



BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
Davis Joint Unified School District Administration Building
East Conference Room,
Monday April 27, 2009
MINUTES

Commission Members: Anthony Costello, Chair, Greg Phister, Robert Agee, Sydney Vergis, Tobin Richardson, Joe Hruban, Michael Faust, Dave Robert (Alternate), (Finance and Budget Commission Interim Liaison Donald Palm)
City Council Liaisons: Ruth Asmundson, Don Saylor (Alternate)
City Staff: Sarah Worley, Economic Development Coordinator

Amount of time for each item is approximate and subject to change.

1. Determination of Quorum and Seating of Alternates

Quorum established at 7:04 PM

New Commission Alternate Dave Robert introduced himself.

Commission members: Faust, Richardson absent

2. Approval of Agenda

Phister Moved and Hruban seconded approval of the agenda, passed unanimously

3. Public Comment

No public comment

4. Approval of Minutes

- March 23, 2009

Agee moved and Phister seconded approval of the minutes, passed unanimously

5. Chamber of Commerce Quarterly Report

Jeremy Brooks, Chamber of Commerce President gave the Commission an overview of Chamber concerns and actions as summarized below:

- *Observed during 4 month tenure that businesses are cutting back where they need to, in November Chamber retreat they planned for reduced 2009 Chamber budget and are focused on demonstrating the value of being involved in the Chamber.*
- *Chamber and Council 2x2's are becoming more positive now, Chamber very concerned about the City's support of the Employee Free Choice proposal for employees to establish unions. City staff report addressed impact to City not local businesses. Small businesses could not pay union level wages. Impact would be a loss of jobs.*
- *Past year Chamber was focused on shifting operations and finding new staff to get Chamber running smoothly as a business, Chamber now in good status.*
- *Current focus on business walks and business outreach*
- *Business climate not great – disagree that Davis has been insulated, comments from some business owners have a different view and that*

times are hard, people are working longer hours and harder for smaller returns.

- *Greatest concern is a desire for an open dialogue between the City and Chamber about impacts of budget issues and changes that affect the community (e.g. July 4th Fireworks) and to limit miscommunication.*

This update was followed by a question and answer session with Commission questions and Chamber responses.

Q. What are the biggest obstacles for the organization and ability to meet its goals?

A. Confirming to make sure members see value in the organization and they feel represented, having events that have value in getting their name out. They have seen a 5 percent drop in membership but have corrected some problems with their accounting system made changes to have better data records and status of payment.

Discussion of how one Commission member had dropped Chamber membership because of feeling that Chamber worked for Downtown businesses. South Davis businesses may not be aware of Chamber changes. Chamber event "Celebrate Davis" a good event to showcase businesses from all over Davis to the community.

Q. Aren't businesses not located in Davis members of the Chamber?

A. Any business doing business in Davis can be a member.

Council Liaison suggested that the Chamber look at Council Agenda's to monitor for items that may be of concern. The Council needs strong representation from the business community at the Council meetings to help them.

BEDC Chair stated the BEDC can assist in addressing needs of business community by fielding issues of concern to the businesses to communicate to the Council.

A question was raised whether the Chamber have any questions or concern about the mix of businesses is changing in the Downtown and did the Chamber have a means of tracking business requests. The Chamber office did keep track.

A general discussion followed focused on how best to promote diversifying the retail mix and means to help the community move forward toward reaching goals.

Council Liaison raised the possibility of having a series of breakfast brainstorming sessions with the DDBA/Chamber and property owners/ developers and professionals/designers about what they wanted the Downtown to look like. How to be more proactive addressing how to making the Downtown more viable as the retail core of the City?

A question was raised as to whether the Chamber had compared and contrasted itself with Chambers and Cities of similar sizes.

6. Staff Communication/Updates

Staff reviewed the material on project updates provided in the packet.

Questions and discussion about the nature of the commercial retail area near the new Target compared to the Downtown. Staff shared information that no tenants for additional retail space approved at commercial center have been identified likely due to timing of project and competition from new commercial centers in nearby communities. Why are retail stores not interested in Davis?

Regarding protection of the Downtown as the retail base - question raised how can this happen without building up? Concern expressed about loss of retail to restaurant space. Interest expressed in learning how best to meet sales and retail needs. What is the proper mix or balance of office, retail and restaurant downtown?

A request to hear more about retail recruitment efforts expressed - Items to address:

- *Should the BEDC try to take a stand on the appropriate mix of retail development?*
- *Why are we having problems filling the commercial pad sites?*

Question also raised about the closure of the Davis Electric Cars

7. Business Park Lands Strategy

Staff provided a brief review of the progress being made on the study and introduced UC Davis student Intern Ben Bidwell who is assisting with data collection for the project.

8. Subcommittee Assignments/Reports

- **Business Retention**

Subcommittee Chair and members reported on approach and what was learned from recent outreach visits. Collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce was being pursued. A desire not to delay start or to have too many representatives at each outreach visit was expressed. Raised need to have the same format and questions and standardized reporting mechanism so that valuable information can be shared. Schedule of upcoming visits to be drafted by staff.

- **Business Attraction**

City's petition to become new location of the USA Bicycle Hall of Fame and pending Council consideration of 3rd and B Street building at Central Park as a temporary location for the Bicycle Museum cited.

Staff provided report on Yolo Venture Community Business Ascent, business competition and the winners of the event, two UC Davis affiliates: Vinperfect (manufacturer of innovative design for wine bottle screwcaps) and Micromidas, (a company that turns wastewater into biodegradable plastics). These two companies will continue to the Statewide business competition in San Diego in November. The venture community effort should be on the agenda for discussion again, efforts still underway to develop a group of local investors.

- Community Enhancement –
Need to revisit the makeup of this subcommittee. (Note: members of this subcommittee Nachman and Kimmerlee are no longer on the Commission).

- Work Plan and Data
 - Economic Indicators Project

Subcommittee chair presented overview of progress made - review and consideration of multiple other samples of community economic indicators many done with far greater resources and requiring substantial commitments to keep updated. Interview with Director of Sacramento Region Research Institute (SRRI) also provided valuable information on sources of information and value and pitfalls of different data sources. Decision to select an initial five key indicators, and readily available data variables as a basis for a start presented given resources available. Importance of ability to compare trend data for Davis over time and Davis compared to other regional competitors expressed in order to learn “how Davis is doing.”

- Work Plan

Preparation of new work plan tabled for time being – much work needed, completion of other efforts such as business park lands study and economic indicators project will inform Commission about priorities in next work plan.

Future Agenda Items

- *Status of retail recruitment for Target pad sites*
- *Discussion of BEDC role in determining appropriate mix of uses for Downtown*
- *Yolo County Venture Community initiative and angel investment fund*
- *Review of Community Enhancement subcommittee roster*

9. Adjourn

Phister motion to adjourn, Hruban 2nd passed unanimously. Meeting ended at 9:00 PM

Future Meetings: May 18, 2009 and June 22, 2009