



**Board of Directors Meeting
February 24, 2021 8:00 a.m.
VIA Zoom**

Board attendees: Becky Briggs, Rob DiSpirito, Marji Graf, Jennifer Hester, Kimberly Kelley, Bei Ma, Bridget Donnell Newton, Suzanne Osborn, Todd Pearson, Susan Prince, Nancy Regelin, Morgan Sullivan, Bill Tompkins

Absent: Ahmed Ali, Richard Alvarez, Scot Browning, Angela Chaney, Dale Cyr, Carla Merritt

Other attendees: Cindy Rivarde, Morgan Wortham, Sandrine Zoko, Karen Kalantzis, David Levy (City of Rockville), Manish Tewari (City of Rockville), Mark Pierzchala (City Council) Judy Rudolph (resident), Staffan Sandberg (resident), Alan Tan (Renaud Consulting), Margaret Doan (GKA), and Sarah Crisafulli (GKA).

1. Call to Order, Welcome and Remarks – Susan Prince 8:05 am

- a. Ms. Prince introduced Alan Tan from Renaud Consulting who is learning more about the REDI Board and operations. She also introduced Sandrine Zoko for Ultimate Staffing who is filling in for the Administrator Coordinator position.
- b. Morgan Sullivan offered to present a market overview at a future meeting, and Board Members were eager to hear his presentation. Ms. Rivarde will schedule.

2. Operational Items

- a. Approval of January Minutes – Susan Prince
Kimberly Kelley moved to accept minutes, and Becky Briggs seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.
- b. Treasurer’s Report – Scot Browning was not present. Ms. Rivarde stated that the SBA finally released the remaining \$75,000 from the FY2020 Core funds. Paperwork for the second payment of CARES Act dollars is submitted and should be released soon. There are still delays with the SBA processing, but receipt of the FY2020 funds has relieved the concern about immediate cash flow.
- c. New Board Member – Dan Mallon had an emergency and could not attend. His resume for consideration to be on the Board was circulated at the last meeting. **Becky Briggs moved to accept Dan Mallon as a Board Member and Kimberly Kelley seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.** Mr. Mallon will next file his expression of interest with the City Clerk to get his candidacy on the Mayor and Council agenda.
- d. Review of 15 Official Opinions of the Compliance Board 24 (2021) – Susan Prince read the following summary:

SUMMARY OF THE DECISION OF THE OPEN MEETINGS COMPLIANCE BOARD

PRESENTED BY BOARD CHAIR SUSAN E. PRINCE

REGARDING 15 *OFFICIAL OPINIONS OF THE COMPLIANCE BOARD 24* (2021)

ROCKVILLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, INC. (“REDI”)

On January 28, 2021, the Open Meetings Compliance Board (“OMCB”), in response to a complaint, issued the foregoing opinion, that is summarized as follows:

1. OMCB determined that REDI is a public body and subject to the Open Meetings Act (“Act”).
2. OMCB found a violation of § 3-302 of the Act. The complaint alleged failure to post meeting notices. REDI posts the general schedule of its Board meetings on the website, and notice of committee meetings in past agendas/minutes. Reasonable advance notice of meetings, including the date, time, and place of the meeting, is required under § 3-302 of the Act. A standing notice, such as that posted by REDI on its’ website for Board meetings, is ordinarily sufficient, provided that the public is notified of departures from the regular schedule. OMCB found that the Board had departed from its regular schedule or did not hold a meeting, but REDI did not show that the public was always notified of those changes. They also found no evidence that the public was notified that upcoming committee meetings would be listed under the link to “past agendas”. In any event, notices of Board and committee meetings should be located in the same place for easy access and should be updated. As a result, they found a violation of the Act.
3. OMCB found that, although it is good practice, the posting of agendas online is not required, and so REDI did not violate the Act in this respect.
4. OMCB found that REDI has been posting its agendas and minutes online since at least July, 2020, and so has addressed any issue in this respect and is not violating the Act.

A majority of Board Members are required to sign the opinion. Board Members are requested to sign the last page and send it to Cindy Rivarde to compile for presentation to the Compliance Board. Board training on the requirements for Public Entities will be presented at the April 28th meeting.

