



MINUTES
BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
Monday January 25, 2010

Commission Members: Chair Robert Agee, Vice-Chair Joe Hruban, Greg Phister, Sydney Vergis, Tobin Richardson, Michael Faust, Dave Robert (Alternate), Finance and Budget Commission Liaison, Donald Palm
City Council Liaisons: Ruth Asmundson, Don Saylor (Alternate)
City Staff: Sarah Worley, Economic Development Coordinator
Brian Abbanat, Economic Development Specialist

1. Determination of Quorum and Seating of Alternates

Quorum determined: 7:03 p.m.

Absent: Commissioners Richardson, Robert,
Councilmember Saylor

2. Approval of Agenda - Agenda approved: 7:03 p.m.

3. Public Comment No public comment

4. Approval of Minutes January 22, 2010 *Minutes approved: 7:04 p.m.*

5. DDBA Quarterly Update

Rosalie Paine, DDBA Co-President provided an update of DDBA activities. The downtown gift card generated over \$35,000 of card sales in a very short period of time. The DDBA will add additional promotion over Valentines Day. The DDBA engaged in a number of different charitable events over the holidays. The DDBA will repeat August's successful "30 on 30" on 1/30, this Saturday.

The Marketing Committee has taken on additional members. Kate Hutchison and Laura Tomasello are committee chairs. They continue to work on publicity and event items.

The Parking Committee is working on this year's work plan. The Subcommittee will do a parking utilization survey of all downtown parking this year. They will continue to monitor E Street parking lot and evaluate parking adjacent to Amtrak. They are looking at improving utilization of existing parking garages at 1st & F and 4th & G. The Parking Committee will also look at possibly developing a double parking restriction during the noon hour to reduce disruptions to downtown circulation.

Interstate 80 does not have any signage promoting downtown. The DDBA paid for I-80 billboard signage this past year. This was expensive and not particularly effective. The DDBA was disappointed at the lack of city support for a new downtown signage opportunity at the Olive Drive exit and the opportunity lost to increase exposure to I-80 motorists. There are many issues relative to freeway signage. This was an opportunity at an existing location that wasn't taken advantage of.

The DDBA has some new board members and the Annual Meeting will be held at Feb. 2nd at 5:30 at USE Credit Union.

Councilmember Asmundson responded she has not given up on the issue of improving Davis Freeway signage. The vote occurred when she was gone and lost on a 2-2 vote. The sign will not occur in the short term resulting from Councilmember Souza's condition to transfer sign ownership to the City. The property owner refused. Councilmember Asmundson is working with Councilmember Souza to amend his condition.

She was absent when the Council voted and it lost 2-2. She will bring it back sometime in the future.

DDBA Co-President Michael Bisch shared the Visioning Committee has spent most of the past year understanding the current economic status of downtown. The committee is exploring topics such as where does the DDBA downtown want to be, what kind of vision does the DDBA have for downtown, and how to increase downtown economic activity. The committee has also been looking at peripheral land use decisions. The Business Park Land Needs study caught the committee's attention and the ramifications of what that might be on the downtown. Suggestions were given to the City on what they could do to facilitate downtown redevelopment. The committee has been looking at the Economic Prosperity report, which addresses a lot of what the committee is dealing with.

A commissioner stated the BEDC is about to start developing its annual work plan and asked what the DDBA would like to see the BEDC consider. Michael Bisch asked the Commission to concentrate on where does the community want to go from an economic standpoint and resources available to allocate towards that. He stated the most important resource to protect is the land available for development. Some land use decisions are being made on a very superficial, project-specific level and not looking at secondary effects of those decisions (e.g. rezoning light industrial to office uses). What affect does peripheral office space have on the downtown market? These are subjects the Visioning Committee would like to bring for discussion. He stated BEDC may be the forum for the kind of discussion.

Discussion followed regarding whether the DDBA is looking at other cities as a model. The DDBA responded there is not an interest in modeling after any city in particular, but are interested in taking what works in other cities and applying them to Davis. Some European and Asian cities come to mind.

Rosalie Paine commented there should be a constant DDBA presence on this Commission, not as an oversight, but as participating members. It's a reasonable seat to have filled. Discussion followed regarding whether the best approach was for a DDBA member to serve as a commissioner or establish an ex-officio seat for the DDBA and Chamber of Commerce as well.

A commissioner stated the BEDC is interested in increasing the "bandwidth" of communication to learn as much about the Davis economy and business climate as possible.

6. Economic Indicators

Recommended Action: Consider and recommend Council endorsement of project concept and process framework.

Commissioner Agee provided an overview of the sample economic indicator report. Its purpose is to foster discussion on big issues that are important to Davis, can measure progress in a couple of different ways over time, and become more aware of interrelationships between issues. The City looks at a lot of data on a pretty regular basis. It's a rare occasion when it is

summed together to draw conclusions. This report does that, but additional help is needed. A larger, more formal group is needed to complete the effort. That group is a steering committee – a partnership of the commission, business interests, regional planning experts, and the university, among others. That’s the next step – to put together that next group. This report has some deficiencies but is pretty well formed. Council liaisons were supportive of the effort. The subcommittee would like a recommendation to move forward with the draft in concept and the timeline, and the Commission’s direct involvement reviewing it. It had its origins in the commission and the subcommittee would like to continue that. Between now and the next meeting, don’t hesitate to provide input.

