

FREEPORT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
TUESDAY, February 23, 2016, 7:30 AM
Freeport Community Services
MINUTES

1. The meeting convened at 7:40

In attendance: Wendy Caisse, Candice Rinaldi, David Latulippe, Mark Malone, Zane Shatzer, Betsy Ruff, Scott Gleeson, Peter Joseph

Absent: Jim Cassida, Peter Troast, Adam Nappi, Chip Gray, Mary Davis, Andy Kull

2. Introductory comments

Wendy welcomed everyone, and did not have introductory comments.

3. Consent Agenda Items:

1. Approval of MINUTES of January 26, 2016 meeting

Ed moved and Zane seconded approval of the minutes. The vote was unanimous of all those present and voting.

2. Acceptance of FINANCIAL STATEMENT for the period ending January 31, 2015

Dave moved and Ed seconded acceptance of the financial statement. The vote was unanimous of all those present and voting.

4. Economic Development Report (Written Report)

Keith said that his report detailed a number of the projects and activities which had been taking up his time. He said there is a great deal of activity in town. With that in mind, he asked the board's advice on a matter of a possible conflict of interest. He reminded the board that he has been working with the Freeport Arts and Cultural Alliance (FACA) which had focused its attention on a potential location for an arts center. At the same time, he has been working with a potential user/buyer for that space. He said that since he sits on the board for FACA, he feels he owes loyalty to that organization and it seems strange to be assisting a competitor who is interested in acquiring the same space. He mentioned that he and Ed Bradley had spoken about this matter, and Ed had encouraged Keith to disclose the issue to the board and seek guidance. Ed said that Keith has been critical to the FACA board's exploration of the building in question. However, he also recognized that as FEDC director, his role is to provide information and assistance to businesses who are seeking space. Ed felt that the FACA board would lose a lot if Keith were no longer able to assist them, but acknowledged that this conflict was inevitable once FACA started looking at properties. The danger is that if the building returned to a retail/business use with Keith's assistance, the arts community and other members of the Freeport community who have supported and encouraged FACA will think that FEDC has placed a higher value on the retail/business use in that space over a community arts center. Keith said that he thinks both users have merit, and would like to continue assisting both, if possible. Mark asked whether or not the other user had a buyer's broker working on her behalf. Keith said that he had not been in contact with any broker representing the user. Mark said that at some point, her needs would exceed what Keith is able to provide, and she would need a broker. Keith said that whether she was working with FEDC through a broker or by herself, it would not change the perception. Betsy said that she was concerned about the possibility of the community's perception of the board changing drastically if FEDC had been seen to favor retail over a community arts center. Zane suggested that the problem might sort itself out, since the first person to put money down and get site control would determine who had the ability to occupy it; that decision was not made by Keith or FEDC. Wendy asked how the FACA board felt. Ed said that he and Keith would be discussing the matter with them at the upcoming board meeting. Wendy thought that the board should hear from FACA, but that helping a potential tenant/buyer of a commercial building is a part of Keith's job/role as FEDC director. Since the conflict is essentially between Keith and FACA, it should not be up to the FEDC board to say whether Keith should continue in his role at FACA. Keith and Ed said they would speak with the FACA board and update the FEDC board at or before the next board meeting.

5. Discussion re: Clam Flat Leasing

Peter Joseph gave a brief summary of the issue. The proposal had originated at the Shellfish Commission. Freeport is already unique because of its local control of shellfishing (instead of state control). State law allows leasing, in which a fisherman obtains an exclusive license to fish a particular piece of mud. The proposal from the Shellfish Commission would allow local control over leasing, and would be the first ordinance of its kind. Qualified lessees would have to be licensed as shellfish diggers through the town, so there would be little "attraction" of

new businesses to town. Ed agreed that in its current form, the ordinance is limiting, but pointed out that aquaculture could be a significant economic driver, and that supporting aquaculture is recommended in the Vision 2025 plan. Mark asked why the ordinance did not allow out-of-town diggers to participate. Peter said that non-resident diggers could be licensed by the town, but they pay a slightly higher fee. Scott suggested that this proposal arose out of a need to understand why clam flats are depleting. Some experiments on seeding have been successful, and could result in more-successful harvests, but there is concern in the community about inviting large fishing corporations to set up shop here. Peter said that the strongest opposition has come from riparian owners and traditional diggers, but both are waiting to see a more finalized version of the ordinance. Ed pointed out that traditional fishing and riparians always object to aquaculture. Dave said that it is good for FEDC to support the industry, but bad for FEDC to take a position on this ordinance. He felt that FEDC's involvement in potential commercial activity on the waterfront would stir up residents in those areas. Betsy agreed and cautioned the board against alienating community members in that area. Mark said that aquaculture is explicit in Vision 2025, so FEDC should absolutely support a pilot program. Wendy re-stated the board's consensus: We generally support the idea, but will wait until there's an ordinance at the council level to take a position on the proposed pilot program.

6. Discussion re: Filling Board Vacancies

Keith informed the board that he had received notice from Peter Troast that he would not be able to continue on past June as a board member. His term expires at that time, and he would not seek re-election. Keith said that Peter had asked him to let the board know that he will continue to participate and anticipated attending his remaining board meetings. Keith said that he also had not heard from Mary Davis for some time and wondered whether she had intentions to continue as a board member. Keith reminded the board that last time there was a board vacancy, a membership committee convened to meet with the applicants and make a recommendation. The board encouraged Keith to contact people who have expressed interest in the past.

7. Preparation for the Workshop with Town Council

Keith reminded the board that FEDC's workshop with the town council would be on March 8, and asked for as many board members to attend as possible. He said that he had previously provided a copy of his memorandum which had been submitted to the council, and asked if the board members had any comments or feedback. There was none. The board asked Keith if he expected opposition. Keith said that the council has been very supportive of FEDC, and reminded the board that at last year's public hearing on FEDC's budget item, no member of the public spoke against it. He said that the conversation about "economic development structure" had been put to rest, and felt that the council had no desire to revisit that question this year.

8. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 9:15