

Council Economic Development Committee

**2nd Floor Conference Room
City Hall**

February 22, 2018

1:30 p.m.

Members:

Councilmember Coffey
Councilmember White

Staff:

Ana Cortez, Assistant City Manager
Sean Hawkins, Economic Development
Manager
Rob Peterson, Airport Director
Cally Price, Assistant to the City Manager

Others:

John Baule
Roger Wentz
Maria Rodriguez
Luz Gutiérrez
Jonathan Smith
Daniel Flores

Executive Minutes

Coffey called the meeting to order.

1. Board Appointed Reports/Discussion Items:

There was discussion about the frequency of Board appointed reports/discussions. Coffey motioned that quarterly updates would be sufficient and White seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Council members will report on their committee or committees in January, April, July, and October.

- a. Yakima County Development Association – White
- b. Greater Yakima Chamber of Commerce – White
- c. Lodging Tax Advisory Committee – Coffey
- d. Public Facilities District – Coffey
- e. Supporting Investments in Economic Development Board (SIED) – Coffey
- f. Yakima Valley Tourism - Coffey
- g. Plaza Ad Hoc Committee – Coffey/White

2. Minute Approval

It was Committee consensus to accept the minutes as presented.

3. Discussions

- a. Update on partnerships with YVC, Entrust, 100 Jobs and other work force development programs
No report.
- b. 2017-2020 Economic Development Report
 - i. Progress update from Center for Business Development

Rodriguez introduced Daniel Flores, owner of Xochimilco Restaurants and a couple margarita/tequila bars in town. The Center for Business Development was able to assist in expanding his business and acknowledged staff for their assistance in increasing his business exposure.

Gutiérrez added that she is working with a tortilla factory owner for the next campaign.

- ii. Progress update from Greater Yakima Chamber of Commerce
No report.

- iii. Progress update from Choose Yakima Valley

Smith reported that nothing new has been happening on the possibility of forming a port district. Kittitas has a ballot measure for establishing a Port District on the ballot for April. Results from that ballot measure will be discussed at the next Economic Development Committee meeting.

Smith is working with staff on developing a central area that describes business incentives for employers looking at relocating or expanding in Yakima.

Smith reported that Choose Yakima Valley has been conducting several workforce development programs and offers some online courses. Gaps in workforce needs have been identified and are being addressed.

Smith continues working on "cluster businesses".

- iv. Progress update from Yakima Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

Gutiérrez reported that she is still researching the possibility of a multi-cultural center in Yakima. A Committee and Board have been formed and they are moving forward.

- v. Progress update from Yakima Valley Tourism

Baule reported that the convention center expansion process has begun. There are some options they are considering but still a lot of work to be done.

- vi. Progress update from Yakima Air Terminal

Peterson reported that he has met with a few companies looking to expand operations at the airport. Because of the SIED funding the airport was able to open up 21st Avenue allowing access to the south side of the airport. There is a national pilot shortage so staff is working with YVCC and CWU and discussing the possibility of them expanding their flight training and programs.

Another challenge is working with Alaska Airlines. FlyYKM campaign was launched thereby increasing the City's load factors 32% and

expanding air service in and out of Yakima. Unfortunately, people flying on Alaska have not had good experiences. A draft copy of a letter to Alaska Airlines was distributed and reviewed. Coffey will make contact with other jurisdictions about signing on the letter and meeting with Alaska representatives.

vii. Progress update from City of Yakima/Economic Development

Hawkins reported that Council stopped the incubator project so that has been eliminated. He continues working on the image campaign with local partners.

Another area of the plan that Hawkins is focused on is sites for business. The current challenge is lack of available sites. He is promoting the mill site property, Tiger Marts and a couple other locations and has some businesses interested in Yakima.

c. Discussion about changes for the 2017-2020 Economic Development Plan – clarity for partners and staff

Cortez discussed the Economic Development Plan history and asked for staff direction. Coffey would like to see the plan keep moving forward. White believes the plan can move forward with some minor changes.

d. MRSC's Introduction to Economic Development and Mississippi State Community Economic Development

Cortez provided some information on how different organizations define economic development.

4. New business

White distributed and reviewed some information on Creative Districts. He will be participating in a conference call on March 8 to learn more.

White would like to have the Bloomberg Philanthropies and possibly Creative District funding opportunities added to the March 20 City Council agenda.

White wants to explore fiber optic conduit for the city. Staff will work with info systems on schematics and provide an update at the May economic development committee meeting.

5. Audience Participation


Kathy Coffey, Chair