

**FREEPORT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**  
**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
**TUESDAY, December 1, 2020 7:30 AM**  
**Web Meeting via Zoom**  
**MINUTES**

**1. The meeting convened at 7:36 AM**

**Attending:** Mary Davis, Sarah Tracy, Jim Cassida, Rebecca Doten Lizotte, Leanne Barschdorf-Nichols, Candice Rinaldi, Mark Malone, Nikki Yanok, Tawni Whitney

**Not Attending:** Dan Bacon, Chip Gray, David Lockman, Caleb Stephens, James Hendricks, Peter Joseph

**Guest:** Dan Piltch

**2. Introductory comments**

Mary expressed thanks for all those contributing and volunteering time and effort to help Freeport. She encouraged board members to stay engaged, as more minds makes a better outcome.

**3. Election of Sarah Tracy to Board**

Mary invited Sarah to introduce herself. Sarah said that she raised in Freeport and attended FHS, and returned to Freeport after schooling. She said that following her time on the council she wanted to stay involved and engaged. She said she was very concerned and interested in downtown and was excited to be a part of FEDC's efforts. Leanne moved Sarah's election to the board for a term expiring in June, 2023. Jim Cassida seconded. The vote was unanimous of all those present and voting.

**4. Strategic Agenda**

Mary said that there are questions in the community about who FEDC is, and what FEDC is doing. She talked about emphasizing our mission statement, which includes "sustainable growth," which is something that the community cares about. She has also heard questions about the board being "corporate advocates" which is a misconception. Mary shared the strategic statement and the organization of FEDC activities going forward. COVID-19 has changed the conversation to looking at how things are different. The "street gang" has emerged as strong advocates for downtown.

**a. Experiential/Coordinated Marketing**

Mary asked Tawni for an update. Tawni said that there had been lots of cooperation from landlords. She described some of the pop-up projects being installed for the holiday season. Sarah asked about town-owned properties. Tawni said that she has spoken to Peter and he has been supportive of any efforts. Sarah suggested doing something to dress up Bartol Library. Tawni said she would speak to Peter. Rebecca said that it would be great to offer handwashing or sanitizer stations at town properties. Mary said that Visit Freeport has been involved and they are focusing on the Sparkle Celebration and marketing efforts, but the street gang is trying to coordinate efforts. Visit Freeport is also taking the lead on print materials, but she asked Dan Piltch to speak about the potential for a Freeport App or other web-based solution. Dan said that it's obviously too late to do anything for the holiday. Visit Freeport wants to focus on their own website and making it mobile/interactive. Mary said that the town needs something interactive, as well as Wi-Fi. Mary said that the "street gang" is also looking 3 months out toward the first quarter of 2021 instead of the immediate. Mary thanked the street gang members and encouraged more volunteer efforts.

**b. Residential Development/Diversifying Uses**

Keith distributed the board's statement on general support for housing development and gave a follow-up report on the KV Enterprises project. Nikki and Rebecca said that public feedback had quieted following the withdrawal of the project, but the expectation is that the public will have an increased opportunity to make their voices heard on the direction of future growth. Keith said that the project was polarizing, but also fueled opinions and motivated residents to want to make their voices heard, which gives a great opportunity to gather as much feedback as possible as we enter into the public visioning process. Mary asked Leanne and Nikki for an update on. They spoke about meeting with Jim Damichis and his team at Camoin, which gives us an opportunity to gather some of the data for downtown that the town did not yet have in the examination of the KV project. Sarah said that there is skepticism on behalf of some residents, who believe that development/change is inherently bad, and FEDC needs to be able to answer the question of why new development is better than nothing. Leanne said that we hope to get data to answer that question from Camoin. Keith said that there were some strong value statements made by

residents in the KV Enterprises discussion: 1) downtown should be the priority, 2) economic sustainability, and 3) public finance/tax impacts, and that all of these were great to hear. Rebecca said that many people had been asking about the impact of vacancies, as well. Mark said that landlords are going to ask for tax assessment adjustment, if they're not already. He said that some data on "here's what development means for Freeport" could be good to present to the public. Mary agreed and encouraged a data-driven approach.

**5. Update on Strategic Planning Effort for Downtown – Scope of Work**

Mary, Chip and Tawni discussed their effort in talking with consultants and vendors, each of whom had various scales of involvement and proposals for a planning effort. Through that process, Principal emerged as the best partner for the community. Sarah pointed out that there is a lot of cooperative potential between this effort and the comprehensive plan update, and said that it would be also good to remind people of the difference between the two. The board agreed.

**6. Consent Agenda**

**a. Approval of Minutes of Board Meeting on October 27, 2020**

**b. Acceptance of Financial Report for Period Ending October 31, 2020**

Jim Cassida moved and Leanne seconded the consent agenda. The vote was unanimous of all those present and voting.

**7. Executive Director/Metrics Report**

Keith gave a brief summary of his report. He spoke about how the vacancy rate report had been updated to generate simple reports on changes to vacancies on a quarterly basis. Keith highlighted the decision at the planning board to recommend passage of the proposed overlay for existing commercial uses and some arts/cultural events at the desert. Mary asked about a property inventory, and reminded the board that Mark had been suggesting that FEDC have an inventory available on its website. Mark suggested a spreadsheet with properties and vacancies, etc. Keith said that this spreadsheet exists, but is only used internally to track vacancies and calculate vacancy rates. The board discussed ways to use this information in an out-facing way, and also website revisions. Mary asked about food trucks. Keith talked about policy changes and the licensing/application process. Keith thanked the council and the advocates who had stepped up to encourage changes that could add a new element to downtown on a trial basis.

**8. The meeting adjourned at 8:58 AM.**