



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

September 12, 2023, 4:30 p.m.
Hybrid Meeting – REDI office and Zoom

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

Absent: Todd Pearson

Staff: Cindy Rivarde, Richelle Wilson, Danette Nguyen

1. CEO

a. Economic Development

- i. Life Science Branding - Ms. Wilson provided an update on the Life Science Branding project that is finishing up the final two focus groups. Medium Giant will be scheduling their in-person immersion tour in the next month. The Committee discussed that it would be beneficial for them to see some actual business operations rather than just driving around the City (which they have already done).
- ii. Research Bio Pilot and Rise Zone – Ms. Rivarde informed the Committee that REDI staff has been working with CPDS and Jim Soltesz to find ways to grow and support life science/bio science businesses in Rockville. The zoning code update will be a great tool for this. In addition, Mr. Soltesz suggested that planning look at the area around Research Boulevard as a pilot. A meeting of property owners was held to explore the idea, and in the meantime, Gentzler provided a great plan pro bono. There is not a next step right now for planning to take, as there is not an immediate development need. In the meantime, Ms. Rivarde and Ms. Wilson met with the Maryland Economic Development Corporation (MEDCO), who suggested a state designated Rise Zone might be helpful as it provides the ability to create financing incentives like tax increment financing. Katie Gerbes in planning has worked on the College Park Rise Zone, so she will assist in exploration. A Rise Zone requires a close affiliation with an institution of higher learning, so Ms. Rivarde has a meeting with Anne Khademian at USG to discuss.
- iii. Rock East – Ms. Wilson noted that the project has commenced and Recast Cities will kick off October 3rd. Recast will engage with the businesses to develop contacts and lists, as well as develop a plan for supporting small-scale manufacturing. The County Executive and his staff also toured the area, visiting Mas Panadas, Mayorga, and the ProMark site. Ms. Rivarde noted that ProMark may be interested in allowing a mural on the new storage facility they are constructing.

b. MWBC

- i. SBA - Donald Smith left the SBA, and they are working on replacing him. His streamlining of the program and support will be missed. Ms. Nguyen outlined the plans for the CORE and BSU programs for FY24. The BSU FY23 grant closed out already, and the CORE final reports are due at the end of October.
- ii. IntHERact – the first IntHERact event was a success. Both Susan Prince and Nancy Regelin were able to attend. Feedback was given that a shorter program would be beneficial so there could be more networking time. The next one will be at a woman owned whiskey facility.
- iii. Howard County – Ms. Nguyen reported that she has had successful meetings to bring MWBC services to Howard County. The new CEO at the Howard County EDA Jennifer

Jones was interested in receiving a proposal for locating a business counselor there. She is also meeting with Ms. Nugyen and Laura Bacon from the Third to work out having a Shop Local location at the Third in Columbia.

- iv. BSU Recruitment – Francisco Cartagena has accepted the Program Manager position and will start October 10th. He comes from USG where he runs their innovation center. His expertise in entrepreneurship, academia, and IT will be very beneficial to meet the SBA requirements for the BSU location. It was also noted that part-time employee Samantha Zarnes has resigned, so a new associate business counselor at the BSU location will need to be hired by Mr. Cartagena after he comes on board.
- v. Frederick Microgrant Pilot – Ms. Nugyen noted that the microgrant program to support creative industry businesses has been developed with Karen Kalantzis and will be launched soon.

2. Board Business

- a. September BOD Agenda – Ms. Rivarde noted that Randy Cohen from Americans for the Arts would speak about the national impact of the arts. Mr. Cohen resides in Takoma Park and is the main research person from Americans for the Arts, which issues a report every 5 years. The October meeting will have the presentation of the Annual Audit by SnyderCohn. Ms. Prince asked if the presentations of staff work at Board Meetings could follow a work plan format, and Ms. Rivarde agreed.
- b. Holiday party dates were discussed. The Committee wanted to ask at the BOD meeting which week was best, and to ensure that there are no conflicts with celebrations of other key organizations. They also want to incorporate a charity component. Ms. Prince noted it was important to connect the business community with charities and highlight volunteer opportunities. Ms. Rivarde mentioned that a connection with the charities involved in Rockville Rewards might be a good opportunity.

3. Other Business

- a. The hardhat tour of Twinbrook Quarter is scheduled for Friday, and another will be on October 4th with the Secretary of Commerce.

4. **Next Meeting** October 10, 2023, 4:30 p.m., Hybrid/Zoom.