



**REDI Board of Directors Meeting**

**MINUTES**

**March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2023, 8:00 am.**

**Hybrid Zoom/In-Person Meeting**

**REDI Office, 51 Monroe Street, PE20, Rockville, MD**

**Board attendees virtual:** Marji Graf, Bei Ma, Nancy Regelin, Michael Scott,

**Board attendees in person:** Richard Alvarez, LaVonne Torrence Berner, Kelly Groff, Susan Prince, Craig Simoneau, Morgan Sullivan, Bill, Tompkins

**Absent Board Members:** Monique Ashton, Nikhil Bijlani, Angela Chaney, Nick Fullenkamp, Alton Henley, Carla Merritt, Suzanne Osborn, Todd Pearson, Justin Yang, Cliff Veirs, Justin Yang

**Other in-person attendees:**

Staff: Cindy Rivarde, Yesenia Cruz, Amanda Bosland

Visitors: Graham Sessoms (JLL/Speaker), Danny Rehr (member of the public)

**Other Virtual attendees:**

Staff: Richelle Wilson, Rhonda Devan

Visitors: Manisha Tewari, Abe Bruckman (both City of Rockville), Sharon Disque (City of Gaithersburg), Judy Costello (Montgomery County)

**Meeting Called to Order by:** Susan Prince

1. Call to Order, Welcome and Remarks.....Susan Prince

Susan Prince called the meeting to order at 8:00 am

a. Ben Anstrom resignation

Ms. Prince informed everyone of Ben Anstrom's resignation from the Board of Directors due to work obligations. Ms. Prince encouraged Board members to reach out should they have any questions or recommendations for new members.

2. Operational Items

a. **Action: Approval of Minutes (February)**.....Susan Prince

**ACTION: Morgan Sullivan made a motion to approve the February minutes. The motion was seconded by LaVonne Torrence Berner and passed unanimously.**

b. Treasurer's Report.....Rhonda Devan

i. Review of Financials through February

Ms. Devan presented the financial review through the month of February. Total cash funds are approximately \$1.8 million; this includes about \$1.4 million in unrestricted funds and \$264,000 in reserve funds. Restricted funds are about \$200,000. Average monthly expenses are approximately \$182,000. The available cash flow provides about 10 months of expense coverage. Ms. Devan noted that the for IRS functional areas, program costs are at about 84%, which is fairly consistent with prior years. In terms of revenue tracking, we are at 86% of the budget to date. Ms. Devan also pointed out that expenses are consistent with the budget.

3. CEO Report.....Cindy Rivarde/Richelle Wilson/Danette Nguyen/Amanda Bosland

Ms. Rivarde informed the Board staff will provide a monthly update in writing in order to reduce the length of meeting discussion.

a. Economic Development

i. Business Retention, Expansion, Attraction/Placemaking

1. Life Science Branding Project

Ms. Rivarde briefly mentioned Medium Giant is in the middle of the naming phase. They will begin testing with focus groups which include real estate brokers and venture capitalists.

2. Business Visits/Openings: No updates.

3. Rock East Small Manufacturing Initiative

The final report was recently received on the opportunity of how we can position our light industrial area. On April 18<sup>th</sup> at the Rev Room, Ilana Preuss will talk about her findings to the public. (See staff report).

4. Bio Event – March 20 was successful focusing on venture capital.

- ii. Marketing
  - 1. Explore Rockville/Rockville Rewards/Global Bites (See staff report)
- iii. Small Business Support/MWBC
  - 1. EmpowHer
  - 2. Shop Local

Ms. Nguyen was on vacation, please see staff report for updates.

4. Presentations

State of the Market .....Morgan Sullivan/Graham Sessoms, JLL

The presentation highlighted ongoing challenges and changes in the commercial real estate sector, emphasizing a broader market correction, especially with the office market. Key topics included difficulties in obtaining commercial financing, the trend of converting commercial properties that are conducive to residential or life science use, as well as the impact of residential rent control policies on developers pursuing multifamily development decisions. Also addressed, was the evolving office demand driven by remote work trends and the importance of flexible work arrangements. Rockville, as in many markets, is seeing a flight to quality, where employers have the opportunity to upgrade to better space for less rent, especially if downsizing. It was noted that for the first time in 25 years, there is no commercial construction in the pipeline. There is a shortage of available flex/light industrial space. Overall, it provided insights into the complex factors shaping the commercial real estate landscape and the need for adaptive strategies in response to market conditions. The presentation prompted a discussion about these topics, for more information, Board members are encouraged to review the presentation shared via email.

5. Strategic Items

- a. Incentive Committee .....LaVonne Torrence Berner  
Ms. Berner informed the Board that the committee is continuing to work on reviewing the applications received. The next deadline is April 30.
- b. Marketing Committee .....Bei Ma  
Ms. Ma mentioned the possibility of some website updates.
- c. MWBC Advisory Board .....Nancy Regelin  
No further updates.
- d. Bio Committee .....Justin Yang  
Mr. Yang was not present to provide an update, but see the staff report for details on the first Bio Boost event.

6. Brief Partner Updates:

- a. Greater Rockville Chamber of Commerce .....Marji Graf  
Ms. Graf informed the Board that House Bill 1515 regarding sales and use tax did not pass. Ms. Graf told the Board about a few of the upcoming events which include: the Marketing Roundtable taking place at the Seneca Community Room

from 5 pm-7 pm, Access to Capital Panel on April 29<sup>th</sup>, and the 35<sup>th</sup> Annual Rockville Public Safety Awards on June 5<sup>th</sup>.

- b. City of Rockville.....Mayor Ashton/Craig Simoneau

Mr. Simoneau communicated that Mayor and Council are still in the budget season, informing the Board that the last budget public hearing will take place on April 8<sup>th</sup>, with the comment period ending on April 12<sup>th</sup>. On May 6<sup>th</sup>, Mayor and Council will discuss the Rockville Metro Station. Mr. Simoneau shared the good news that Rockville was awarded \$568,000 through the Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods Grant Program from the U.S. Department of Transportation for the pedestrian bridge at the Twinbrook metro station. The City also obtained funding for emergency operations and police radios. Board members were referred to the City report for full updates.

- c. Montgomery County EDC.....Bill Tompkins

Mr. Tompkins mentioned that the Montgomery County Council (ECON committee) received an office market update from MCEDC a couple of weeks ago . He mentioned that it is also budget season for the County. With the unfortunate bridge collapse, there is a focus at all levels of government to focus on providing aid.

- d. Maryland Department of Commerce .....Carla Merritt  
Ms. Merritt was not present to provide an update.

**Nancy Regelin adjourned the meeting at 9:17 a.m.**

**Upcoming Important Dates:**

**Executive Committee Meeting**.....April 9, 4:30 p.m.

**Finance Committee Meeting**.....April 9, 5:30 p.m.

**Rock East Report** .....April 18, 6:00 p.m. The Rev Room

**Board Retreat**.....April 27, 8:00 a.m. Schulman Rogers

**Board Meeting**.....May 24, 8:00 a.m.