



**BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**  
**Davis Joint Unified School District Administration Building**  
**East Conference Room**  
**Monday March 23, 2009**  
**MINUTES**

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

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**1. Determination of Quorum and Seating of Alternates**

*Quorum determined @ 7:04 p.m.*

Absent: Councilmember Saylor, Councilmember Asmundson

In attendance: Donald Palm, liaison

Resigned: Commissioner Nachman

**2. Approval of Agenda**

*Agenda approved @ 7:04 p.m.*

**3. Public Comment (5 min)**

No public comment

**4. Approval of Minutes (5 min)**

- February 23, 2008

*Minutes approved unanimously*

**5. Davis Downtown Business Association Quarterly Report (15 min)**

DDBA co-presidents described the organization and composition of the Board. Described Visioning subcommittee and the DDBA's related concerns regarding rising vacancies in downtown. Discussion followed regarding quality of data to assess downtown vacancy rates.

Conversation followed including description of the Marketing and Parking. Marketing subcommittee is focused on how to get the word out that downtown is the place to shop. Parking subcommittee is currently focused on E Street Plaza paid parking lot. Observations are that parking at nighttime is a problem because there are no restrictions. Conversation transitioned to the right balance of uses downtown. There was general consensus that a right balance is desirable but no consensus on what that balance is or should be.

DDBA emphasized that urgency ordinances are not the right mechanism for regulation or ensuring a correct balance. Zoning and/or changes and ordinances that affect downtown businesses should proceed through an outreach process that includes the DDBA, Chamber of Commerce, and the BEDC. Allowing time for a sufficient outreach process with the business community was considered essential before any city actions were taken that could affect business owners.

Chair asked if there was anything the DDBA would like the BEDC to think about between now and their next visit. DDBA would like the BEDC and City to think about possible programs to bring more visitors into downtown. The DDBA is also working on a Shop Local campaign wishing to encourage residents and workers to buy in Davis and referenced a past "Deal in Davis" campaign.

## **6. Staff Communication/Updates (10 min)**

Staff provided updates on business-related projects occurring in town including:

Trader Joes: Looking at a ground lease on original site.

Gottschalks: March 30<sup>th</sup> is important date for buyer. If no buyer, a consortium would likely purchase and liquidate.

Conversation continued regarding shifting locations of businesses.

3/4/E/F Project: In restructuring mode.

Urgency Ordinance: Commissioner question regarding an urgency ordinance proposed. Staff responded Council decided not to act on an urgency ordinance to require a conditional use permit for businesses selling tobacco paraphernalia, since the business generating the concern was already open. It was acknowledged the process didn't allow time for much business community input or open dialogue; the Council's intent was to have more discretionary review to have some ability to regulate design/placement of businesses selling tobacco related paraphernalia. Discussion followed regarding free market approach to uses and zoning.

Davis-Woodland Technology Park: Staff provided update on 67,000 square foot R&D incubator in Woodland. It was noted that the economic feasibility of the project may benefit from the City of Woodland's eligibility for federal funding that Davis is not eligible for due to its higher per capita income levels. Commission Chair stated a connection between the work BEDC and the City is working on with Golden Capital Network and start-up companies' need for affordable space. This is why there is interest in pursuing some type of business incubator here.

Northern California Railroad Line: Staff provided update on a possible alternate alignment of the Northern California Railroad Line from downtown to east of the City that would accomplish multiple benefits including eliminating downtown trains on that line and flood concerns with a trestle in the Yolo flood basin which inhibits 30-50% of water flow. Feasibility study is being conducted.

Sales Tax: Staff provided update on most recent business gross receipts. 59% drop in auto sales, 39% drop in contractor services.

Staff noted a new energy company in Davis: Octus Energy created by Chris Soderquist.

Woodland-Davis Alternative Transportation Corridor: Staff provided an update on project progress and possible alignment alternatives. Kick-off meeting was recently conducted including farmers. Support is high overall, with mixed support for bicycles and low-speed vehicles sharing the corridor. Multiple grant applications have been submitted, then negotiations regarding maintenance and patrolling need to be held.

Commission Chair asked about the project's economic benefit. Staff responded any economic benefits would be indirect. It's more of a transportation infrastructure project.

Cannery Park: Staff provided an update on the withdrawal of the Cannery Park application. Stated factors by Lewis Planned Communities included costs associated with EIR and uncertainty in the process. Staff stated Community Development was held to a very tight timeframe for processing the application and EIR which it was in compliance with up to the point of withdrawal. Commission Chair stated Lewis Planned Communities representative thinks the process failed them. Is encouraged to have BEDC look at the process and what caused the problem. Would like to consider looking at lessons learned. Commissioner asked the property's status. Staff responded the status is unknown at this point. Staff noted there were additional factors and developer decisions that also affected the overall processing timeframe for the project (such as design phase) that were not city-driven.

**7. Current Updates(10 min)**

- Agricultural Initiatives

Commissioner gave an oral presentation on ideas to connect local food growers with Davis residents. Proposed an idea of a local storefront for farmers/farmers market merchants to sell their products more regularly versus just twice a week. There was support for the concept but it was recognized that it will take a person or entity to champion this kind of idea and see it through.

**8. Business Park Lands Strategy (30 min)**

Staff provided update on the Business Park Land Strategy. Provided overview of existing visions and policies and how they provide the project's underlying foundation. Explained conclusions of the Davis economy from the Cannery Park Business Park Viability Study. Outreach approach was presented and discussed. Project objective is to understand what the community's long term needs are for business park-type land and how to meet them.

**9. Subcommittee Assignments/Reports (30 min)**

- Business Retention

Chair of subcommittee stated they have some interviews set up. They're also working at putting questions together.

- Business Attraction

Commission chair stated the big news is the Golden Capital Network business competition. Davis will be hosting the competition's second round. Staff added the date is 4/23 in City Hall. Commission chair stated unlike other competitions, this is not a business plan competition, it's a business competition. Commission chair stated the objective is to create a local angel investor fund. Has spoken with Jon Gregory and the objective is to create a \$2.5 million fund.

- Community Enhancement

Staff provided an update on the city-campus hub idea. Idea was to have City, Yolo County Visitors Bureau, Davis Downtown Visitors Association, Farmer's Market, and UCD co-located to have a ticketing hub for city and UC events and other visitor information. Campus was working with Ticketmaster but the deal fell through. They do recognize that it needs to be more user-friendly as there is a tremendous opportunity to better reach the community.

Commission Chair gave an update on the bike museum. Stated Hall of Fame is still in the air, but we're cautiously optimistic. The competition is tough and politics are heated. Davis has put an incredible amount of effort and a good foot forward. If we get it, it could change a lot of things.

- Work Plan and Data

Commissioner provided update on the subcommittee's efforts with the economic indicators project. Objective is to answer the question: How are we doing? Stated the subcommittee is currently looking at data sources.

**10. BEDC Work Plan**

- Discuss committee priorities/tasks for year

Tabled until next meeting.

**11. Future Agenda Items**

**12. Adjourn**

*Meeting adjourned @ 9:35 p.m.*