CITY OF FREEPORT
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
430 North Brazosport Boulevard, Freeport, TX
Tuesday, November 12, 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 *(Absent)*	Secretary
Shonda Marshall	
Mark Parker	
Ronnie Martin *(Absent)*	

Robert Johnson: Executive Director
Lance Petty: City Manager
Jerry Cain- City Liaison
Loren Smith: EDC Attorney
Rachael Cohen: EDC Staff *(Absent)*

I. Call to Order
Josh Mitchell called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m. A quorum was present.

II. Invocation and Pledge
Ken Tyner led the invocation and Sandra Loeza led the pledge.

III. Citizens Comments
One citizen requested to comment on her concerns. Melanie Oldham, 1206 West Broad.

IV. Consent Agenda
1. **Approve Meeting Minutes for October 8, 2024**
2. **Approve Financials**

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

V. Discussion and Action Items

1. **Discuss and update on the UTSA study for the downtown Main Street district.** ***(Moved from discussion item 5 on the agenda)***

Wade Dillon, Museum and Main Street Director for the City of Freeport, presented updates on the Downtown Comprehensive Plan and Design Guidelines, which were officially released on October 17, 2024. These documents, which are available on the city's website, were designed to serve as a strategic framework for revitalizing and preserving the historic downtown area of Freeport. Wade outlined several initiatives, including the separation of the Freeport Historical Commission from the Main Street Advisory Board. This separation would allow the city to pursue Certified Local Government (CLG) status, which opens additional funding and partnership opportunities. Wade highlighted that the documents contained an implementation strategy and were filled with initiatives that could significantly impact downtown's economic and cultural vitality. Board members were encouraged to review these materials thoroughly, as they represent a roadmap for the city's future growth.

2. **Discuss and take possible action on financials for the TexPool accounts**

The board reviewed the need to update the signatory authority on the city's TexPool accounts. Currently, Cathy Edzell and Robert Johnson are listed as signatories. To improve efficiency and reflect recent staffing updates, the proposal was made to remove Cathy Ezell and add Ashley Ferguson. This change ensures the appropriate personnel are authorized to access and manage these financial accounts.

Motion: Shonda Marshall made a motion to approve the removal of Cathy Edzell and the addition of Ashley Ferguson as a signatory. Sandra Loeza seconded. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

3. **Discuss and take possible action on the Business Improvement Grant Application: Sweet T's**

Tammy Davis, the owner of Sweet Teeth, presented her application for a Business Improvement Grant. The grant is aimed at addressing safety and usability issues at her property. Tammy explained that the current parking lot is uneven, has several potholes, and is poorly lit, creating a hazard for her customers, particularly at night. She provided estimates for lighting improvements and parking lot repairs:

- **Lighting improvements:** Estimated cost of $5,900, with a grant award of $2,950.
- **Parking lot repairs:** Estimated cost of $30,000, with a grant award of $10,000.

Tammy emphasized the importance of her business as a community hub and noted her regular charitable contributions to local causes. Board members commended her application for its detailed preparation and the alignment of her project with community enhancement goals.

Motion: Shonda Marshall made a motion to approve the grant for $12,950. Ken Tyner seconded. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**.

4. **Discuss and take possible action on the Business Improvement Grant Application: Rhombus, Inc.**

The board considered a grant application from Rhombus, Inc., represented by Roshan, who was unable to attend the meeting due to a prior engagement. Rhombus, Inc. requested $13,500 for property repairs, specifically:

- **Roof repairs:** Estimated cost of $22,732.50, with a grant award of $10,000.
- **Signage upgrades:** Estimated cost of $7,000, with a grant award of $3,500.

Concerns were raised by board members regarding Rhombus, Inc.'s lack of property insurance and whether alternative funding sources, such as FEMA or local college programs, had been explored. The board agreed to approve the grant contingent upon the applicant providing documentation of efforts to secure additional funding and support.

Motion: Sandra Loeza made a motion to approve the grant for $13,500, with $10,000 for roof repairs and $3,500 for signage, then later amended her motion contingent on the applicant demonstrating an attempt to secure additional funding from sources such as the Small Business Administration (SBA), Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), or the Small Business Development Center at Brazosport College (SBDC), etc. Josh Mitchell seconded. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

5. **Discuss and take possible action on the Business Improvement Grant Application: Four Corners**

The Four Corners project aimed to revitalize a commercial property's exterior, making it more attractive and safer for the community. The proposal included repairs to improve customer access and address structural concerns. The board discussed the importance of clear performance agreements to ensure accountability and timely project completion.

Motion: Josh Mitchell made a motion to approve an amendment to the previous agreement and amend the new contract to make it payable to Mr. Ali. Mark Parker seconded. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

6. **Discuss and take possible action on the Gensler Project.**

The board discussed the strategic importance of the Skinner Street property, which is zoned for manufactured homes and located near urban renewal land. The property's valuation had significantly increased over the past year, rising from $80,000 to $295,000, highlighting its potential value for future development. The discussion centered on how best to leverage this asset for economic growth while considering zoning restrictions and community needs. The board decided to table the matter for additional review and analysis at a future meeting.

7. **Discuss and take possible action on an extension of the waiver for work done due to Beryl's damages**

Updates on the Gensler Project were presented, focusing on its potential to attract new businesses and improve Freeport's economic landscape. The board discussed possible funding sources and emphasized the need for broad community engagement. It was determined that additional documentation and strategic planning were required before taking any formal action. The item was tabled for the next meeting.

8. Discuss and take possible action on Skinner Street Property.

The board reviewed a request to extend a waiver for work delayed due to damages caused by Hurricane Beryl. The previous waiver was set for 90 days and the request was for further days. While the board was generally supportive of the extension, members requested additional documentation from the applicant to substantiate the request. This would ensure the waiver extension aligns with the board's standards and expectations for accountability. The date was discussed and agreed to be extended until April 1st, 2025 for residents to have started work related to Hurricane Beryl repairs.

Motion: Ken Tyner made a motion to approve the waiver extension from 90 days to April 1st, 2025, to be eligible for this work waiver extension. Mark Parker seconded. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

VI. Board and Executive Director Comments

VII. Executive Session- Adjourn into Executive Session

It is now 7:37 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

Reconvene into an Open Session

Board President's statement:
It is now 8:07 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 the executive session.

VIII. Adjourn

Josh Mitchell requested a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Motion: Shondra Marshall made the motion, seconded by Ken Tyner. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Josh Mitchell adjourned the board meeting at 8:08 p.m.