



CITY OF NOVATO
CALIFORNIA

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMISSION

Minutes

December 2, 2021

A. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Meeting called to order 3:01 p.m.

Present:

Chair Thomas

Commissioner Russell

Commissioner Smith

Commissioner Wells

Commissioner Williams (arrived after roll call)

Ex-Officio Barry (arrived after roll call)

Ex-Officio Hope-Karell (arrived after roll call)

Absent:

Commissioner Pelham

Staff: Will Morat

B. APPROVAL OF FINAL AGENDA

M/S/C – Russell/Wells

Ayes: 4 Nays: 0 Absent: 2

C. PUBLIC COMMENT

Regina Bianucci, member of the City's Citizen's Finance Advisory/Oversight Committee, was attending as an observer given the overlap between her committee and EDAC and their goals of revenue generation.

D. CONSENT ITEMS

D.1 Approve Minutes of September 2, 2021

M/S/C – Smith/Thomas

Ayes: 4 Nays: 0 Absent: 2

E. GENERAL BUSINESS

E.1 Review & consider implementing a Novato gift card program to support the City's Shop Local campaign – Will Morat

Staff provided an overview of the proposed local gift card program through 3rd party vendor Yiftee. Gift cards would be electronic only, redeemable only at local Novato businesses that had signed up to participate (verified by staff), at no fee to City or merchants (purchasers of gift card would pay a \$1 + 5% of value fee at time of purchase). City will have template webpage to customize for sale/promotion of cards; cards do not expire.

Motion to recommend City proceed with implementing gift card program, as proposed, upon confirming that revenue for purchased cards are disbursed to participating merchants at time or purchase (not when redeemed by customer).

M/S/C – Williams/Wells

Ayes: 5 Nays: 0 Absent: 1

E.2 Receive update and summary of November 16, 2021 BizViz visits – Chair Thomas

Chair Thomas summarized the BizViz experience in the Downtown West district:

Participants: Chair Thomas, Comm. Pelham, Ex-Officio Hope-Karell, Staff Morat

Date: November 16, 2021

Businesses: Ito's White Tiger Karate, Firehouse Subs, La Michoacana Ice Cream

COVID remained a challenge – Ito's White Tiger was still at about 75% of pre-COVID level; Firehouse was at 70%. Inflation was a concern for Firehouse & La Michoacana due to impacts on product, ingredients, supply.

Chair Thomas suggested trying to secure visits with some of the “bigger” businesses in town, as most have been with small businesses.

F. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Ex-Officio Hope-Karell summarized SBDC's upcoming COVID relief grant program for Microbusinesses; full update to come back as agenda item at future EDAC meeting.

Chair Thomas suggested focusing on tax leakage and its implications

G. STAFF UPDATES

G.1 Train Depot Proposals

Staff summarized the November 9, 2021 City Council meeting and the 3 proposals received. Next steps is full evaluation of quals which are due from 3 proposers on December 16, 2021.

G.2 Draft Downtown Parklet Design Guidelines

Staff summarized the DRC's approval of DRAFT guidelines for downtown parklet program; next step is full City Council consideration in February 2022.

Morat also noted the “Clean Streets” initiative that is being considered to coordinate local businesses with the City to maintain street/storefront/sidewalk cleanliness. More information forthcoming.

Cannabis non-storefront retail RFP anticipated to be released 1st or 2nd week in December.

Downtown Tree lights project commencing; 3 weeks anticipated completion. All tree lights installed the length of Grant Avenue.

Staff noted the intent to hold a joint EDAC-Citizen's Finance Advisory meeting specifically about sales tax, including a presentation from the City's sales tax consultant.

H. ADJOURNMENT – 4:23 p.m.

M/S/C – Williams/Russell

Ayes: 5 Nays: 0 Absent: 1