



## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMISSION

September 27, 2018 - 3:00pm

### Commissioners:

**Chair:** Peter Pelham; **Vice Chair:** Vacant  
John Williams; Coy Smith; Harry Thomas; Rick Wells;  
Michelle Mahoney; Anne Russell; Ex-Officio Member: Sylvia Barry

### MINUTES

#### A. Call to Order & Roll Call

Chair Pelham called the meeting to order at 3:03pm

Commissioners Present: Harry Thomas, Anne Russell, Peter Pelham, Coy Smith, Rick Wells, John Williams, Michelle Mahoney, Sylvia Barry, Ex-Officio

Staff: Jessica Deakyne, Maggie Rufo, Gretchen Schubeck, Chris Blunk

Presenters: Mathew Gilster, Open Counter; Stephanie Koehler, DNBA

Members of the Public: Mayor Pro Tem Pam Drew

#### B. Approval of Final Agenda

**Motion to Approve Final Agenda**

**M/S/C Thomas/Wells**

**Ayes: 7 Nays: 0 Absent: 0**

#### C. PUBLIC COMMENTS

#### D. GENERAL BUSINESS

##### 1. Open Counter Presentation – Matthew Gilster

Open Counter is a web-based tool offered on [novato.org](http://novato.org) related to zoning and permits. The tool helps users navigate the permitting process, including permit and fee estimator, and a zoning portal. Website for more:

[Novato.opencounter.com](http://Novato.opencounter.com)

[Novato.zoningcheck.com](http://Novato.zoningcheck.com)

**Zoning Portal** helps potential businesses find an appropriately zoned spot for their business.

**Business Portal** As the user enters information on the project, types of permits needed and (estimated) fees are updated in real-time. It is a tool for saving staff time, and also saves the public time vs. coming in and waiting in line at One Stop Shop to see a planner, as well as allowing businesses to see what they are looking at in terms of location, cost, scope, as well as helping them be more prepared when they do come in to the city to start the process. Matt went over the analytics dashboard for the use of the portals in Novato. The Zoning Portal is popular, most common use searched is restaurants.

Ex-Officio Barry suggest linking to Open Counter from the DNBA website and the Chamber website. Staff does promo of Open Counter via e-newsletters, choosenovato.com and novato.org.

Novato doesn't currently subscribe to Open Novato's Residential Portal. Matt recommended looking at City of San Diego to see an example of the residential portal.

2. **Downtown Novato Business Association Update** – Stephanie Koehler, DNBA Director, provided an update on DNBA activities. This past year was quite successful, city dollar-for-dollar match, city is investing in downtown core. Worked to help find the new location for the Farmers Market, which was successful, & helped them be able to have beer pourings. Continued partnership with Clean & Green Day for the planters on Grant Avenue. Kiosk quarterly calendars, six along Grant, poster with events. Any of the downtown businesses can email Stephanie with their events three months in advance to be included on the calendar. Marketing has included social media and targeted ads in the Marin IJ.

Added this year: offering a partial scholarship to Leadership Novato program attendance for one of our downtown businesses.

Events: Bouncy Ball New Year with Novato Fire District, attended by 2800 people, on New Year's Eve at noon. Started Rock the Block, with two events this summer. Rob Sundberg, a local teacher and musician, came up with the idea. The vendors at event were DNBA members. Plan to do two events again next year.

**Upcoming events:** Safe Trick or Treat with Scream on the Green. Small Business Saturday on 11/24. Christmas trees on Grant Avenue: small trees placed on Grant Avenue for the public to decorate. Hugely popular with families, schools, businesses.

New Event downtown – Harvest Festival, originated with Trek Wine, and now has morphed into a downtown event. Mantra, Indian Valley Brewing, Trek, Pacheco Winery participating on Sunday 10/14, 2-7pm, with music curated by Rob Sundberg.

Stephanie is looking into “universal gift cards” that can be used at any store in downtown Novato.

Commissioners and staff gave kudos to Stephanie/DNBA for all of the above. Commissioner Smith asked if a regularly scheduled event in downtown is possible. Staff replied that a lot of resources are needed to make an event seamless. Rock the Block is kind of a pilot to test the idea and may open the door to other ideas for downtown. Commissioner Williams talked about Front Porch event San Rafael had. Something individual businesses could do - limitations are having time to work with businesses on these kinds of things.



## F. Staff Updates

Gretchen Schubeck, Sustainability Coordinator provided an overview of the recent Northbay Climate Action Summit at the Buck Center: over 125 people attended from Northbay counties and agencies, as well as all of our City Council. The intent is to gather again in February 2019 for further discussion of the ideas generated and inclusive of more general types of participants, such as businesses.

Chris Blunk, Deputy Director of Public Works, gave a presentation on possibilities to create additional parking downtown. Public Works took a look at downtown streets for opportunities to restripe what we already have to potentially increase parking. Chris presented three ideas:

Front Street, parallel to Redwood Blvd, by Matsuyama, and retail center. It's a two-lane, one-way street. Parking is parallel parking near a retaining wall. Staff can meet Novato Fire Protection Districts (NFPD) minimum width standards by striping diagonal spaces, which would provide 25 more spaces at an estimated cost to city of \$5K. There would be no parking on business side of Front St.

First Street similar concept, between Grant & Vallejo, stripe in perpendicular parking spaces, near Nave Motors, which are more efficient use of street width – adds seven additional spaces at an estimated cost of \$5K.

Industrial at Second St., South of Grant. Concept dependent on development of former Pini site at First and Grant. Convert Industrial between First and Second to be one-way westbound, to allow for 14 additional parallel spaces. Low-impact as 90% of cars go westbound on Industrial, based on traffic counts observed.

Staff is going to Council October 30<sup>th</sup> with these three proposals.

Chair Pelham asked how we can improve wayfinding for parking off Grant Avenue. More and different wayfinding signage may be needed. Also, outreach to business owners to ask their employees to park in these areas, and leave areas around the restaurants free for the public.

Commissioner Williams is supportive of the effort to create more parking downtown and wonders if staff is expecting push-back from people on Industrial? Commissioner Smith – some residents have back gates onto Industrial, so they would still have an access point.

Commissioner Russell asked about time limits on the parking spaces. These streets currently have no time restrictions and none are planned.

Jessica reported Downtown Depot site RFP closes on Monday, 10/1. Results will be provided to Commission at October meeting. There has been great interest, and several site tours. City expects a handful of proposals with a target of 11/3 for a public workshop to review. Staff will present to council after the public workshop and survey period.

The second Business Insider newsletter had a high open rate – The Depot and Cannabis stories had the most “clicks”. Staff went over the schedule for the DNBA BID annual process.

Hamilton Commissary Site RFP Open House scheduled on 10/13 for public to review proposals submitted.

Business License software is being updated. Business license applications and renewals online provided by HDL. Launching on 10/8.

Staff asked if there are other updates or presentations the commission would like? They requested:

- Biotech industry rep to talk about local and general industry trends, impact of manufacturing vs. offices vs. funding.
- Cannabis – would like to stay up to date. Commissioner Williams mentioned an uptick in cannabis-related commercial inquires.
- Environmental impact report on General Plan.
- Development of Fireman’s and Birkenstock. Fireman’s lease up in October.

Commissioners are welcome to send Jessica any other ideas that come up.

**G. ADJOURNMENT**

**M/S/C Pelham/Williams**

**Ayes: 7 Nays: 0 Absent: 0**

Meeting adjourned at 4:52pm

**Next Meeting: October 25, 2018**