project
Robert Johnson gave an update on the Parks Project. He stated that he and Lance Petty had presented at Phillips 66 and the presentation had gone well. Johnson stated that he had meetings scheduled with BASF, Chevron Phillips, Dow Chemical, and was awaiting a reply from ME Global. George Matamoros added that he had been present at

the Phillips 66 presentation and he indicated that we should be hearing back from them soon.

Robert added that Freeport LNG had also been contacted and given the presentation. Freeport LNG indicated that they had received a request from the Freeport Fire Department for a new fire truck and that that request took precedent but they would still see what they could do for the parks project.

7. Discuss and take possible action on joint Main Street/ TIRZ Board walking tour
Robert Johnson stated that he had met with the Main Street Coordinator, Ana Silbas, and the Main Street Board about the possibility of a downtown walking tour in conjunction with the TIRZ and EDC Boards. Robert added that he, Ana Sibas, and Lance Petty had taken a walking tour downtown to assess any catalytic infrastructure that could possibly be improved in the downtown Main Street district.

Ana Silbas stated that there was a meeting between Lance Petty, Shonda Marshall, Robert Johnson and herself to discuss the TIRZ and the mission of Main Street. Because of this meeting it was decided that a joint Board walking tour would take place at 5:00 p.m. on February 27, 2024. She also indicated that she and Robert Johnson had met with representatives from the Texas Historical Commission Main Street program and UTSA Center for Urban and Regional Planning Research about the walking tour. Ana indicated that this joint board walking tour would then set up the Community Visioning Session to be held on March 26, 2024 at Riverplace.

VI. Board and Executive Director Comments

1. Robert Johnson presented a briefing on ongoing projects.

VII. Executive Session- Adjourn into Executive Session

It is now 7:42 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. **Marketing request from the Brazoria County Hispanic Lions Club**

Reconvene into Open Session

Board President’s statement:
It is now 7:53 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. **Marketing request from Brazoria County Hispanic Lions Club**

Sandra Loeza made a motion to fund the Fishin' Fiesta firework show for up to $12,500.00. The check must be made out directly to the vendor with receipts received by the EDC. George Matamoros seconded the motion. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

VIII. Adjourn

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

Josh Mitchell adjourned the board meeting at 7:55 p.m.