



## Economic Development Virtual Committee Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86114924368>

To join the meeting, click on the link above

Or iPhone one-tap:

1-646-558-8656

Webinar ID: 861 1492 4368

June 8, 2020

6:30pm

### AGENDA

I. Call to Order

The Zoom committee meeting was called to order at 6:37pm. Mayor Wanda Stringfellow joined the Committee members and Mrs. Jackson. There was no mention of any public attending.

II. Approval of Minutes

None presented for approval.

III. Old Business

1. City Administrator's Report and Updates

The City Administrator acknowledge that the Opportunity Zones Prospectus had gone live. The Chair suggested that it be added as a tab to the website instead of just listed in the body to limit the need to scroll as other items are added. The CA spoke briefly that she was still communicating with the group who previously met with Council on a project that cannot at this time be fully disclosed in an open meeting. The CA did not have an update for the Economic Development Master Plan or Comprehensive Plan at this time. She mentioned she presented ideas regarding annexation during a budget meeting.

2. Website and Social Media Policy

The Chair acknowledge some language sent by the City Attorney based on the employee handbook and policies & procedure manual. However, there is obvious misunderstanding or confusion between the intent of and the need for

the electronic media policy beyond general employee use of social media. The Chair tabled the item until such a time that she and the City Administrator can meet to discuss the merits of the requested policy.

3. Business Resource – Website

The City Administrator discussed the cost of building a new website using Wix or Weebly. The Chair asked about the data storage for a government site and domain hosting. The Chair asked that we better understand VC3's web role before making any switch. The CA confirmed that the staff was still in the research stage of this project and it largely depended on the budget.

The Chair requested that we build on the InvestInChesterSC.com website to offer more to the business community. Councilman Williams suggested items that would be particularly useful to business owners and commercial property owners. The committee will generate a list of items for the web page that could be useful to business development in Chester.

IV. New Business

1. Economic Development During COVID-19

The Committee gave kudos to the staff for the suggestion to defer business license penalties until June 22, 2020. The City Administrator noted that many had decided to go ahead and pay for their licenses and that there were no major concerns or issues.

Councilman Williams suggested having more dialogue and communications with the businesses. It would help identify the items they need most (especially for the business resource page on the website) and how they can help recruit additional businesses.

2. Business Outreach

The committee recognized that is agenda item was already discussed. Mr. Williams discussed how some local businesses have talked with him about Wylie Park, especially its location and the walking trails. He suggested we talk to them more about recreation ideas to make Chester more marketable to current, existing business owners as well as new ones.

Mr. Williams also discussed the economic growth around us and how the City needs more partnering and development.

The Chair asked if there was any additional outreach that had not been discussed.

The Chair spoke of some individuals used their personal social media to alert businesses and taxpayers on the CARES Act (particularly, PPP, EIDL, etc.) but we did not think to make a bolder effort to identify these resources. There was

some reiteration on the need for a business resource web page. Speaking of social media, it was recognized that the new “Meals and Deals” page was a great community response to advertise for local restaurants.

Mr. Leon Carter of SC Works has asked for assistance in spreading the word about their services to assist young people in getting jobs. Posting on social media, on Channel 3, etc. The Chair will ask that he speak with the City Administrator and Mrs. Roof, the HR director about his services and the possible publicity partnership.

The committee recognized that several businesses and organizations had partnered on community projects that were happening in the city to assist with the COVID-19 pandemic:

- COVID PPE supplies = Luck Companies (supplies donated to Police Department for its elderly care project and to SFSP), Duke Energy Grant (\$3000 awarded to SFSP), GAF Materials Corp (supplies donated to SFSP)
- GAF supplying roofing materials for several housings in the community. This project is led by Councilman Williams with support by i58 and Councilwoman Douglas.
- GAF Material Corp partnered with the United Way to gift first responders.
- The RMDSF and Battered But Not Broken nonprofits are currently putting together elderly care packages to be distributed by the City of Chester Police Department.
- COVID Testing was a demonstration of all hands on deck: Agencies and departments across the county assisted with MUSC’s 4-day mobile testing. TruVista, Gas Authority, First Citizens, and CWR provided meals prepared by local restaurants for staff on the testing days, GAF Materials Corp provided water for the staff and public during the testing days, and Douglas Strategy Group provided snacks for the staff on the testing days.
- Councilman Williams provided lunch for summer feeding service program staff during one of their long workdays.

### 3. Incentives

The committee voted to request the attorney to draft a Bailey Bill ordinance to have a first reading and public hearing, if necessary, by the July meeting. So, by the end of August, we will have a City Bailey Bill in place. There was discussion

of having a joint Bailey Bill with County Council to boost its effectiveness. After recalling a couple of discussions with County Council members, it was suggested that the City request it after it was at least on its way to passing one itself.

\*Action item – Request the attorney draft a Bailey Bill ordinance ready for July meeting.

The committee discussed façade grants, marketing packages, and increase tourism opportunities as incentives. The Chair asked that we have a joint meeting between Economic Development and Public Works to discuss a Vacancy Ordinance for Commercial Properties. Mr. Williams agreed. *(The consideration of such ordinance come from the first reading of the Residential Rental Registry. Mayor Stringfellow requested a similar registry for commercial properties. During the Public Works meeting, it was determined a vacancy ordinance would be more appropriate.)*

The City Administrator informed the committee that she was awaiting the Chester Historical Society on the historical wayfinding project. The Chair encouraged that if that project will be delayed that we think about additional wayfinding for City buildings (i.e., police station, fire departments, city hall, parks, etc.).

The Chair requested an updated Wi-Fi report on the downtown Wi-Fi and to start looking for ways to potential expand available Wi-Fi in the parks, at the agribusiness center, etc. Mr. Williams also discussed how that is a source for marketing to businesses.

Mayor Pro Tem Douglas presented an idea for a “Shark Tank” style competition for new startup businesses. Due to limited time, the matter will be fleshed out and re-presented at the next meeting.

#### 4. Grants

A special called meeting was due to start, so this part of the Economic Development meeting was deferred to its next scheduled meeting.

#### V. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:25pm.