



ROCKVILLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, INC.
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
July 14, 2020, 5:00 p.m.
VIA Zoom Meeting

Committee Attendees: Susan Prince, Bridget Donnell Newton, Morgan Sullivan, Nancy Regelin, Jennifer Hester

Staff: Cindy Stewart, Morgan Wortham

Not Present: Scot Browning

1. Call to Order – Susan Prince

The new Committee Members and Morgan Wortham, the new MWBC Managing Director were introduced and welcomed.

2. Updates

- Grants
 - Final reports were filed with the City of Bowie.
 - All requirements for Prince George's County have been filed.
 - The SBA third quarter report is due at the end of July for the period through June 30. Morgan Wortham is working with staff and Carma to meet the deadlines. She will soon turn to preparing budget modification requests for the Core FY2020 SBA grant.
 - Morgan is also planning to either herself or with SHS work to spread out the various grants over a month by month report so that we can more easily see when we are varying from the grants and need to make adjustment requests. It is expected by the SBA that adjustments will be needed for the FY2020 grant as well as the COVID grant.
 - Application for the FY2021 SBA Core Grant is likely to be in August.
- Financials
 - Stephanie is on track with meeting the deadline for providing materials to the SBA auditor in August for FY2019. We are expecting they will interact with us remotely in September. The audit results will be similar to those of FY2019, as we fixed accounting methods starting with FY2020, which the SBA approved. We will make those notations to audit findings.
 - The end of year accounting is being completed by Stephanie to close out FY2020, and then start Snyder Cohen for their audit. We are trying to move up completion of the audit to be done by end of November or early December so it can be transmitted to the SBA by the end of December.

- The draft for Finance Policies and Procedures is almost complete. Morgan Wortham and Carma will look at the MWBC provisions. **Cindy will circulate the latest draft so that the new Committee Members can review them as well.** It is hoped that the Finance Committee can review a final document for adoption at the September 8th meeting.
- Recruitments
 - Morgan Wortham is prioritizing moving forward with recruitment of a full-time permanent Training, Marketing and Outreach Manager. Since Kate has cut her hours so drastically, this is a critical role to fill quickly.
 - In addition, Morgan's goal is to get at least one temporary Associate Business Counselor on board to help Martha with her workload. There will be several temporary Associate Business Counselor positions, and Martha is continuing to take the lead in the recruitment with Morgan's support.
- Memorandum of Understanding between REDI and the City of Rockville
 - The REDI MOU will be discussed with Mayor and Council at the Council's October 5th meeting. The meeting will be devoted to Town Center and the REDI MOU. Cindy will also present the Annual Report for FY2020. This will be a good opportunity to talk about the Board's strategic plan and direction in order to coordinate with the Council's vision.
 - **The Committee, Chair and CEO will work to put together talking points in preparation for the meeting.**
 - The last mark up for requested changes to the MOU that was approved by the Board of Directors in Spring 2019 was distributed for review by the Committee, and **Cindy asked members to provide any comments they may have.**
- Economic Development
 - GKA is continuing to move forward with both the REDI and MWBC rebranding and website projects. The quality of their work is great. We are still on target for launch of the REDI site in August and MWBC in September.
 - The next Workforce/Education planning meeting is July 29.
 - The Incentive Review Committee met recently for 2 applicants, Recon and Artists & Makers. Susan noted that Ryan was supposed to get back to the Committee with some information on both before making the awards. Cindy will coordinate this with Ryan.

3. Discussion of Vision/Ideas for the Executive Committee Term

Susan asked the Committee to provide ideas on what they hoped to see REDI accomplish and how we could continue to enhance the business base of Rockville.

- **Connections and Outreach**
 - Strategic thoughts
 - Nancy mentioned that she felt that REDI needs to have more impact by making sure more people know about REDI and MWBC. Her mantra is that innovation begets innovation.
 - Jennifer also said she things there is currently great potential for Rockville. She feels that we have a very segmented community, and

that it is necessary to bring the segments together in order to see the development we desire.

- It is important for REDI to make meaningful connections with businesses, stakeholders and leaders who are outside of our current inner circle. We need to draw in more people and engage them.
- Nancy noted that she is excited about GKA's work, as we have not been getting the message about REDI and MWBC out – and we have not been engaging the younger generation enough.
- It has been an expressly articulated goal of the City and REDI to engage with millennials and bring younger professionals to Rockville. The City recently hired a consultant who reported to Mayor & Council regarding this issue.

