



**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMISSION MEETING  
OCTOBER 24, 2019**

**MINUTES**

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

Chair Russell called the meeting called to order at 3pm

**Commissioners Present:** Chair Anne Russell, Vice Chair Michelle Mahoney, Peter Pelham, Harry Thomas, Coy Smith, John Williams, Ex-Officio, Miriam Karell

**Commissioners Absent:** Rick Wells, Sylvia Barry

**Staff:** Vicki Parker, Laura McDowall, Maggie Rufo

**Members of the Public:** Councilmember Pat Eklund, Novato Citizens Finance Advisory Oversight Committee Co-Chair, Rafalina Maglio

**B. APPROVAL OF FINAL AGENDA**

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

**C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 26, 2019**

**M/S/C Thomas/Pelham** Ayes: 5 Nays: 0 Absent: 1 Abstain: 1

**D. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None

**E. GENERAL BUSINESS**

1. Consider approving a joint meeting with Novato Finance Oversight Committee on January 23, 2020 at 3pm.

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

2. Priorities Workshop – Vicki Parker

Community Development Director Parker started the workshop with a presentation on the strategic plan goals that relate to economic development.

The commission had a discussion of value of the Shop Local program. Commissioners requested an update on the program at an upcoming meeting. Staff discussed the formalization of the Business Visitation Program. It was suggested that the program start with businesses that opened in the past year as their experience with the city process will still be fresh in their minds. The Commission also suggested sharing information about the Small Business Development Center (SBDC)

as a resource to small businesses during the visits. Staff will bring a set of questions and a list of resources back to the Commission for feedback at a future meeting.

Commissioner Smith left the meeting at 4:46pm.

The Commission then discussed their economic development priorities. Commissioner Thomas felt that keeping/helping Costco was a top priority. Commissioner Pelham agreed that protecting our revenue sources was important and felt that new Downtown SMART station could create some momentum for inactive properties such as Fireman’s Fund, The Square, Birkenstock and the N. Redwood corridor.

Chair Russell stated she hopes the owners of Blue Barn had a positive experience with the city while constructing their new business. Commissioner Williams would like to see renewed enthusiasm for outreach, and for hiring an economic development manager.

Vice Chair Mahoney agreed with previous comments and stated Novato needs to define where it wants to be as far as economic growth. She felt that Beauty Heroes was a great example of online store that opened a retail store as their flagship store in Novato and suggested Novato-based online stores, like Zenni or Birkenstock, would be interested in something similar, and mentioned pop-ups. Vice Chair Mahoney felt that a vibrant downtown was important now that the SMART Train would be stopping downtown.

Commissioner Pelham left the meeting at 4:56pm.

3. Review outstanding items before year-end

Chair Russell recalled that at the beginning of 2019 the commission heard a presentation from Public Works about restriping of parking spaces to create more parking. Commissioners would like to have an update on that effort at the December meeting.

Vice Chair Mahoney asked that staff present highlights of commission’s accomplishments over this year, similar to the annual report.

**F. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

Commissioner Karell reported there were two small business workshops left in the three-part series offered by SDBC and the City.

**G. STAFF UPDATES**

Laura McDowall requested that commissioners email her directly when they have questions or cannot attend a meeting.

**H. ADJOURNMENT**

**M/S/C Thomas/Williams**                      Ayes: 4   Nays: 0   Absent: 3

Meeting adjourned at 5:04pm.