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**PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES**

Date: October 12, 2022

Time: 8:30 am

Members Present Chair: Councilmember Danielle Jurinsky, Vice Chair: Councilmember Dustin Zvonek, Councilmember Angela Lawson

Others Present Councilmember Steve Sundberg
Adrian Botham, Andrea Barnes, Becky Hogan, Blake Fulenwider, Brad Pierce, Brandon Cammarata, Brian Rulla, Cathy DeWolf, Chance H., Cindy Colip, Crystal Vigil, Daniel Brotzman, Daniel Money, David Schoonmaker, Debbie Bickmire, Elena Vasconez, Gayle Jetchick, Jacob Cox, Jason Batchelor, Jeannine Rustad, Jeffrey Moore, Jennifer Orozco, Jose Rodriguez, Jose Rodriguez, Julie Patterson, Kim Kreimeyer, Laura Perry, Leah Ramsey, Marcia McGilley, Marisa Noble, Melissa Rogers, Michelle Gardner, Morgan Cullen, Rachel Allen, Sarah Young, Scott Berg, Stephen Gubrud, Victor Rachael, Yuriy Gorlov

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 7, 2022, DRAFT MINUTES–COUNCIL MEMBER JURINSKY

2.a. The minutes were approved.

3. GENERAL BUSINESS

3.a. Small Business Program/Event Update- Small Business Development Center

Summary of Issue and Discussion:

Marcia McGilley, SBDC Executive Director

Marcia McGilley presented this item. The Small Business Development Center (SBDC) provides free and confidential appointments for one-on-one business consulting in both English and Spanish, educational webinars, events, and resource referrals. From January through September 2022, 36 jobs were created, 25 were retained, \$2.3 million was raised for businesses, there was a \$4.7 million increase in sales, and there was \$3.4 million received in government contracts. The SBDC

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currently offers the Business Boost Program as a response to businesses being disrupted by COVID. Many expressed interest in learning about digital business tools and processes to increase operational efficiencies. The program is aimed to enhance the operations and scalability of small and micro businesses to thrive in a digital world. This is in partnership with the Community College of Aurora, which developed the English Curriculum, the Aurora-South Metro SBDC, which developed the Spanish Curriculum, and Arapahoe/Douglas Works, which did the registration, marketing, and hosting of the sessions. Arapahoe County provided funds for the CCA, while Aurora provided funds for the SBDC consultants. The program includes eight business boost models in English and Spanish including professional virtual presence, digital fundamentals, online hiring tools, cybersecurity, Excel, etc. They were presented live in June, July, and August and received feedback that helped adjust the curriculum. Modules will be offered on-demand prior to December and will be at no cost. Citizens can go to CCA for further education, A/D Works for hiring, retention, and apprenticeship; and SBDC for workshops and one-on-one consulting for basic business needs.

The 15th Annual Veterans Small Business Conference is being held on October 12, 2022, from 9 AM to 12 PM virtually with 107 attendees and 23 registered at this time. It aims to provide veteran small business owners, including their spouses and partners, access to tools, resources, and people to make their businesses thrive. Aurora is currently home to 23,589 veterans. In the last five years, SBDC has personally served 164 veterans, 87 service-disabled veterans, and 8 active-duty veterans. Aurora-South Metro SBDC and the Aurora Chamber are presenting partners, with the city of Aurora as a Premier Sponsor and the US Small Business Administration as a Collaborating Sponsor. Connect to DOT and Colorado Enterprise Fund came in as pillar sponsors. The conference will feature welcome sessions, breakout sessions, and live roundtables with discussions on hiring and retaining employees, maximizing social media, starting a business, and other topics in either English or both English and Spanish. On September 18, 2023, an in-person conference will be held from 8 AM to 8 PM at the Hyatt Regency Aurora with the city of Aurora as the Premiere Sponsor.

