

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
WEDNESDAY, MAY 12, 2021, 11:00 AM  
ATTENDED VIRTUALLY**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting of the Economic Development Advisory Committee was called to order by Councilor Vigil Coppler, Chair, at 11:00 am on Wednesday, May 12, 2021 and was attended virtually.

**2. ROLL CALL**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Councilor JoAnn Vigil Coppler, Chair  
Kate Kennedy  
John Fiens  
Ryan Cordova  
Meghan McGarrity  
Robert Lurcott  
Victoria Murphy

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Melessia Coleman, Excused  
Ryan Gallagher, Excused  
Johanna Nelson, Excused

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Rich Brown, Director, Department of Community Development  
Janice Krish, Economic Development  
Liz Camacho, Economic Development  
Sean Moody, Asset Development  
Daniel Fernandez, Project Director, Midtown  
Andrea Salazar, Assistant City Attorney  
Jesse Guillen, City of Santa Fe  
Elizabeth Martin, Stenographer

**3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**MOTION** A motion was made by Mr. Fiens, seconded by Ms. McGarrity, to approve the agenda as presented.

**VOTE** The motion passed on a roll call vote as follows:

Chair Vigil Coppler, yes; Ms. Kennedy, yes; Mr. Fiens, yes; Mr. Cordova, yes; Ms. McGarrity, yes; Mr. Lurcott, yes; Ms. Murphy, yes.

**4. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA**

None.

**5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**MOTION** A motion was made by Ms. McGarrity, seconded by Mr. Lurcott, to approve the minutes as presented.

**VOTE** The motion passed on a roll call vote as follows:

Chair Vigil Coppler, yes; Ms. Kennedy, yes; Mr. Fiens, yes; Mr. Cordova, yes; Ms. McGarrity, yes; Mr. Lurcott, yes; Ms. Murphy, yes.

**6. ACTION ITEMS: CONSENT**

None.

**7. ACTION ITEMS: DISCUSSION**

None.

**8. PRESENTATION**

**A. STIR LABS PROGRAM**

Ms. Camacho gave a Power Point presentation on the STIR Labs Program.

Ms. Camacho said this project is funded by the National Science Foundation and is a collaboration of academics, planning and economic development. We are working with UNM and other partners and are at the beginning of the project. The length of the project is to be sixteen weeks. We are participating in the dialogue and will decide if we want to go further.

Ms. McGarrity said this is a cool project. She did not see any involvement or participation from the Community College. As this moves forward can it be integrated.

Ms. Camacho said we had a lot of academics at the beginning, but will add it in

as we go forward. We also want to add input from young people.

Ms. McGarrity said she would like to think about jobs that do not necessarily require a higher education degree. She wants to make sure that we remain focused on our people and their needs.

Mr. Fiens said he looked at this carefully a couple of times. He feels like we thought “here is something shiny, let’s do it.” He does not see an ROI here. People are excited about this so maybe you see something here. We are not out of the woods yet with COVID. We should shore up our short term goals. The goals in this project are very academic. Business is business. That vocabulary is not used in business. What are the deliverables. Technology is not a magical mystery tour. It is skills. You can teach skills. There is no point in making it a mystery. We need to focus on our own kids and what we can do for them. An example would be helping them get a Microsoft Certification. This is a reactive thing. Good luck with it. He is interested in what comes of it.

Ms. Camacho said you make some valuable points. We are focused on our kids here. There is a wide variety of activities we participate in and create. We may not continue this. We will see how it goes. Yes, we did go for a new shiny one here.

Chair Vigil Coppler asked where does the \$8,000 contribution from the City come from.

Ms. Camacho said it is coming from her marketing budget.

Chair Vigil Coppler asked what is the end date of this project.

Ms. Camacho said June of this year.

Mr. Lurcott asked if the Committee could see a list of participants in the discussions.

Ms. Camacho said yes, she will provide that.

Mr. Lurcott asked who are the champions of this.

Ms. Camacho said mostly UNM.

Mr. Lurcott said the City is getting paid to do this. He is talking about the private sector. Someone who believes in this and gets people interested.

Ms. Camacho said New Mexico Economic Development, Los Alamos Labs, herself and Jon Mertz, if we think it is of value and a good fit.

Mr. Brown said he appreciated Mr. Fiens perspective. We are in the business of market research and diversification of the economy is one of the goals. In Santa Fe tourism and government run the City along with micro businesses. If we are going to try to grow and diversify our economy we need marketing intelligence. It may seem that this is a large endeavor. It is one of many. We wanted you to be informed as we go through this process.