Discussion followed regarding the origin of the project concept. Commissioner Agee responded this project is deeply rooted in the BEDC’s charge. There have been positive reactions from both the Chamber of Commerce and DDBA. This is the macro view of things – from major trend lines to simple economic facts. If those trigger a deeper conversation then the subcommittee has accomplished the original intent. A deeper, more thoughtful conversation is where this should be headed.

Councilmember Asmundson mentioned this provides a baseline to compare against. This will represent a reflection of what Davis is all about. She stated Council has wanted this since establishing the BEDC.

Commissioner Agee stated it’s not meant to be a marketing tool. It’s meant to be objective. It’s the Commission’s advice and opinion after examining the data and conferring with experts. Maintaining some notion of arm’s length in this is relatively important.

Discussion about next steps followed.

Commissioners provided comments on the sample report, with a primary focus on whether the group of comparable cities is correct for Davis. Commissioner Agee responded there are many different ways to do it. There is no one right answer. The subcommittee needed one to reach out and grab information. Finding the data is sometimes maddening. The idea is to get the first report on the runway and let it take off and all the suggestions from people who want to get involved in it. That’s exactly the kind of dialogue desired and that’s what the steering committee should do.

Motion (Commissioner Faust): Recommend endorsement of project in concept and framework moving forward

Second: Commissioner Phister

Aye: Commissioners Agee, Faust, Vergis

No: Commissioner Hruban

Motion passes

7. Best Business Award Nominations

Recommended Actions:

- a. Consider award nominee recommendations from the awards subcommittee.
- b. Vote on nominees recommended to be approved by the City Council as recipients of 2009 Best Business awards in the following three categories:
 - Individual Contribution to Local Economic Development;
 - Business or Organization Contributions Local Economic Development;

- Extended Excellence in Local Economic Development.

Staff reviewed the process for bringing the best business award to Council.

Commissioner Hruban shared the subcommittee's recommendations for the following categories:

1. Individual Contribution to Local Economic Development – Reed Youmans, Hallmark Inn,
2. Business or Organization Contribution to Local Economic Development, Farmers Market
3. Extended Excellence in Local Economic Development – Hibbert Lumber

*Motion (Commissioner Hruban): Vote on recommendations for Best Business Award
Second: Commissioner Phister*

Aye: All

Noes: None

Motion Passes

Discussion followed regarding who would notify award recipients and who would author background information.

8. Staff Communication/Updates

Staff gave update on status of business park land study. Study is focused around seven key chapters.

1. Project overview
2. Economic development policies & value of business growth
3. Davis economy
4. Davis' existing vacant land inventory
5. Business community outreach results
6. Business growth projections, land demand analysis, alternative economic future(s), economic impacts
7. Implementation

Staff shared the purpose of the study was to provide objective data for community decision making. There will also be a supplement addressing the downtown's role in future business growth and affect of peripheral development on downtown office space.

Staff shared a Yolo County Economic Development staff met recently with Congressman Mike Thompson so he could be more informed about economic conditions in Yolo County: The Yolo County ED staff participated in preparing a comprehensive economic development strategy (CEDs). Davis staff stressed the need for funding for major infrastructure projects such as surface water project and mandated upgrade of the Water Quality Control Plant. Davis and Yolo County are not capitalizing on UC Davis. To accomplish this funding for business incubators, and subsidized space is needed. The successful startups can drive greater regional growth. The chances of getting Yolo County layoff aversion grant looks pretty good. If awarded, it will allow Davis to participate in the MetroPulse business retention program and continue contracting with the Small Business Development Center to provide business assistance and consulting services to Davis businesses. Tomorrow there will be a Yolo County jobs forum, focusing on the rural/agricultural economy.

A commissioner shared he recently had a productive conversation with Diane Parro. He learned a lot about Yolo County Visitor's Bureau. He discussed the prospect of her visiting BEDC and giving a report. That could be beneficial to BEDC.

9. Subcommittee Updates and Organization

Discussion focused on what is the best approach for this year's work plan. Commissioner Agee stated the BEDC should try to be more practical and specific. The work plan should be tailored to the interests and time availability of commissioners and what they can take on as individuals and as subcommittees. A subcommittee was established to identify concrete projects for the BEDC to work on an aligning those with the interests of commissioners

10. Future Agenda Items

Discussion occurred regarding whether the BEDC should take a position at February's meeting of putting the sales tax extension on the June ballot. The BEDC concluded that since the Council will have already made a decision, that meeting time would be better spent discussing other items. There was general agreement the BEDC should get ahead of these topics in the future.

11. Adjourn - *Meeting adjourned 8:59 p.m.*