



CITY OF NOVATO
C A L I F O R N I A

**Economic Development Advisory Commission
Draft Meeting Minutes**

Thursday, March 7, 2024 – 3:00 PM

**CITY HALL
901 SHERMAN AVENUE
NOVATO, CA 94945**

Chair

Katie Skjerpig

Vice Chair

Alex Tishman

Members

Viral Shah

Coy Smith

Harry Thomas

Thomas Young

Miriam Hope Karell, Ex-Officio

Staff Liaison

Jessica Deakyne, Assistant City Manager

A. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Meeting called to order by Chair Skjerpig at 3:02pm

Commissioners present: Shah, Skjerpig, Smith, Thomas, Tishman, Young, Ex-Officio Karrell (arrived at 3:05pm)

Commissioners absent: None

Staff present: Assistant City Manager Jessica Deakyne, Principal Management Analyst Sullina Smith, Management Analyst I Alison Fletcher

B. APPROVAL OF THE FINAL AGENDA

Commission Action: Upon motion by Commissioner Thomas and seconded by Commissioner Tishman, the Commission voted **6-0-0-0** to approve the final agenda.

Ayes: Shah, Skjerpig, Smith, Thomas, Tishman, Young

Noes: None

Absent: None

Abstain: None

C. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

D. CONSENT ITEMS

D.1 Approve the Meeting Minutes of November 16, 2023

D.2 Approve the Meeting Minutes of February 14, 2024

Commission Action: Upon motion by Commissioner Thomas and seconded by Commissioner Tishman, the Commission voted **6-0-0-0** to approve the minutes of November 16, 2023 and February 14, 2024.

Ayes: Shah, Skjerping, Smith, Thomas, Tishman, Young

Noes: None

Absent: None

Abstain: None

E. UNFINISHED AND OTHER BUSINESS

E.1 Receive an update on the February Joint Special Meeting with the Finance Advisory Committee and provide staff any potential direction including forming an Ad Hoc Committee

Assistant City Manager Jessica Deakyne presented the item and provided a summary of the Joint Special Meeting. It was noted that the meeting was held per the Economic Development Advisory Commission's (EDAC) Work Plan and since EDAC was missing several Commissioners and lost quorum when an EDAC Commissioner had to unexpectedly leave, staff recommended forming an Ad Hoc Committee to allow EDAC an opportunity to provide input on the criteria.

Commission Action: Upon motion by Commissioner Thomas and seconded by Commissioner Tishman, the Commission voted **6-0-0-0** to create an Ad Hoc Committee to further consider the criteria approved by the Finance Advisory Committee at the Joint Special Meeting of February 14, 2024, and to present their findings to City Council on behalf of the Commission.

Ayes: Shah, Skjerping, Smith, Thomas, Tishman, Young

Noes: None

Absent: None

Abstain: None

Commission Action: Upon motion by Commissioner Smith and seconded by Commissioner Tishman, the Commission voted **6-0-0-0** to appoint Commissioners Thomas, Tishman, and Skjerping to the Ad Hoc Committee.

Ayes: Shah, Skjerping, Smith, Thomas, Tishman, Young

Noes: None

Absent: None

Abstain: None

E.2 Receive an update from the Ad Hoc on the City of Novato Business Visits and provide feedback on potential new businesses to visit

Commissioner Thomas presented the item and gave an overview of his experiences attending several of the business visits including common themes from businesses, for example, difficulty hiring qualified employees or finding available property zoned for a desired use. The Commission directed staff to

contact the remaining businesses previously identified by the Ad Hoc Committee to schedule additional business visits.

E.3 Receive an update from Staff on the progress of the City Business Survey and provide direction to staff on how to proceed

Principal Management Analyst Sullina Smith presented the item, including the ways in which staff provided the survey to business license holders through several emails and mailed with the annual business license renewal packet. With these efforts, the response rate was very low. Commissioners considered whether there was enough outreach and will evaluate whether additional, more targeted outreach might be helpful to encourage participation. The Commission directed staff to send the survey out again.

E.4 Appoint a new Commissioner to the Ad Hoc on the City Business Survey

Commission Action: Upon motion by Commissioner Skjerping and seconded by Commissioner Tishman, the Commission voted **6-0-0-0** to appoint Commissioner Young and Ex-Officio Karrell (should the bylaws allow) to the Ad Hoc Committee.

Ayes: Shah, Skjerping, Smith, Thomas, Tishman, Young

Noes: None

Absent: None

Abstain: None

F. GENERAL BUSINESS

F.1 Designate an Ex-Officio Member for a term of 2 years ending in February 2026

Chair Skjerping presented the item that the Ex-Officio term ended on February 28, 2024, and the Commission needed to designate a new Ex-Officio Member.

Commission Action: Upon motion by Commissioner Smith and seconded by Commissioner Tishman, the Commission voted **6-0-0-0** to designate Sylvia Barry as an Ex-Officio member for a term of 2 years ending February 2026.

Ayes: Shah, Skjerping, Smith, Thomas, Tishman, Young

Noes: None

Absent: None

Abstain: None

F.2 Receive an update from Staff on the progress of the FY 2023-2024 Work Plan and provide direction on the next steps for the FY 2024-2025 Work Plan

Assistant City Manager Jessica Deakyne presented the item and reviewed the many completed items, thanking the Commissioners for their hard work on the FY 2023-2024 Work Plan. Staff recommended agendaizing the FY 2024-2025 Work Plan item for discussion at a future meeting before being presented to City Council.

F.3 Receive an update from Staff on the Small Business Month workshop planning and provide direction on the next steps

Principal Management Analyst Sullina Smith presented the item and has been in discussions with Ex-Officio Karell, Director for Marin Small Business and Development Center (SBDC) to consider agenda topics, schedule, and type of event. Commissioners provided feedback based on their own experiences hosting or attending similar events.

G. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Young and Chair Skjerping expressed appreciation for staff’s efforts and continued hard work to support the Commission.

H. STAFF UPDATES

Principal Management Analyst Sullina Smith provided updates regarding the Depot Project, and Planning Commission’s recommendation to Council to amend the Novato Municipal Code to allow check cashing services as an acceptable accessory use to travel agencies and grocery stores. Assistant City Manager Jessica Deakyne announced the 2024 State of the City Address to be held on March 19, 2024, and a Community Budget Workshop on March 28, 2024, both to be held at City Hall. The Spring recruitment for Committees, Commissions and Boards closes March 31, 2024.

I. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 4:47pm.

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing minutes were duly adopted at the Economic Development Advisory Commission meeting of April 4, 2024.

/Addison Luong/
Addison Luong,
Senior Office Assistant



Follow us on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, NextDoor & Nixle