



ROCKVILLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, INC.
INCENTIVE REVIEW COMMITTEE
Open Meeting Minutes
January 24, 2025, 12:30 p.m.
Hybrid

Committee Attendees: LaVonne Torrence Berner, Laurie Boyer Babb, Susan Prince, Rich Vicente, Muhammad Kehnemouyi

Absent None

Staff: Richelle Wilson, Martha Jimenez

I. Operational Items

a. Operational Items:

- i. **ACTION: Ms. Babb motioned to approve the 12/13/24 minutes, which Mr. Vicente seconded. The committee unanimously passed the vote.**

II. Updates on prior grant applicants

- a. **Lady Vinter** – Ms. Wilson reported that Lady Vinter is still working on the completion of their buildout for their new lease at 42 Maryland Avenue, Rockville, MD 20850. The MOVE application was reviewed and approved by the Incentive Review Committee for an award of \$5,500. The final disbursement of the grant funds is contingent upon the completion of the buildout and the issuance of a certificate of occupancy by the City of Rockville Planning Department. Ms. Wilson will conduct bi-weekly check-ins with the grantee to monitor progress and provide any necessary assistance.
- b. **Aloha Poke** – Ms. Wilson reported that Aloha Poke, an approved MOVE applicant, has been unable to commence operations. The buildout was halted due to a serious illness of one of the principal owners. Mrs. Barneby, representing the ownership, communicated that the property landlord, Sterling Organization, has agreed to allow them to seek a new business to assume the existing lease. Ms. Wilson will check in with Mrs. Barneby to offer assistance in finding a suitable business to take over the lease agreement and to report back on any developments.

III. Discussion on Changes to the MOVE program

- a. Ms. Wilson reported to the Incentive Committee on recent changes to the County's MOVE program. To align REDI's program with the County's updated guidelines and to support the strategic focus on small-scale manufacturing, she presented a proposal to amend the current property class requirements. The current policy accepts only Class A and B properties. The proposal is to expand eligibility to include Class C properties. It was noted that these properties are primarily occupied by small-scale manufacturing businesses, which represent an emerging target industry for REDI. Ms. Babb spoke in favor of the amendment, stating that

adding Class C properties is essential for supporting REDI's efforts in retaining, expanding, and attracting small-scale manufacturing firms.

- i. **ACTION: Ms. Torrence-Berner motioned to include Class C as an eligible commercial property option for both the MOVE and Expansion grant programs. The committee unanimously passed the vote.**

IV. Rubric Modifications

- a. Ms. Wilson presented the current Small Business Impact Fund Rubric to the committee for review. The purpose of the discussion was to consider amendments to improve the efficiency and clarity of the applicant evaluation process. The committee directed staff to add a new question addressing the scalability of the applicant's business model, review and edit the application to reduce its overall length where possible and ensure the evaluation rubric is aligned with the questions presented in the application.
 - i. **ACTION: Ms. Wilson will present an update at the next meeting concerning updates to the rubric and application.**

- V. Meeting adjourned at 1:33 pm

Next Meeting -TBA