Mr. Fiens said he did not disagree with anything Mr. Brown said. Research and analysis is integral to economic development. He trusts Mr. Brown. He just does not see it in this one. You are 100% correct in the concepts you laid out.

**B. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW OF THE MIDTOWN BI-WEEKLY DEVELOPMENT UPDATE REPORT: INCREMENTAL DEVELOPMENT NEXT STEPS**

Mr. Brown introduced Mr. Fernandez and Ms. Salazar who will participate in this report.

Mr. Brown presented a Power Point presentation update and added that recently they have had five major studios ask about doing projects at Garson.

Mr. Fernandez also commented on the Power Point presentation.

Ms. McGarrity asked if more could be shown about the role of the Midtown Project Coordinator. What is the status of the land swap with the state.

Mr. Brown said the Project Administrator will be focused mainly on the razoring and will be in charge of the process as the applicant. We are not working on the land swap yet. The State has specific purposes for the land and have invested funds in it. We are looking for other opportunities for a land swap to move their plan to. Sean Moody will be working on that project. In four to five months we will pick that up again.

Mr. Fiens said he would like to comment on the PR. The Albuquerque Journal continues to cover Midtown diligently. They recently commented in an article about the lack of transparency about a proposal. The City declined to comment. That is not a good idea from a PR perspective. That is just his feedback.

Mr. Brown said thank you for that. It is him that they were speaking of when they said declined to comment. He did responded back and forth several times to questions. In fact he responded seven times that day. The Editor has now called him for an interview.

Mr. Fiens said he was glad to hear that. Maybe you could ask them for a correction to be printed. You deserve that.

Mr. Lurcott said there are three issues he is interested in as the process moves forward. One is having a real plan for this project that includes roads, utilities and open space and the connections. Since the City is now the Master Developer we should not be tentative about putting that forward. It needs solid thought as to how it will be physically arranged. That is in order.

The second one is the engagement process. There was previously organized public workshops. The public should be able to see what came of their work. There needs to be a clear process of how you are moving forward with that.

Third is a clear strategy on what kind of affordable housing will be part of this. Owing the land is the best bet to be able to create low income housing. Focus on that. There are buildings on the east edge of the property that ought to be looked at for use.

Ms. McGarrity said some of the comments she hears in the community are that the City is just going to band-aid Midtown and then sell it. Can you address that.

Mr. Hernandez said we made a presentation to Councilors when the developer left the project. We talked about doing incremental development so that we could make decisions along the way. That is the process at this time and how we are approaching it. We wanted to give options. We are doing incremental development so smaller developers can be involved as well by developing one or two sites.

Mr. Brown stated that we cannot just sell the parcel. It has to go to City Council for that. Development does not mean disposal or sale of land. That goes through City Council and public hearings before there is any action. The plan is to go with the guidelines we have.

Ms. Salazar said there was a Resolution adopted that is our framework. We could not rapidly dispose of the property. We have those parameters. We are moving forward with planning and zoning so we can get to what the initial plan is.

Mr. Fiens said in preliminary chats it has been said that if we invest in the land it will increase two to three times in value. When do you have to start providing details of the cleanup of the property and buildings and how that effects the land value.

Mr. Hernandez said that is part of the overall planning process. The ROI notion is one piece of it. Then if we want to implement Phase 1 of that we will work on that. Strategic Economics is looking at that for us. In July or August we will see the costs of that.

Mr. Brown said there is an amazingly new interest in film in Santa Fe. We may need to make short term investments to make those buildings usable for that purpose. We could license to the studios sooner than later.

Mr. Fiens asked if there are festivals or larger events to come on that land.

Mr. Brown said those have their locations planned already. There are some smaller organizations who might want to use the space. There is a small concert band who wants to use the band shell for practice.

Mr. Lurcott said he was hoping for feedback to his comments. Do you see a framework plan and the development of a site plan that locates public open space and housing for instance. What is the process. What is the status of affordable housing and can we have an opportunity to chime in.

Mr. Hernandez said yes, the idea is to develop a development plan. Roads, utilities, open space and parcels of blocks. That plan will also include sustainability in the site plans. We hope to identify good places for low income housing and housing affordability throughout the district. We want to develop all of that. Since the City owns the land the City can drive the level of affordability.

Mr. Brown said we are moving to an approach of housing affordability to diversify the housing design. We will come back to this Committee to look at that. Ms. Ladd will join us.

Ms. Murphy said the term affordable housing tends to mean certain things. A few years ago we attempted to soften that to housing for all. She likes the Housing Affordability theme.

