



**ROCKVILLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, INC.
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

June 13, 2023, 4:30 p.m.

Hybrid Meeting – REDI office and Webex

Committee Attendees: Susan Prince, Bridget Donnell Newton, Nancy Regelin

Absent: Todd Pearson, Bei Ma

Staff: Cindy Rivarde, Danette Nguyen, Richelle Wilson

1. CEO

a. Visit Montgomery MOU

Ms. Rivarde noted that a new 2-year MOU has been negotiated with Visit Montgomery that is in the Committee packet. The terms were vetted with the Marketing Committee. Ms. Rivarde stated that the funding for tourism was in the funding request to the City and was granted by Mayor & Council. The Committee agreed that the MOU should go to the full board for approval.

b. Update on Grants

- i. Grow Grant – REDI received \$20,000 for employing Montgomery County residents.
- ii. Placed Based Grant – Ms. Wilson’s grant application to continue to build out the Rock East Commercial District was granted by the County in the amount of \$100,000. She is working with County staff to put together the grant agreement and reporting requirements. REDI plans to hire Recast City as a consultant to assist with the continued work.
- iii. MWBC has a lot of grants in the hopper. Decisions with regard to two of the large grants will be made in July (yield giving and small minority business). The County of Frederick has agreed to fund \$15,000 for the first half of the fiscal year, while they put together an RFP for small business services that is expected to be issued in late December/early January. The City of Frederick is processing \$15,000 for FY23.

c. Restaurant Week Campaign

Ms. Wilson reported that the Global Bites pilot campaign was successful with a great kick off at Hometown Holidays. The goals for number of participating restaurants was met, and all the available passports were downloaded. There has been an uptick in social media posts about Rockville dining from influencers and others. Staff is still gathering receipts and closing out the program. The Committee requested that the successful results of the program be written up in a report. It was noted that this pilot has assisted in understanding the technology opportunities that can be used when REDI takes over administration of the Rockville Rewards program. It was suggested that REDI continue to work with Visit Montgomery to leverage the restaurant week and international dining branding efforts.

d. International Bio Show

Ms. Rivarde and Ms. Wilson attended the Bio show in Boston. There were over 18,000 attendees and many interesting connections made. The Secretary of Commerce for Maryland was there and learned more about REDI. Also meeting with the Massachusetts Innovation staff was productive as they agreed there is an opportunity to collaborate with regard to the many businesses that want a presence in both of our markets. Ms. Wilson and Ms. Rivarde will be following up with a number of connections made. This was capped off nicely upon return for the

spin off company for American Gene Technologies on Friday night, which the Secretary of Commerce also attended. Ms. Ma did not attend, as she is in China attending to a family matter.

e. IntHERact programming

Ms. Nguyen reported that staff has developed programming (and branding) for IntHERact: Immersive Networking by the Maryland Women's Business Center. The series provides entrepreneurs exclusive access to insider knowledge from success small businesses with a unique blend of fun immersive activities and structured workshops. The networking events will cost between \$75-100 to attend and occur on the 4th Thursday of each month beginning in August. In addition to an attendance fee, we will have sponsorship opportunities with tiered pricing at \$250, \$500, or \$1,000. At each IntHERact event, attendees will have the opportunity to hear directly from a different featured business as they take the stage to share their company's journey, backstory, and expertise in a specific area. Following the presentation, attendees will participate in hands-on activities that align with the expertise of the featured business from interactive floral arrangement workshops to food tastings and rejuvenating yoga sessions that help you find balance in an entrepreneurial endeavors.

f. Pilot microgrant program for City of Frederick creative businesses

Ms. Rivarde reported that Karen Kalantzis graduated from Leadership Frederick and developed a final project to create a micro loan/grant program. Staff decided it would be a great pilot to use \$10,000 of carry over funding for a pilot program to provide marketing support for businesses in the City of Frederick that are in the creative industry sector. City of Frederick economic development staff are also interested in partnering on this project. The funding for this is included in the proposed budget.

g. Red Gate Idea

Ms. Rivarde noted that Stephany Wu and her team put together the Red Gate presentation that was in the Committee packet. They have proposed that the City work with various embassies to allow construction of gates that represent the various countries in an area of the park. This would celebrate diversity, encourage community gatherings, and act as an attraction or tourism. It is hoped that discussion of this idea can be brought into the upcoming development of the park being undertaken by the parks department.

2. Board Business

a. Draft Strategic Initiatives and Work Plan

The Committee reviewed the draft and provided input. It was noted that the "Diagnosis of the Problem" sections needed to be stated more strongly as problems to solve. Ms. Prince will assist with/review these revisions so that the draft can go to the full board the following week.

b. Board Terms for Class 2 Members

The Committee reviewed the board members in Class 2. It was noted that the Board needs to vote for extension of terms, and then submit the recommendations to the city. It was noted that the Nominating Committee is meeting with a potential new board member recommended by Dan Mallon, and that Kelly Groff from Visit Montgomery has expressed willingness to join the Board. The Committee agreed that the Nominating Committee should meet prior to making recommendations to the full board – so this item will be targeted for the July meeting.

c. Agenda for the June meeting

The Committee agreed to move the strategic plan draft to the Board in June, and upon input from Mr. Pearson the FY24 draft budget. Board terms will be slated for the July meeting. The July meeting will be considered the annual meeting in compliance with the By-Laws.

3. Other Business – It was noted that the COVID policies should be reviewed to see if they should be modified or rescinded. REDI should be in alignment with the City policies.

Next Meeting July 11, 2022, 4:30 p.m., Hybrid/Zoom.