



PASADENA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Board Meeting

Conducted via Zoom Meeting

March 25, 2021, 3:00 p.m.

Minutes

Members present:

Steve Cote, President
Rick Lord, Vice President
Emilio Carmona, Secretary
Marilyn Wilkins, Treasurer
Ernesto Paredes
Steve Phelps
Salvador Serrano, Jr.

Members Absent:

Others Present:

Jeff Moore, Brown & Hofmeister, LLP
Carlos Guzman, Pasadena EDC Executive Director
Rick Guerrero, Pasadena EDC Manager
Suzette McDowell, Pasadena EDC Marketing Manager
Karina Tomlinson, Assistant Secretary to PEDC Board

Agenda Item One: Call to order

The Board meeting on March 25, 2021 for Pasadena Economic Development Corporation was called to order at 3:03 pm by President, Steve Cote. *(At this time, he also stated that there was no Pre-board meeting as the actual Board Meeting was called to order.)*

Agenda Item Two: Acceptance of the sworn statement.

Read by the Honorable Lester Rorick and accepted by all Board members.

Agenda Item Three: Administration of the Oath of Offices to newly appointed members, roll call.

Administered by the Honorable Lester Rorick to all Board members.

Agenda Item Four: Election of Officers

Steve Phelps made a motion to reappoint current Officers as the Officers for the next 2 year term: Steve Cote – President; Rick Lord – Vice President; Marilyn Wilkins – Treasurer; Emilio Carmona – Secretary and Karina Tomlinson – Assistant Secretary. Motion was seconded by Rick Lord. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUS.

Agenda Item Five: Public Comments

No public comments made by attendees.

Agenda Item Six: Approval of Minutes

Board President, Steve Cote called for a motion to approve the minutes from the meeting held on January 28, 2021. Rick Lord moved to approve the minutes seconded by Steve Phelps, MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUS.

Agenda Item Seven: Board Actions - Resolutions

- a. **PEDC RESOLUTION 21-007** – Consideration to authorize Staff to negotiate and execute an agreement with AECOM to provide engineering services for Richey Street Phase II (CIP# S110) in the amount of \$108,000.00 from the North Pasadena Redevelopment Project Account (M008).

Rick Lord made a motion to approve, seconded by Ernesto Paredes that PEDC Resolution 21-007 be passed, approved and adopted. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUS.

- b. **PEDC RESOLUTION 21-008** – Consideration to authorize Staff to negotiate and execute an agreement with Stantec for services related to the planning, creation, submission and implementation of Brownfields Program Grants.

Ernesto Paredes made a motion to approve, seconded by Salvador Serrano, Jr. that PEDC Resolution 21-008 be passed, approved and adopted. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUS.

- c. **PEDC RESOLUTION 21-009** – Consideration to approve the acceptance of funds from CenterPoint Energy not to exceed the annual amount of \$5,000.00.

Rick Lord made a motion to approve, seconded by Emilio Carmona that PEDC Resolution 21-009, be passed, approved and adopted. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUS.

Agenda Item Eight: Report by Carlos Guzman, Executive Director

Before starting his report, Carlos asked Suzette to give her presentation for Pasadena Loves Local 2.0. Suzette began by reviewing what the Goals of Pasadena Loves Local 1.0 were and how those were accomplished. She continued with some numbers received from a staff conducted survey of the grant recipients. Out of 165 surveys sent, 110 responses were received which equates to a 66% response rate. Some highlights are that 45% of recipients reported their sales were decreasing since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic; 30% of survey respondents predict a moderate to high chance of reduction of employees. 54% of respondents lease their property and 17% of them do not plan to renew their lease. The most impactful response was that 31% predict a moderate to high chance of the dissolution or closing of their facilities in Pasadena within the next 6 months. Suzette added that although this is a small pool of surveys, but it really helps see the picture of the situation that we're in from a business standpoint. Another component of the survey that we wanted to hear about from businesses is what they need help with. Suzette provided some of those numbers, but highlighted 2 because she thinks PEDC can really help move the needle. 70% of the respondents mentioned advertising & marketing strategies are key things they need assistance with, as well as 35% need help with social media and digital advertising. How is PEDC addressing this currently? We are re-designing our website that will be heavily small business focused to really bring them tools and resources that they need. One of the biggest tools that will be an addition to our new website is SizeUp Pasadena that is a business intelligence tool designed for small business. It will give small businesses data that they would typically have to pay for. The information provided will include: where to expand or relocate within our City as well as areas to advertise in. This information is critical right now because they have no room for error to make those kind of decisions so having that data is critical. The last think is both the EDC and Chamber are Google certified partners. Recently we held a Google workshop in partnership with the chamber with 100 participants and the event focused on