- CM Jurinsky requested information regarding services that the SBDC does for veterans and veteran business owners in Aurora. M. McGilley said that veterans are a new area of focus for SBDC, and they are kicking it off with the conference. She stressed that everything they do is available for veterans.
- CM Lawson mentioned that there are youth interested in businesses and entrepreneurship. She asked for information regarding what SBDC does for youth such as virtual learning tools. M. McGilley said that she will contact CM Lawson.

Outcome:

Information only.

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Follow-up Action:

None required.

3.b. ARPA Small Business Grant Update**Summary of Issue and Discussion:**

Elena Vasconez, Business & Economic Development Supervisor

Elena Vasconez presented this item. In January 2021, City Council approved \$2.5 million in ARPA funds to support small businesses struggling to recover from the pandemic. The funds were designated to support approximately 250 small businesses by providing \$5,000 grants to post-pandemic startups and \$10,000 grants to existing businesses. The program was promoted city-wide through various platforms and media outlets. Eligible businesses were required to show a net value of less than \$350,000 and gross sales of less than \$5 million. They also had to demonstrate how they are still being impacted by the pandemic, but they are currently in the recovery process. 320 applications from different industries such as goods, retail, childcare, manufacturing, and service industries, were received and screened. Since only 250 applicants were covered, staff requested Council to approve extra funds to cover all applications. This request for \$700,000 in ARPA funds was approved. Currently, 77 applications for payment were reviewed and staff disbursed approximately \$500,000. 39% of applications were female-owned businesses and 62% were minority-owned. Staff are approving and funding applications weekly to have them all approved by the end of 2022. Following this, a final report will be presented.

Outcome:

Information only.

Follow-up Action:

None required.

3.c. Development Review Quarterly Update**Summary of Issue and Discussion:**

Jason Batchelor, Deputy City Manager

Jason Batchelor and Laura Perry presented this item. All revenues and expenses in the Development and Review Fund are tracked according to the policy direction that development pays its own way. Revenues are continued to be projected to come in over what was budgeted. However, expenses are also expected to come in over budget due to continuously hiring additional staff and third-party contractors to meet the increased workload. The Office of Development Assistance (ODA) has been meeting pre-development applications. For inspections, Planning and the Building Division continue to perform highly. The engineering side, which received several comments, has also improved. Development activity remained strong through the summer and staff received high levels of inspection requests and plan

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sets coming through. Pre-application meetings, used as a precursor for expected development, have also gone down.

Through feedback from the Red Tape Reduction Committee, staff developed a plan with four major areas of focus including management and leadership oversight, culture and customer service, process and technology improvements, process documentation, and teaching and training employees and customers regarding the overall process. The Development Review Governance Committee has been stood up composed of DCMs, the city manager, and department directors. Regular meetings are held regarding improvements and addressing roadblocks. The expedited review processes have been completed. In-person meetings are made available in addition to virtual or hybrid meeting requests. Staff members are also having in-person meetings. ODA pre-application meetings' lead time has gone down from five or six weeks to a three-week lead time since June. This is typical compared to pre-pandemic times. For inspections, third parties were contracted for paving and roofing. The TCO extension fee was eliminated in Q2 of 2022. Staff coordinated with Adams, Arapahoe, and Douglas Counties to go live on digital mylars for plats. They are working on the last issues, such as file size limitations, with recording master plans. The master drainage plan and preliminary drainage plan checklists have been updated. The large project development review process is up and running involving meetings with all large projects in the city. Standing bi-weekly or monthly meetings are done to ensure good communication, identify priorities, and resolve issues. Updating the Guidance and Reference Manuals is currently in process.

Changes are being made to eliminate up to 80% of license agreements currently required. Stakeholders were involved in addressing the needs for license agreements and identifying alternative ways to address them. Staff is continuously getting feedback from key developers and is hoping to finalize before the end of 2022. Requirements are continuously being gathered for the Plan Review Comments Tracking and Scorecard to ensure that all comments are streamlined. To maintain a culture of performance, there will be cross-departmental training, knowledge-sharing workshops, and weekly division meetings to ensure consistency of comments and guidance and to understand each department's tracking and processes. A plan is being developed for the timing of fee payments to ensure that plans are not being held up due to payments.