Mr. Cordova stated that he has a lot of confidence in Mr. Brown and his staff. They have been very open about this project. We are a long way off on this. It takes a lot of planning. He thinks they have really done their homework on this. Affordable housing are words that make people feel uncomfortable. Housing Affordability is much better. He is a builder. That is perfect. We still have a long way to go on this property. This time we have gives the public the opportunity to drive around it and see it.

Chair Vigil Coppler commented that the American Institute of Architects sent a letter to the Councilors. They want an opportunity to review the properties on Midtown with the idea of recording them on the State Historical Register. Be mindful of that.

Mr. Brown said we were just informed of the request this morning.

Chair Vigil Coppler said regarding the land swap, Council reviewed an agreement between the City and the State regarding the property in question. What happened to that.

Mr. Brown said the agreement was for the 2020 Legislative Session. The Cabinet Secretary never advanced that Bill so that scenario died. We took them on a tour and found out about their investment then.

Chair Vigil Coppler said regarding the Project Manager position, it is taking two to three months to get things out of HR. The funds for this position will come available on July 1<sup>st</sup>. You would be right to go ahead and start advertising that position.

Mr. Brown said we are working with HR on the job description then we can start the process. There is a bit of a lag in the work flow with HR. In the interim our Property Manager is acting as the applicant to get the process going. Sam Burnett. He has planning background and is in Public Works.

Chair Vigil Coppler said the sooner we define costs on what the City is embarking on the better. The return on investment is important. She is ready to start talking about costs.

Mr. Brown said the previous developer talked about a development amount of \$30 million. They did not give any details on how they got to that number. It is not backed up by any data. It was \$30 million over a ten year period. Daniel and I are working on that.

Chair Vigil Coppler asked why did we not get the presentation you are giving to Council tonight today at the Committee. This is the presentation from last time. The Committee will hear that presentation a month later. That is not okay. Next time we want the new presentation. It is not sacred. It is all public information. She knows it is already prepared. There is no reason to not present it to this Committee. We should see it first so our comments can be presented to the Council if need be.

## **9. PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

## **10. MATTERS FROM STAFF**

Mr. Brown said he would like to give a couple of updates.

Ms. Krish reported that she had created the City of Santa Fe Economic Development Facebook page. Primarily it is for small businesses. It is informational.

Ms. Krish shared the page for viewing and stated that LEDA recovery grants will be the first posting.

Mr. Moody reported that he is working on the Resolution for the Las Estrellas property for introduction by the Chair. A month and a half ago the Council passed a Resolution that the land sale of Santa Fe Estates could come before a public hearing. Santa Fe Estates is two hundred acres. He is developing a Resolution for that and it will come to this Committee in July. Staff is working on the Warehouse 21 building and

the former Boys and Girls Club for July as well. Those will also start with this Committee.

Ms. Camacho reported that the ecosystem website will be on line soon. We are also working on a resource site with LANL that will include where the resources are, workforce resources and funding. Film and Digital media are included.

Mr. Brown reported that the Feds passed the American Rescue Act. We are waiting for the guidelines on funding. We will pursue this and will bring it to the Committee in June. The City will get \$15 million. It will come in two tranches, half now and half at the end of next year. There are three categories. Cities who have suffered deficits in their budgets, communities who have suffered during COVID with utility payments or rent for community members and businesses who were not able to get funds from former COVID funds.

The next Federal program the President is working on is the Jobs and Infrastructure Plan. That, if signed, focuses on the future. We are hoping to see it signed by January. The City will receive funds from that directly if signed.

Mr. Brown said he will be a Judge at the Business Accelerator Pitch Contest this Saturday. We are a sponsor. Fifteen businesses are to be pitched. He will send the Committee a link if you want to attend virtually. It will be at 10:00 am.

Last month the business licensing process was brought up. We are working with IT on the Chrome issue. They are working on a portal to be able to walk applicants through the process if they are not a Chrome user. The level of renewals has dropped off since last month.

Ms. Krish is working on an RFP on Workforce Development. It will include new entities that are now doing workforce training and workforce development along with the ones we have worked with in the past.

Mr. Lurcott commented that the rental assistance funds process has been pretty clumsy. Housing is a primary concern. He hopes we are going to use a good batch of that money to keep people housed.

## **11. MATTERS FROM THE COMMITTEE**

None.

## **12. MATTERS FROM THE CHAIR**

None.

**13. NEXT MEETING  
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 9, 2021**

**14. ADJOURN**

There being no further business before the Committee the meeting adjourned at 1:00 pm.

---

Councilor Vigil Coppler, Chair

---

Elizabeth Martin, Stenographer