○ Potential Actions/Tactics

- Jennifer suggested that the Board share with each other the other associations and boards they participate with so that we can leverage our networks. Cindy mentioned that she needs to put together a board packet that would ask these kinds of questions and include a conflicts policy etc. Cindy confirmed that the July 2020 Board contact list was updated.
- Jennifer suggested that the Committee consider creating a Junior Board, so that the Board of Directors could give projects to younger people and let them have a voice in our work. This would also give us a way to tie into the school system more.
- Cindy mentioned that she and Ryan are working with City Staff to develop a business survey. This will allow REDI to touch as many businesses as possible and will also help develop our database of businesses. It will also provide a baseline of information so we can start to see trends over time.
- It was mentioned that we could get more Board engagement during meetings if assignments were given that they needed to come prepared for.

● **Branding/Creating a Sense of Place in Rockville**

○ Strategic Thoughts

- Creating a sense of identity for Rockville was a central theme for the Committee.
- Everyone felt that the arts and creative industries are a platform for bringing diverse community segments together. This is a way to unite people with a vision. There are areas of the City that are diverse and need to be brought together within a whole picture such as Town Center, Lincoln Park, Stone Street, East Rockville, the Gude/Taft area, upper Rock, Research Parkway, the Golf Course, etc.
- The Committee focused on Creativity and Innovation as guiding principles
- Bridget mentioned the work the Mayor & Council have been doing in visioning for Stone Street and with the idea of a land bridge instead of the current metro overhead bridge.
- It is important to acknowledge Rockville's history and use it to highlight the brand and sense of place for Rockville.

- The City Mayor & Council have expressly explored the creative industries in Rockville, and recently had a consultant prepare a report to this effect.
 - Cindy mentioned the Literary Festival that brings national participation, and Nancy noted that Rockville already has many of the attributes that are desired, much of it is about getting the word out.
 - Morgan Wortham suggested that we consider elevating the work we already do with the MWBC to identify Rockville as a HUB for entrepreneurship. Bridget also cited the Rockville Innovation Center as an asset we already have.
- Potential Actions/Tactics
- Craft Beverage/Hip District –Cindy and Ryan are working with David Levy and Manisha Tewari on identifying boundaries for a district that can be branded and promoted. This includes breweries, distilleries, artist studios, a tattoo parlor, and thrift shop. They are looking at having GKA help with branding. Susan agreed that having GKA assist would position us well.
 - Consider making Rockville an Arts and Entertainment District
 - The redesign of the Rockville Metro and bridge (if the land bridge is not pursued) need to incorporate public art and is an opportunity to create a sense of place.
 - Jennifer noted that it is important to honor the history of the traditionally black neighborhood on the east side of the Rockville Metro station, which has experienced a great deal of change over the decades. Bridget agreed and said it is a possible vision to transform Lincoln High School, currently owned by the county and in unsafe condition, to an African American History museum. The Committee loved that idea and felt that this gave a lot of opportunity to cultivate the surrounding area with creative and innovative uses.
 - Find ways to highlight and amplify our work supporting entrepreneurs. Identify Rockville as a HUB and catalyst for developing innovation and entrepreneurs (see also ideas for MWBC below).
 - Develop the MWBC Advisory Board and Board of Directors to add additional viewpoints and skill sets that are not already at the table.

MWBC Luncheon

The Committee acknowledged that the signature annual fall MWBC luncheon will not be able to take place in person because of COVID-19 this October. However, it is important to acknowledge the accomplishments of local entrepreneurs, clients and funders. It is critical to bring on a Training, Marketing and Outreach Manager to help with all of the planning.

Ideas alternatives include:

- Highlight the 10-year anniversary of the MWBC
- Produce a video acknowledging accomplishments and funders
- Have a virtual pitch contest that focuses on how companies pivoted for COVID and came up with creative solutions. Highlighting innovation was strongly supported. Morgan Wortham suggested contacting someone she knows who put together a pitch competition “She’s got a deal” that might be worth looking at.

- Nancy mentioned that we might want to have slightly edgier awards – like who pivoted most for innovation, a newcomer award. We could find ways to tie an award to the Rockville Innovation Center.

4. Board Business

- The Committee agreed to move the Board meetings from the fourth Friday at 8 a.m. to the fourth Tuesday of the month at 8 a.m. Cindy will inform the Board.
- For the July meeting, however, the meeting will be on the 29th (the fifth Wednesday). There will not be an August meeting.
- The Committee will continue to meet the second Tuesday of the month at 4:30. However, for August, because of vacation schedules, the Committee will meet Tuesday, August 4.
- Board Meetings will be scheduled for an hour and a half with a goal to keep it to an hour if possible. It was noted that engagement of board members with interesting topics and presentations is necessary. It was also noted that subcommittees might not need to do oral reports if the agenda indicated status.
- Discussion of committees was tabled until the next meeting.

Next Meeting: August 4, 2020, 4:30 p.m., Via Zoom