3. CEO Report

a. Annual Accomplishments of CEO

Ms. Rivarde presented her annual accomplishments to the Board for the period of December 3, 2019 through December 3, 2020. It was Ms. Rivarde’s second year

with REDI challenged with needing to respond to the pandemic, transitioning the Managing Director role for MWBC, hiring new staff with COVID funds while continuing to move strategic goals forward and correcting significant financial management issues, ultimately resulting in a smooth audit with Snyder Cohn accepted by the Board in October. Details include:

COVID relief

- Moved operations online – including counselling and workshops.
- Facebook live presentation with Ben Cardin and Antonio Doss to address federal relief programs
- Partner with Chamber, City and MCEDC on workshops for businesses and providing continuous timely information and addressing business needs.
- Served on County Task forces to address needs of the Live Sciences and Technology sectors and Workforce Task Force
- Developed an outreach campaign for greater reach for MWBC for COVID support including blogs, emails, and online trainings.
- Obtained additional funding for COVID support from Montgomery County for developing trainings in English and Spanish for the Childcare providers (which is being leveraged by the State to grow our program).

Board Engagement

- Facilitated Board Retreat with Dale Cyr to obtain common language and approach to mission, vision and values using Richard Rumelt's *Good Strategy Bad Strategy*.
- Helped bring on new Board Members: Bei Ma of the Pinea Group and Suzanne Osborn of Westat.
- Created new Marketing and Workforce/Education Committees.
- Added review of MOVE/Expansion Grant to Incentive Review Committee duties.
- Worked with new Board Chair and Executive Committee on creating priority action items.

Marketing

- Selected GKA after an RFP process to retool the mission, vision and values for REDI and MWBC and to redesign both websites. Also created new logos and brand guidelines for each.
- Created idea to brand the E. Gude area as a craft beverage area, hired GKA to develop a concept with a working group.
- Increased digital ads and external articles posted sharing news about Rockville's industry sectors and posted over 201 items on COVID resources.

Business Attraction/Retention/Expansion – and Incentive programs:

- 4 new Headquarters
- Aurinia Pharma – up to 500 jobs 120,000 sf
- Autonomous Therapeutics
- On Demand Therapeutics
- Integrated Pharma

Community Support and shoring up Town Center businesses

- Total Recon
 - Cottage Monet
 - Dawsons
 - Peerless Rockville
 - Pour Vino N Hops
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- Grew the retail incubator in Town Square that we created last year in partnership with the City and FRIT, and graduated several MWBC clients, which was features at our 10th year MWBC virtual celebration.

Talent Alignment - Workforce/Education

- Developed a series of roundtable discussions designed to engage educational leaders at USG, Montgomery College and the Public School System with Business Leaders (particularly those who hire), and Government Agencies providing workforce programs and funding. We have had three workshops so far that have continued to grow each time with engagement and number of people participating.
- Developed the idea for a dynamic data portal between educational institutions talent output and business hiring needs and have engaged leaders at Montgomery College, the Tech Counsel, Bowie State, the Montgomery County Chamber, MCEDC, the Department of Commerce, and USG about the need for an objective, continuing mechanism to address our local talent alignment needs.
- Supported USGA Tournament at Woodmont – with national coverage on TV (even though no crowds due to the pandemic).

Work with the City of Rockville

- Negotiated a new MOU with the City that will run through FY2024.
- Participated in drafting the King Farm Farmstead RFI and served on a task force to discuss approach for an RFP for redevelopment.
- Participated in and provided input to the Rockville Metro Station working group with WMATA, City and County staff.
- Worked with city staff to present information to the ULI TAP group to assess options for Town Center, many of which are being considered by Mayor and Council for adoption.

Financial and Operational Stability

- Successfully brought SBA FY2016 audit to conclusion working with SHS Services to rebuild our Quickbooks structure and obtained a downgrade of High-Risk Status which allowed us to apply for CARES Act dollars.
- Completed Finance Policies and Procedures, which were adopted by the Finance Committee.
- Brought on Carma Fauntleroy as Interim Managing Director for MWBC (with SBA approval) and successfully obtained the CARES Act funding of \$420,000 as well as a \$20,000 research grant with the Greater Washington Community Foundation.
- Hired and onboarded a new MWBC Managing Director and several new staff.
- Moved website hosting to VPSG, obtained firewall for phones and computer systems, implemented cyber security software, moved filing to Files on the Go in the cloud so that everyone can work remotely well and have access, purchased new laptops for all staff.
- Negotiated a new phone system agreement that allows for more functionality.
- Hired
 - Andrea Dunethan to assist with budgeting and grant management
 - Calvin Brockington, a retired Federal auditor to assist with our SBA relationship.
 - SHS develop a system for tracking expenses compared to the various grant budgets on a monthly basis and a timekeeping module.
- Revised and updated the Employee Handbook.

