

**TOWN OF ROCKY MOUNT  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
January 26, 2021  
5:30 P.M.**

The Economic Development Authority (EDA) of the Town of Rocky Mount, Virginia met at the Rocky Mount Municipal Building on Tuesday, January 26, 2021 at 5:30 p.m., with Chairman Adam Lynch, presiding.

**ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS PRESENT**

Board Members Present: Chairman Adam Lynch, Vice Chair Doug Guilliams; Economic Development Authority Board Members, Ann Dillon, Chas Mitchell, and Tyler Lee

Board Members Absent: Member Tara Holley

Others Present: Cultural & Economic Development Director Beth Simms, and EDA Clerk Cherie Compton

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Additions or Corrections: To move Old Business above Staff Updates

Motion: To approve the agenda with the change

Motion By: Member Tyler Lee

Second: Vice Chairman Doug Guilliams

Action: Approved by a unanimous vote of members present.

**REVIEW AND CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES**

Let the record show that prior to the meeting, Economic Development Authority received the following draft minutes for review and consideration of approval:

**December 22, 2020 - Regular Meeting Minutes**

Motion: To approve minutes as presented

Motion By: Member Tyler Lee

Second: Member Chas Mitchell

Action: Approved by a unanimous vote of members present

## **Secretary's Report**

Economic Development Clerk Cherie Compton gave an update of the balance from statement ending December 31, 2020 with a balance of \$150,322.18. Economic Development Authority members were presented with a treasurer's report.

## **Old Business**

Rachel Spencer and Lucas Weaver from Access joined the meeting via Zoom. They presented the branding survey results gathered from approximately 342 people. The survey consisted of questions such as:

What connects you to this place? What connects people who live/ work here together? What story do you want to tell for the future? What sets Rocky Mount apart? Top attractions, experiences, ideas, strengths. Some of the most common answers were small hometown feel, historic, growing, safe, laid back or boring, Harvester, music roots, parks, between the lakes.

Results also showed some barriers such as the town is perceived as sleepy especially on weekends or evenings, many empty buildings, disconnect from uptown/downtown, housing, and workforce shortage.

The survey also indicated there are places for opportunity. The Harvester could be used more for local musicians and artists, offering lower cost events. Historic vacant buildings offer new uses to attract workforce and build on local economy through collaborative or shared office space and short-term leases. Outdoor events offer a tremendous opportunity to attract visitors, and many said that more need to be done and to also feature alcohol at some events outside.

The next steps will be sharing of formal reports, logo concepts, brand messaging, marketing strategy, and to launch the brand.

An open discussion ensued.

## **Staff Updates**

Cultural & Economic Development Director Beth Simms gave an update on:

- Harvester General Manager Gary Jackson retirement
- Working on switching the Harvester to a Non-Profit and how to structure
- Buddy's BBQ is moving to old Hardees building
- Vacant buildings priced too high

Members discussed bringing local acts into town for shows at the farmers market or the Harvester, affordable shows that will promote local musicians.

### **Committee Reports**

Chairman Adam Lynch suggested researching an outdoor recreation committee for the future when the pandemic restrictions are lifted.

### **New Business**

Adam Lynch asked members to be considering ideas for using and expanding the farmers market as economic and cultural projects for the upcoming year.

### **Upcoming networking events & EDA meeting**

Franklin County Connects is the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of every month.  
EDA meeting- Tuesday, March 23, 2021

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Motion to Adjourn By: Member Tyler Lee

Second: Member Ann Dillon

Action: Adjourned by a unanimous vote of members present

Time of Adjournment: 6:41 p.m.

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Adam Lynch, Chairman

ATTEST:

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Cherie Compton, Clerk