



**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMISSION  
FEBRUARY 28, 2019  
MINUTES**

**A. CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL**

Chair Wells called the meeting called to order at 3:04pm

Commissioners Present: Rick Wells, Harry Thomas, Peter Pelham, Michelle Mahoney, John Williams, Sylvia Barry, Ex-Officio, Tim Howard, Ex-Officio

Commissioners Absent: Anne Russell

Members of the Public: David Gabriel, Councilmember Drew

Staff: Jessica Deakyne, Maggie Rufo, Vicki Parker, Russ Thompson

**B. APPROVAL OF FINAL AGENDA**

**M/S/C Harry/Peter**

**Ayes: 5 Nays: 0 Absent: 1**

**C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JANUARY 23, 2019 – with correction of date to Jan. 24, 2019 - MM abstained**

**M/S/C Peter/ Harry**

**Ayes: 4 Nays: 0 Absent: 1**

**D. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

David Gabriel spoke about a restaurant interested in Novato, a national chain.

**E. GENERAL BUSINESS**

**1. Introduction of Vicki Parker, Community Development Director**

Chair Wells welcomed Vicki Parker. Vicki Parker gave the commission an overview of her philosophy about Community Development. She also talked about some of the big items they are working on at present, such as cannabis, General Plan, housing.

**2. Marin Economic Forum Presentation (MEF) - Mike Blakeley, CEO**

Three months since he took this role. Presentation on 2019 Initiatives, and where the organization is going, and background on MEF. One employee, and large board. In 2019, MEF will focus on two PROPOSED initiatives workforce development and Business Retention & Expansion (BR&E). These two areas are complementary.

BR&E – Initially funded by County (April/May), other funding will be sought at various stages. A task force will be created to guide the effort. Develop a work plan. Two phases: data collection and initiative development & support.

Workforce Development – securing a talent pipeline, creating a pipeline to keep pace with business demand is the greatest challenge, businesses compete for talent instead of collaborating to build talent; Marin has various populations that don't have a guaranteed path to employment. Training centers, colleges orienting curriculum for what businesses demand in workers (social equity, inclusive employment).

The “supply side” can benefit MEF through 3 work streams:

- “Sector Partnerships” – convene diff. actors in a sector, like health care, come together and talk about how they are going to secure their talent pipeline, probably start with hospitality;
- Ensuring an inclusive workforce; talking with non-profits in Marin
- Informing the County and residents concerning our “targeted industries.” For example, how are we going to get the tech sector here? One of their criteria is the workforce talent available in a region.

How can commission help? Continue financial support & engagement in MEF board; participate/support 2019 initiatives; provide a platform for residents/businesses to learn and benefit from MEF; consider MEF for fee-bearing projects that utilize their technical skillset, relationships and awareness of Marin. Fill position on their board that has been vacated by Peggy Flynn.

Commission Williams: Is housing or lack thereof an issue that MEF will work on in relation to its effect on workforce development. They provide objective data on housing issues, but are not an advocacy org. They know it is constraining economic growth.

Barry: How is life science going, and should we put more emphasis on that sector? Mike hasn't gotten into the details of life science in this area. He has spoken with a life science company that recently moved into San Rafael. Ultragenyx & BioMarin have members on the MEF board. Important sector in Marin, important to retain. Tech is another sector that can grow in Marin. Venture Pad is a tech incubator in San Rafael – the only one in Marin.

Howard: how can EDAC support BRE? Help with participation in focus groups with businesses here; mid-point check-in with EDAC; development of survey; MEF is leading effort, but it's a community effort.

Thomas: County is going to fund initial effort – is there enough funding? He's designing the work plan to fit the budget. Will be fundraising for ongoing initiatives.

Pelham: How are you going to apply all the interests? Sector-based approach for data collection would be easiest way to go; there is a critical mass of sectors that are of interest to Marin County; or could approach by cities. The taskforce will play a role in determining the best approach.

Smith: Make sure Novato is represented.

Mahoney: Is this something that should be formalized in the meeting minutes, that commission supports this effort. Commissioner Wells stated we need to get a Novato staff person on the MEF Board to represent the city. The city can propose a candidate and MEF has a nominating process. MEF requests: person have relevant

experience, program from county is not official as of yet so this is purely informational at this point. Supervisors have to approve funding in March.

### 3. Brief Discussion of EDAC role/planning session

Chair Wells started the discussion with a question: who is the commission an “advisory” to? Is there interest on this commission to take this advisory role?

Jessica provided the resolution that guides this commission, what the council approved the commission to do. Last revised in 2017, increased to 7 members, broader sector categories, focus on demographic diversity. Staff’s presentation elaborated on the ten duties listed in the resolution.

Duties: clarification of Economic Development Workplan (EDWP), staff provides a draft version of workplan to EDAC and then it goes to council, which is due in a few months. Update Council once a year on how it’s going. Last report to Council was 2017.

#### Recommended Next Steps:

Review memberships and duties

Return with draft EDWP, target May 2019

EDAC presentation with staff to council in July 2019

Staff asked commission what they would like to see on the agenda.

There are many items that could be presented on in-depth to this commission at the meetings. Commissioners can ask for any items to be on the agenda that they have an interest in.

Wells: EDWP should be a regular agenda item, as it’s the guiding document for the commission.

Pelham: good to have staff at council meetings with actionable things that EDAC can do, not just informative presentations.

Thompson: council has a strategic plan for next three years, roadmap, how does that dovetail with EDWP key objectives? The strategic plan will influence the EDWP.

Smith: Motion to direct staff to make sure MEF gets back to them. Pelham second. Encourage staff to maintain contact with MEF and be involved with MEF’s work with the BRE, so Novato is represented.

**M/S/C Smith/ Pelham**

**Ayes: 5 Nays: 0 Absent: 1**

Motion to request City Manager to nominate someone to the MEF board from staff or EDAC commission, who has relevant expertise. Thomas/Williams

**M/S/C Thomas/Williams**

**Ayes: 5 Nays: 0 Absent: 1**

Motion to request City of Novato to find a person capable of working on the MEF board to fill Novato’s seat on the MEF board. Commissioner Smith abstained as he’s on the MEF board already.

**M/S/C Thomas/Williams**

**Ayes: 5 Nays: 0 Absent: 1  
Abstain: 1**

**E. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

Smith: Chamber reports another successful state of the city with City Manager.

Barry: She hears staff say we have a lot of phone calls from people curious about what's happening development-wise in Novato. Can commissioners help with that by also talking to these people? Staff responded that often these calls are confidential and are not really available for sharing.

**F. STAFF UPDATES**

Woodhollow hotel project approved by Council with modifications, now goes to DRC.

Thanks to chamber for state of city for the state of the city – available to watch online.

Met with SBDC about a series of workshops including one during Small Business Week.

March 28 – next meeting. Coy will not be here due to Business Expo. Michelle will also have to miss that meeting.

Many developer calls in the last few weeks from interested businesses.

**H. ADJOURNMENT AT 5:00pm**

**M/S/C Williams/Mahoney**

**Ayes: 5 Nays: 0 Absent: 1**

**Next Meeting: March 28, 2019**