



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

May 23, 2019 - 3:00pm
(Action items in bold)

A. CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL

Chair Wells called the meeting to order at 3:05pm

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

Commissioners Absent: Tim Howard, Ex-Officio

Staff Present: Russ Thompson, Laura McDowell, Vicki Parker

Members of the Public: Councilmember Pat Eklund, Mara Ventura, Natalie Hirschfield, David Gabriel

B. APPROVAL OF FINAL AGENDA

M/S/C – Thomas/Wells

Ayes: 7 Nays: 0 Absent: 0

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MARCH 28, 2019

M/S/C – Pelham/Smith

Ayes: 7 Nays: 0 Absent: 0

D. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

E. GENERAL BUSINESS

1. Acceleration of the State of California Proposed Minimum Wage Increase – Russ Thompson

Russ provided an overview and a handout (see attached document). In January 2019 Councilmember Eklund brought this item to the council, and council voted 5-0 to review in Feb/March 2019, now scheduled for 7/23. Initial public workshop planned. No recommendation or decisions today.

Minimum wage is in the process, at the state level, of being increased incrementally. Some cities have accelerated the increase. Communities can establish their own minimum wage. Affects anyone who has employees in the State of California.

Workshop will be advertised and promoted to local stakeholders, i.e., Chamber of Commerce, labor groups, etc. Staff report to council will include information on what nearby communities are doing.

7/1/2019	\$12.75 min wage (6 months sooner than state schedule)
7/1/2020	\$14.75 (18 months sooner than state schedule)

Public Comment

Mara Ventura, Executive Director, North Bay Jobs with Justice (northbayjobswithjustice.org), coalition of faith, labor and community organizations. They are driving the accelerated minimum wage campaign and will present at the Novato workshop.

Natalie Hirschfeld, Political Director, North Bay Labor Council commented on the link between minimum wage and housing issues.

Pat Eklund, Novato Councilmember, notes there are 155 part time employees at City (mostly PRSC employees) and she has requested a list of their positions and titles.

David Gabriel recommends the city have a business development person on staff, in addition to the economic development manager.

2. Marin Builders Association Building Permit Customer Satisfaction Assessment -Casey Mazzoni

The assessment engages community members, city staff, contractors, and homeowners to look for ways to simplify the permit process. Surveys and focus groups will be employed, as well as comparisons to other cities and what's working. Upon surveying other cities for an estimate, it was revealed that 40-50% of construction is done without a permit – hundreds of thousands of dollars of revenue lost to each jurisdiction. This is not always deliberate on the part of the homeowner as some may simply not know they need a permit. Unpermitted work is also a safety issue. An outline of work and timeline was shared with the commission – see attachments.

Phase 1:

Over 1000 recent permit applicants will be used to gather data for the survey. Aiming for at least 150 responses, which would be a good response rate. Survey also to be sent to Marin Builders Association Members, chamber members, and any other groups interested. The goal is to gather input from those who have applied for a Novato permit in the past two years. There will be a homeowner's focus group, a contractor's focus group, and a contractor's focus group to get input on contractors experience with other jurisdictions. Attempting to gather "best practices" from around the Bay Area.

Partnering with MEF and Robert Eyler to create a scientific, data-driven report. Report is based on empirical data and then a narrative created from the feedback received at the focus groups.

San Rafael has completed Phase 1 and has received recommendations to improve the customer experience and, in Phase 2, San Rafael is going through the 15 recommendations one-by-one to see what they can implement to improve their customer experience (vast majority are administrative changes, not policy changes). Every year they will report to council on their improvements. This is a long-term partnership and project with each city that goes through the assessment.

Vicki Parker, CDD Director, sees feedback from customers on a regular basis that is overwhelming positive: friendly, professional staff, but what is missing is that we are serving different audiences, i.e., contractor vs. homeowners, and she sees the focus group as a great mechanism to work on that.

3. Annual EDAC report to council

Chair Wells asked what the commission would like to include in the report on to the Council. A prior report, presented two years ago, was shared to give the commissioners an example. **The report is scheduled to be presented in July or August.**

Russ Thompson offered his assistance to the commission. A review of past meeting minutes would be helpful in creating the report.

Vision 2020 report is a good document to reference, as well as the Adopted Strategic Plan. Also, **requested a copy of the Economic Development Work Plan.**

F. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioners, as an advisory commission, would like more opportunities to weigh-in on items before they go to council, with their advice/recommendation or position on an issue before the council. In addition, they would like to provide more advice on opportunities, budget issues, revenues, taxes, commercial cannabis regulations, etc., and would like to **discuss commercial cannabis at the June meeting.**

The continuity and effectiveness of the commission is affected by staff turnover and the city should have more economic development staff and more money should be allocated to economic development, which should be a priority of the city.

Highlight any commissioner recommendations in the minutes of the meeting.

Consider a more focused agenda with ten major tasks and consistently work on these tasks.

Commissioner Smith reported that TOT income in Novato is up 8.6%, which is an increase in revenue of \$125,000 for the city. Part of the increase results from the Northbay fires of late 2017, for which TOT was received in 2018. Staff will send the TOT report to the commissioners. Chamber's tourism report to Council is attached to these minutes.

Ex-Officio Tim Howard has relocated out of Novato and has not been responsive to contacts. Hasn't officially resigned from any of his board positions. **Chair Wells will follow-up with Tim Howard** so the commission can move forward on a replacement.

G. STAFF UPDATES

Economic Development staffing and other staffing updates in response to Commissioners inquiries: Russ Thompson reported that he will be attending the EDAC meetings. The vacant position of Senior Management Analyst for Economic Development is in the proposed 19/20FY budget to be upgraded to an Economic Development Manager, but the city cannot recruit until budget is approved for our upcoming fiscal year. In the finance department the city has hired an Accounting Supervisor. Position of Finance Manager is still open. The city budget overall is a flat

budget with no programmed increases, as far as allocating more funds to Economic Development, other than the Economic Development Manager position. Russ reiterated that the work of the commission is greatly valued.

Staff continues to communicate with prospective tenants for major properties in Novato, such as Fireman's Fund. The Birkenstock building is now up for sale. Vicki Parker gave a brief update on projects around town, and will do a **full update at the June meeting.**

Commissioner Russell referenced the JADU program and asked if it is resulting in increased income to the city. The recent JADU open house was a success. Staff can **include information on this with the development update in June.**

H. ADJOURNMENT – 4:41pm
M/S/C Pelham/Smith

Ayes: 7 Nays: 0 Absent: 0

Next Meeting: June 27, 2019