Public Works is in the last stage of its reorganization. Over the next 12 weeks, a change initiative will be implemented to provide employee tools, training, and mentoring, improve predictability and consistency across the review process, simplify the development review processes, and enhance the customer experience. To achieve these goals, staff will continue to have conversations with developers, get feedback, look at checklists, clarify external and internal requirements, and maintain partnerships with the development community to create solutions that meet their visions within the city code. Public Works will transition staff and reset

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their roles, implement additional solutions to enhance efficiency, build capacity, and standardize the plan review process.

- CM Zvonek asked who is participating in the Large Project Development Review. J. Batchelor answered Oakwood, Windler, and Painted Prairie. He mentioned that they are also trying to re-engage Majestic in the process. J. Cox added High Point and Porteos.
- CM Zvonek asked if there is feedback on the updated process for larger projects. J. Batchelor stated that regular check-ins are well received.
- CM Zvonek expressed that he is happy to hear that progress is being made regarding licensing. He asked if the stakeholders are still being kept in the loop and are providing feedback. L. Perry said that staff are still in contact with all developers and are conducting one-on-one meetings to garner feedback.

Outcome:

Information only.

Follow-up Action:

None required.

3.d. UDO Text Amendments including allowing Data Centers in the APZ zone district and a Rezone from Mixed Use Corridor (MU-C) to Business/Tech(I-1) at the Northeast corner of 6th Avenue and Airport Blvd. and to other minor UDO amendments

Summary of Issue and Discussion:

Brandon Cammarata, Planning Manager

Brandon Cammarata presented this item. Data centers are large-scale computer systems for data storage and processing for off-site users and are low activity and low employment. They typically have supporting equipment, backup batteries, power generator cooling units, fire suppression, and security features. While permitted in the city, the proposed UDO amendment will move data centers into their own use since they behave differently than the use they are currently under. This will allow the city to adapt as data centers adapt and address immediate hindrances and barriers to current development. Currently, data centers are under Office Flex, which is typically light industrial uses, with multiple tenants, and requires more parking spaces. The UDO amendment will reduce the parking requirement to better reflect the needs of data centers. In addition, this will also allow permitting this use in the Accident Potential Zone (APZ) district where other light industrial uses may not be permitted. APZ limits its uses to those with low employment density in case of any accidents. It is located at the end of the runways for Buckley Space Port. Buckley is aware of this proposed amendment and has not yet provided comments.

A landowner of a property located at the northeast corner of 6th Avenue/Highway 30 and Airport Boulevard is looking to develop a property with a data center. The

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landowner is also engaged with the Base on other issues on the parcel. The Office of Development Assistance is working with AEDC are working on a draft ordinance to address this. Following feedback from the PED Committee, it will be brought forward to the Planning Commission for a recommendation, then to City Council.

- CM Jurinsky mentioned that Adams County is getting associated with oil and gas sites to work on new regulations for cryptocurrency mining. She added that cryptocurrency mining uses a significant amount of energy and creates a lot of noise. She asked if the staff have any updates regarding this. B. Cammarata mentioned that they have been titling mining centers over the last ten years and they are being implemented into the community. He added that they can look into energy and water use together with AEDC to provide further information.
- CM Lawson asked for further clarification regarding the changes to parking for data centers. B. Cammarata explained they align parking to the needs of the industrial projects. CM Lawson asked if they are just determining parking based on the need of the data center and the number of its employees. B. Cammarata confirmed this. He added that they would no longer need to look at the rest of the flex office, which is close to retail and service uses parking needs.
- Y. Gorlov applauded B. Cammarata and the Planning Department Director for working with AEDC. He mentioned that the unintended change from MUR to MUA allows data centers as a permitted use. However, this would change to conditional use once it is extracted and made into its own category. City staff will work on this to ensure that no current or prospective businesses are negatively impacted. Y. Gorlov explained that data centers' parking requirement ratios are different since they employ fewer people. A million-square-foot facility would traditionally require 1,000 parking spaces for industrial use. This would be lessened for data centers.
- Leah Ramsey, a developer with Chelsea Investments, asked when the change to the UDO could be anticipated. B. Cammarata said that they are hoping to get to Planning Commission at the end of October followed by the City Council in January. He stated that they are aiming for Q1 of 2023.

