



CITY OF MILPITAS

Economic Development and Trade Commission

MEETING MINUTES

4:30 PM

Monday, March 8, 2021

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CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order at 4:32 PM by Chair Norwood.

PLEDGE of ALLEGIANCE

Alternate Commissioner Gomez led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Economic Development Specialist Nicole Inamine called the roll.

PRESENT: Chair Chris Norwood; Vice Chair Casey McNeil; Commissioners Inderjit Mundra, Lynne Rice, Prakash Daryani; Alternate Commissioners Dipak Awasthi and Juliette Gomez; Assistant City Manager Ashwini Kantak; Economic Development Director Alex Andrade, Economic Development Coordinator Daniel Degu, Sr., and Economic Development Specialist Nicole Inamine.

ALTERNATE SEATING

Alternate Commissioner No. 1 Dipak Awasthi was seated in place of the vacant and unfilled Hospitality seat.

Alternate Commissioner No. 2 Juliette Gomez was seated in place of the vacant and unfilled Real Estate seat.

APPROVAL of AGENDA

Motion: To approve the Economic Development and Trade Commission meeting agenda for March 8, 2021.

Motion/Second: McNeil/Awasthi

Motion carried by a vote of AYES: 6 (Commissioner Rice experienced technical difficulties and therefore was not able to vote on this item) and NOES: 0

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: To approve the Economic Development & Trade Commission meeting minutes for February 8, 2021.

Motion/Second: McNeil/Daryani

Motion carried by a vote of AYES: 4 (Commissioner Rice experienced technical difficulties and therefore was not able to vote on this item) and NOES: 0 and ABSTAIN: 2 (Gomez and Daryani)

PUBLIC FORUM

No public comment.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chair Norwood provided an update about the re-opening of Milpitas Unified School District due to increased vaccine distribution.

Economic Development Director Alex Andrade made a note of International Women's Day and also introduced the newest member of the Economic Development and Trade Commission, Commissioner Prakash Daryani. He also provided some details about the American Rescue Plan to be signed by President Biden.

BUSINESS ITEMS

A. Fiscal Benefits of Employment Lands Study

Director Alex Andrade gave an introductory overview of the City's fiscal health, current Council identified priorities, employment and commute patterns, workforce, the Economic Development Strategy, and General Plan and Gateway Plan updates.

Vice Chair McNeil asked how the \$16M deficit compares with that of other cities. Director Andrade responded that all cities have been impacted; the fiscal benefits of employment lands study, Milpitas Metro update, and potential American Rescue Plan dollars will put the City in a more advantageous fiscal position for the future. Assistant City Manager Ashwini Kantak noted that every city experienced about a roughly 10-15% decline in revenues.

Commissioner Daryani posed questions about the City's fiscal health in 2020, to which Chair Norwood suggested that the issue should return to the Commission at another time. Director Andrade shared that a representative from the City's Finance Department is willing to give a high-level overview of the City's financial health at a future EDTC meeting, perhaps in May or June.

Coordinator Daniel Degu, Sr. continued with the presentation, providing information about the strength of the technology and advanced manufacturing industry in Milpitas and the importance of preserving and protecting the city's employment lands. Coordinator Degu also reviewed the project's scope of work including an overview of the Innovation District.

Commissioner Daryani suggested reaching out to NASA Ames Research Center as a potential R&D partner within the Innovation District.

Vice Chair McNeil asked whether there has been a projection made for Research and Development (R&D) salaries in the future and if those salaries will remain sustainable. Vice Chair asked if R&D salaries will always be that high in these sectors, to which Coordinator Degu replied that long-term trends will be part of the wage and occupation analysis as well.

Motion: Receive staff presentation and provide feedback on the Fiscal Benefits of Employment Lands scope of work.

Motion/Second: McNeil/Rice

Motion carried with AYES: 7 and NOES: 0

B. Milpitas Metro Specific Plan

Urban Field Studio consultant Jane Lin provided an overview of the former Transit Area Specific Plan (now Milpitas Metro Specific Plan) and the changes that have happened in the area since its last specific plan update including the opening of the new transit center, including the new BART station.

M-Group consultant Christina Paul described the potential land use opportunities to create employment.

Economic & Planning Systems consultant Teifion Rice-Evans provided a market overview, including commercial opportunities and workspace trends.

Commissioner Mundra encouraged the collaboration between Milpitas Unified School District and the Innovation District. He also noted that an increase in residential density is necessary to create jobs density as well.

Commissioner Gomez asked about transportation solutions from the transit center and expressed concerns about overpopulation and congestion. Milpitas Metro Project Manager Kevin Riley explained the City has just been approved for a Valley Transportation Authority grant to explore a shuttle service between transit stations. Commissioner Gomez asked about bringing in electric scooters, to which Kevin responded that they have been considered and staff is taking a holistic view of micromobility solutions.

Commissioner Daryani expressed that due to the pandemic, employers may continue to let workers work from home for the foreseeable future, and so there may be a decrease in the demand of office space.

Chair Norwood expressed a desire for consistency and uniformity for developments in the area. Chair Norwood elaborated that each of the zones within the Milpitas Metro Plan can have its own design guidelines. M-Group Consultant Christina responded that Planning staff is currently developing objective design standards for residential development. Staff will also consider whether a separate set of design standards need to be developed for commercial development. She noted that “cohesion” may lend itself better to describing new development, rather than “uniformity.”

A Milpitas resident named Barbara (last name inaudible) provided public comment, expressing her support for a more bikeable and walkable environment although she is concerned about traffic. She supported Chair Norwood’s comment that development in the Milpitas Metro area should have some level of uniformity in character. She encouraged the Commissioners to engage with selecting the potential artwork for the overpass.

Commissioner Rice suggested looking at the Milpitas Metro Plan as a long-term, aspirational vision based on market conditions, rather than a literal design guideline for how projects will be developed.

Chair Norwood asked what is a healthy employment to land ratio? What potential does the Innovation District have to be for a balanced employment to land ratio?

Commissioner Daryani commented that establishing benchmarks, such as how much employment lands existed 15 years ago compared to today, would be beneficial.

Commissioner Gomez wants to identify what attracts people to an area.

Commissioner Mundra wants to take a look at all industry segments that could generate revenue for the City.

Vice Chair McNeil commented on the importance of having a flagship of the Innovation District and to establish a connection with schools. Vice Chair McNeil also expressed an interest in exploring a better east-west transportation arterial in Milpitas. Director Andrade noted that it is indeed important and typical for an Innovation District to have a research component, and staff had recently met with the Department of Innovation at San Jose State University.

Motion: Receive update and provide feedback on the Milpitas Metro Specific Plan.

Motion/Second: McNeil/Gomez

Motion carried by a vote of AYES: 7 and NOES: 0

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Daryani motioned and seconded by Commissioner Gomez to adjourn the meeting at 7:04 PM to the regularly scheduled commission meeting on Monday, April 12, 2021, at 4:30 PM. The motion carried unanimously.