

City of Rowlett

Special Meeting

Economic Development Advisory Board

Thursday, July 31, 2008

8:30 A.M.

City Hall Conference Room, 4000 Main Street

Meeting Minutes

I. Call to order

Greg Sims called to order the **Rowlett Economic Development Advisory Board** at **8:34 A.M.** on **July 31, 2008** in **City Hall Conference Room at 4000 Main Street, Rowlett, Texas**. In attendance: Councilmember Cindy Rushing, Mayor Pro Tem Todd Gottel, Greg Sims, Drew Howard, Ben White, George Harris, Robin Tomberlin, John Spor and Mary Alice Etheridge.

II. Welcome and Introduction. Item 2 on Agenda

Greg Sims welcomed the Advisory Board to the meeting.

III. Consider approval of minutes from June 26, 2008 and July 3, 2008. Item 3 on Agenda

Councilmember Cindy Rushing motioned to approve the minutes from June 26, 2008 and July 3, 2008. Robin Tomberlin seconded the motion with all in favor. Motion carried.

IV. David English of Colliers International Q & A Item 4 on Agenda

Mr. English explained that the market has changed since some of the deals he has completed here in the past. Mr. English currently has multiple sites in Rowlett. Mr. English explained that tenants have slowed with commitments. Colliers International has been growing. Sales are down but the numbers are up. Colliers is adding a hospitality group to their company. Optimism is high. A lot of tenants have co-tenant clauses in their deals. Greg Sims asked about the big guys such as Wal-Mart? Mr. English explained that the big box retailers have pulled back. Land values are overpriced with our economy these days. Ben White asked "In the development community is the word out about the PGBT and DART coming to our community?" Mr. English said he believes it is but developers are waiting to see the dirt move because of the delays with these projects. Mayor Pro Tem Todd Gottel asked if there is anything we could be doing to bring more business into the city? Mr. English stated that we should be ready for the new business. We have done a good job by identifying the specialized districts in our city. We should also be conscious of the perception of our development process. He believes perception is changing and for us to keep that as a focus. Mr. English suggested it may be a good idea to have a mystery shopper developer come out and go through the process to gauge the change in our procedures and the positive experience. Ms. Tomberline spoke of her own personal experience and the slowdown in the process is occurring in the engineering department. She spoke of the rocks behind Expo needing to be picked up before Curves could open. This tenant had spent money on marketing and advertising and was not allowed to open as scheduled at the very last minute for a request made by engineering. Drew Howard stated that developers do not like change and they should be told

everything up front and the information should not change at the last minute. Mr. English spoke of the delivery of bad news and a way to put a positive spin on it. Mr. English spoke of getting involved in the community. That "feel" is crucial in the development of lifestyle centers. Citizen's being able to enjoy their community with hike and bike trails or outdoor activities are vital to success and the trend of new development. Mr. English stated it should be more so than a West Village type development. A project that includes places where you can run, walk, community events, activities, shops, convention center, golf course and hotel is vital to success of the developments today. People are walking. Mr. English spoke of the mistakes Rockwall made and the positive aspects of the Harbor development. Conceptually the Harbor is dead on. The problem is how it was developed and some design flaws. Rowlett should learn from this development when developing our waterfront.

V. GISD Update. Item 5 on Agenda

Tabled for the next meeting.

VI. City Update. Item 6 on Agenda

Mayor Pro Tem Todd Gottle spoke of the search for a new City Manager and we are receiving applications. The budget was presented by Interim City Manager George Harris and was very well done. Council will be reviewing the budget and public hearings will be held. The bond committee meeting was kicked off in July and it went very well.

VII. Chamber Update. Item 7 on Agenda

Drew Howard spoke of the Chamber's annual golf tournament coming up in September. State Representative Joe Driver will be at the membership luncheon in August. Drew Howard spoke of engagement of the senior citizens in a mentoring program as a result of an item on the strategic plan. Ben White asked if the Chamber is still willing to help with an Allies golf tournament and Drew Howard agreed. George Harris let Drew Howard know that there is a list of seniors in the city manager's office.

VIII. Directors Update. Item 8 on Agenda

Ben White gave the directors update. Project Primo will be at the next City Council meeting. Project Aero is still looking good. The owner of the company is working out legalities with his partners. A detailed written report was delivered to the board via email and posting on the web prior to the meeting. Pictures of current construction developments were presented on the overhead projector.

IX. Development Process Discussion. Item 9 on Agenda

Keri Samford –Director of Development Services presented a power point of the process to the board. This power point is available to any board member upon request. The first step prior to submitting an application is a pre-submittal meeting with the design review committee. The design review committee consists of the planning department, engineering department, building inspections department and the fire marshal's office. This meeting with the applicant is to help with the requirements of the actual submittal and to gauge any issues that will need to be addressed for the submittal. The second step is the submittal of plans. The first and third Tuesday of each month is the submittal days. A planning case manager is assigned to the case and will follow the case all the way through the process. The plans are distributed to the design review committee. The plans are reviewed by all staff. The engineering, fire marshal and building

inspections departments return their comments to the planning department. The planning case manager will send the comments to the applicant. Every effort is made to return comments within 10 business days. Civil engineering plans are submitted to the engineering department. That is a separate review. Robin Tomberlin stated this is where the delay in the process is. Once all the plans have been submitted and reviewed the plans will either be administratively approved by staff if they meet all the criteria and codes or if there are any variances the project will be go before the planning and zoning commission. We have established an electronic comment format for development tracking. The planning department has added the applicant on all email correspondence to their representatives. The planning department has established a customer care focus and made it a priority. Interim City Manager George Harris stated we may need some fundamental changes in the approval process in the development code to address the delays in the engineering department. George Harris stated we should have consistent rules and they should be consistently applied. Drew Howard agreed that the customer focus is a step in the right direction and he has implemented the practice in his business as well. Ben White stated that the citizens are our customers but as we grow these developers are our customers as well.

X. Discuss EDAB participation in prospect activities. Item 10 on Agenda

Tabled for the next meeting.

XI. Screening Wall Discussion. Item 11 on Agenda

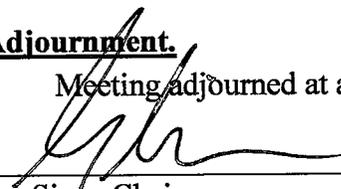
Tabled for the next meeting.

XII. Members of the Economic Development Advisory Board may request topics for the future agenda meetings. No member of the board or commission may discuss any of the requested subjects until such matter has been properly placed on a posted agenda.

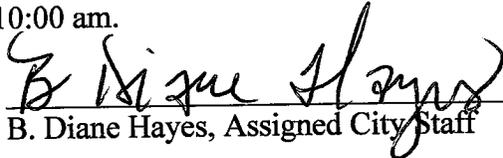
The next meeting is set for August 21, 2008. Items for discussion are EDAB participation in prospect activities and screening wall discussion.

XIII. Adjournment.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 10:00 am.



Greg Sims, Chairman



B. Diane Hayes, Assigned City Staff

8-28-08
Date Approved: