



CITY OF NOVATO
CALIFORNIA

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMISSION MEETING

SEPTEMBER 26, 2019 - 3:00pm

DRAFT MINUTES

A. CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL

Chair Wells called the meeting to order at 3:01pm

Commissioners Present: Chair Rick Wells, Peter Pelham, Coy Smith, John Williams, Harry Thomas, Michelle Mahoney, Ex-Officio Sylvia Barry (arrived at 3:03pm), Ex-Officio Miriam Hope Karell

Commissioners Absent: Vice Chair Anne Russell

Staff: Laura McDowall, Vicki Parker, Adam McGill

Members of the Public: Councilmember Pat Eklund, Councilmember Pam Drew, Regina Bianucci Rus, Michael Clarkson

B. APPROVAL OF FINAL AGENDA

M/S/C Williams/Thomas Ayes: 6 Nays: 0 Absent: 1

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF AUGUST 22, 2019

M/S/C Pelham/Smith Ayes: 5 Nays: 0 Absent: 1 Abstain: 2

D. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Regina Bianucci Rus, member of the Novato Citizens Finance Advisory / Oversight Committee, stated the committee wants to meet with other committees as their mission overseeing finance issues overlaps with that of the other Novato committees.

Michael Clarkson, potential cannabis business owner and Novato resident, wants to bring attention to changes that the Planning Commission (PC) has made to the proposed cannabis regulations at their last meeting. Mr. Clarkson stated that changes proposed by the Planning Commission include banning walk-in retail, limiting retail licenses to one non-storefront and one micro delivery service, and other requirements that would limit the success of small businesses, such as limiting inventory to allowing only one week's worth on site. Another issue is the operating hours proposed for the permitted businesses, which is 8am – 8pm. Mr.

Clarkson stated this is not enough time to accommodate orders from people getting home after work and will cause logistical issues for the operators, consumers and patients. Additionally, no provision is made for Novato business owners/residents to have priority in the selection process. He stated that during the public comment process for cannabis, most people supported prioritization of Novato residents for licenses. If the regulations are passed with these changes it will negatively impact Novato cannabis businesses ability to operate successfully, and negatively impact consumers.

E. GENERAL BUSINESS

- 1. November EDAC Meeting Date falls on Thanksgiving, consider canceling or rescheduling meeting.

The commission agreed to cancel the November and December meeting dates and replace with a special meeting date to be determined.

- 2. Nomination of Chair & Co-Chair

Chair Wells nominated Vice Chair Anne Russell to be Chair.

M/S/C Wells/Thomas Ayes: 6 Nays: 0 Absent: 1

Commissioner Thomas nominated Michelle Mahoney as Vice Chair.

M/S/C Thomas/Wells Ayes: 6 Nays: 0 Absent: 1

- 3. Staffing Update: Vicki Parker, Community Development Director, and Adam McGill, Acting City Manager

Community Development Director Parker advised the commission that she will now oversee Economic Development as part of her role as the Community Development Director. Director Parker explained that she has an extensive background in economic development and redevelopment. She has experience with strategic planning, and she is looking forward to working with the commission to identify mid- and long-term goals, and action items.

Director Parker let the commission know that she values clear communication and directness and invited the commission to communicate to her what their priorities are so she can focus her initial work efforts. It was suggested that a workshop to discuss the commission’s priorities be scheduled for the October meeting.

Acting City Manager Adam McGill introduced himself and gave a brief overview of his vision for the City and the future of the Economic Development Department.

F. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Mahoney suggested the committee review any outstanding items since there are only two more meetings before year-end.

Commissioner Thomas asked about the cannabis proposals. Community Development Director Parker responded that the Planning Commission reviewed the proposed regulations at their last meeting and that the Planning Commission is recommending that the City Council approved non-storefront retail only. Director Parker further stated that the City Council would be considering Commercial Cannabis at their meeting of October 22, 2019.

Commissioner Smith stated that the Economic Development Advisory Commission had made a recommendation to the City Council to support cannabis regulations but pointed out that what is going forward to council is different than the original proposal that they supported. Director Parker invited members to attend the Council meeting as individuals if they would like to make comments to the City Council consistent with their original recommendation.

Commissioner Pelham expressed concern that the cannabis recommendations being taken to council could affect Novato's ability to be competitive with other counties.

Commissioner Mahoney thanked Chair Wells for presenting their annual report to council, as well as appreciation to Laura McDowall for preparing the presentation.

G. STAFF UPDATES

Staff gave an update on the introduction of a City Council ordinance accelerating the state-mandated minimum wage increase. It was clarified that the State of California Department of Labor Standards, not the City of Novato, would be responsible for enforcement of the ordinance's provisions.

H. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 3:49pm

M/S/C Thomas/Pelham

Ayes: 6 Nays: 0 Absent: 1

Next Meeting: October 24, 2019