Outcome:

There was no objection to presenting this item to Planning Commission.

Follow-up Action:

Staff to add this item on the agenda for future Planning Commission meeting.

3.e FOR AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 146 OF THE CITY CODE OF THE CITY OF AURORA, COLORADO, RELATING TO THE STANDARDS FOR OTHER TYPES OF SIGNS

Summary of Issue and Discussion:

Councilmember Zvonek, City Council

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CM Zvonek presented this item. Businesses in Aurora regularly use pennants or signages advertising specials, holidays, and showing support for local sports teams. Currently, the City Code requires businesses to obtain a permit to hang the pennants, limits the consecutive days they can be hung, and requires pennants to be in good condition. The proposed ordinance will remove the permit requirement and limitation on days but will still require pennants to be in good condition. This ordinance aims to reduce potential harassment through code enforcement and allow code enforcement officers to focus on other issues and responsibilities. CM Zvonek stressed the need for a broader code review process to identify small requirements placed on businesses that do not make a difference to the city or consumers but have an impact on businesses.

- CM Lawson expressed her support. She asked if businesses could put up campaign signs that are not in good shape throughout the year but not pennants. CM Jurinsky said that campaign signs can only go up 45 days before an election. CM Zvonek mentioned that there are differences in types of signage and the proposed ordinance only focuses on pennants. He added that they should look at the code and determine the rules being put on businesses that should be removed.
- CM Jurinsky expressed her support for the proposed ordinance. She mentioned the need to look through the code and remove those wasting businesses' and code enforcement's time. She mentioned that the pennants and banners were promoted during the pandemic shutdown as tools to drive business.

Outcome:

Committee unanimously approved moving this item forward to Planning Commission.

Follow-up Action:

Staff to add this item on the agenda for future Planning Commission meeting.

4. MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION**4. a. Aurora Economic Development Council**

- Yuri Gorlov
- NO REPORT

4.b. Havana Business Improvement District

- Chance Horiuchi:
- NO REPORT

4.c. Aurora Chamber of Commerce

- Kevin Hougen:
- NO REPORT

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4.d. Planning Commission

- Melvin Bush
NO REPORT

4.e. Oil and Gas Committee

- Brad Pierce:
A report on Q3 activities is included in the packet.

4.f. Business Advisory Board

- Garrett Walls
NO REPORT

4.g. Retail

- Bob Oliva
NO REPORT

4.h. Small Business

- Elena Vasquez
NO REPORT

4.i. Visit Aurora

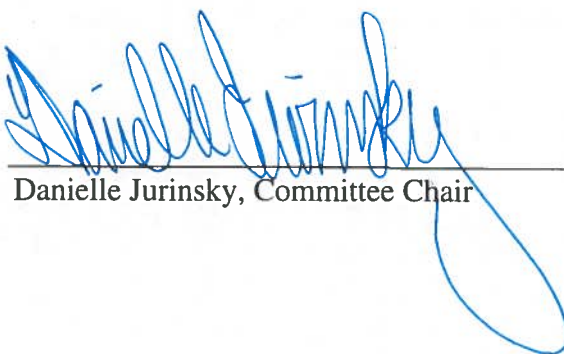
- Bruce Dalton
NO REPORT

5. CONFIRM NEXT MEETING DATE

Scheduled for November 9, 2022, at 8:30 AM MT.

6. ADJOURNMENT

APPROVED:



Danielle Jurinsky, Committee Chair