b. Economic Development

1. Deputy Director Recruitment- Art Davis from Bakertilly has presented 20 candidates for the position. This is being reduced to a semi-finalist list, and it is anticipated that the Ad Hoc Hiring Committee will interview candidates in early March.
2. Administrative Coordinator – Sandrine Zoko has been hired as a temp through Ultimate Staffing to fill the Administrative Coordinator position. She was welcomed.
3. March 15 will be a Mayor and Council meeting to discuss branding options, and the Board is encouraged to attend.

c. MWBC

1. New Website – the website launched February 11th, and Board Members are encouraged to visit the site. GKA was thanked for their excellent work.
2. Staffing – Ms. Wortham reported that Bryan Thomas joined as a part time Senior Business Trainer. Mr. Thomas has a finance background and is instrumental in repositioning the We Grow program to help businesses with financial resiliency and sustainability. His support of training

development compliments the outreach and promotion of training programs being done by Thomas Squire.

3.

4. Presentations

- a. GKA – E. Gude District – Margaret Doan and Sarah Crisafulli from GKA presented the vision and ideas for branding the E. Gude District. They provided an overview of the engagement process with stakeholders that has been in depth, and the recommendation of the working group and Executive Committee to name the area Rockville East District, Rock East for short, and with an abbreviation of R.E.D. The name has longevity by being general enough that various businesses can be represented there and is also attractive to younger workers. This allows us to highlight the fun breweries, bites, and other businesses in the area; the craftsman enterprises; and access to trails. Redgate Park is also in the district and will be a key component for attraction as it is redeveloped. It was noted that there is a County effort to brand Silver Spring as a walkable urban brewery district, and that RockEast can tie into their brand and marketing along with Visit Montgomery’s Tastemaker Trail campaign. The Board congratulated GKA for its presentation and was very excited to move forward with the concept. GKA will next create a logo, microsite, and banner design. This concept can plug into an overall Rockville commercial district structure (similar to Orlando’s), and other areas can also highlight their unique identities. This approach will be discussed at the Mayor and Council meeting on March 15th. It was noted that a budget to continue implementation needs to be developed. Morgan Sullivan was very supportive of the concept and suggested connecting with some local property owners and businesses so that they can use this effort in their marketing for tenants and workforce. He mentioned that housing developer EYA might be interested, and that having residential offerings in this area would make the district stronger.

5. Strategic Items

- a. Workforce Education Committee – The next roundtable will be on March 10, Noon-2 p.m. to discuss the COVID-19 vaccine and return to the workplace. Attorney Michael Gottlieb will moderate and be joined by panelists Dr. Sliman, Chief Medical Officer for EMMES; Arlene Pietranton, CEO of the American Speech Language Hearing Association; and employment attorney Lynn Perry Parker.

6. Brief Partner Updates:

- a. City of Rockville - Rob DiSpirito
The City report is in the Board packet. Mr. DiSpirito highlighted some upcoming Mayor & Council meetings:
March 1 – discussion of the FY2022 budget
March 15 – branding and the presentation of the Rockville 2040 draft plan from the Planning Commission to Mayor & Council.
March 22 – budget discussions.

He also noted that the City is working with businesses to extend their permission for outdoor seating, and that the City, Chamber, and REDI are co-hosting a second business forum at 9:00 a.m. on March 29th.

- b. MCEDC – Bill Tompkins
Mr. Tompkins reported that he, Ben Wu, and his board chair Robby Brewer met with Cindy Rivarde and Susan Prince in a productive meeting to discuss priorities and how the organizations can work together. He noted that MCEDC priorities where REDI plugs in well include attraction efforts, taking Rockville Town Center to the next level; and working with MWBC. He said he will have updates at the next meeting for anticipated County Council actions.

- c. Maryland Department of Commerce – Carla Merritt
Ms. Merritt was not present.

- d. Rockville Chamber of Commerce – Marji Graf
Ms. Graf was not present for this portion of the agenda.

Upcoming Important Dates:

Mayor & Council (budget)	Monday March 1 and 22 7:00 p.m.
Executive Committee Meeting	Tuesday, March 9, 4:30 p.m.
Finance Committee Meeting	Tuesday, March 9, 5:30 p.m.
Education/Workforce Roundtable	Wednesday, March 10, 12-2
Mayor & Council (branding)	Monday, March 15, 7 p.m.
Board Working Session	Saturday, March 20, 8 a.m.
City, Chamber, REDI Business Forum	Monday, March 29, 9 a.m.
REDI Board Meeting (and Board Training)	Wednesday, April 28, 8 a.m.