educating small businesses on how to get their business listed and how to rank higher on Google to drive traffic to their business. So now how do we leverage this program to align our program of work and how do we see it going forward? She continued with some slides with 3 key pillars of what the right prescription to support the Pasadena business community could look like. The pillars are Marketing Efforts, Education, and Business Engagement. Beginning with marketing efforts, we will engage with key community institutions to shift their mindset to think local first. The more big companies we can get to make that shift, the better it is for our small business community. In addition, there is opportunity to increase these efforts by telling the story of businesses, highlighting some of them and sharing testimonials to help drive traffic to their business. The other component is the educational component that ties to the Google partnership. We see this as a combination of key educational workshops similar to the Google workshop as well as a resource hub with regional and local resources at their fingertips. The last component is a business engagement component that will expand on the survey that was conducted. We see this as an opportunity to engage with our business community through in person visits, virtual visits and more targeted surveys. This will help us get a pulse on how they are dealing with the pandemic and where are the areas where PEDC can make the most impact. She proceeded by going over some reasons why a partnership with the chamber would be beneficial. First, they would help us reach a broader audience and really move the needle; the PEDC would be following best practices from neighboring EDO's and both entities have a stake in business success. More importantly, we are already partners on the campaign and understand the importance of generating awareness. This partnership would offer the ability and infrastructure to support and host through existing networks and increase the credibility of the campaign as a citywide effort. Currently staff is working with the chamber to define specifics and outline the program. We want to get feedback and input based on the information you saw from the survey results to hopefully bring something back for approval at the April meeting. *Steve Cote asked Marilyn and Salvador if they are seeing those kind of issues with their own businesses. Marilyn stated that she is seeing more clearly that her accounts receivable is harder to collect. They can see the stress with respect to that, and hate to be the "bad guy", but it's a part of life. Salvador added that he's seeing more businesses going home based. They are cancelling their property insurance and keeping their general liability, which hurts his business. He's seeing the domino effect of when businesses with multiple locations downsize to have only one. Steve then asked for the Board's thoughts on the initiative presented by Suzette. Marilyn mentioned that she was startled by some of the percentages of economic weakness that we're looking at. She feels the initiative should be well received if we do a good job judging by the amount of feedback on the surveys. Ernesto Paredes then asked how the Spanish-speaking business community is responding to the survey. He added that they are the ones that normally would not join the chamber or ask for any assistance for different reasons. Suzette responded that 17% of the respondents included in those totals were Spanish speaking only. Steve asked if the Pasadena Hispanic chamber was merged with the chamber to which Salvador responded that it is correct. He added that Spanish speaking or not, he feels partnering with the Chamber is the right lane because the chamber has a good pulse on that. He thinks it's a good program. Rick Lord asked how they would get to businesses that are not part of the chamber. Suzette responded that the goal is to open the program to both members and nonmembers of the Chamber, similar to the Google workshop that was hosted that was free and membership in the Chamber was not a requirement. Marilyn asked if there would be a repeat of that Google presentation. Suzette responded that the Chamber is currently surveying some of the attendees, but they have heard that they really enjoyed it and would like to see more. Google does not record the workshops because they are constantly changing, but offers tons of different workshops with the latest information.*

Carlos proceeded with his regular update: He provided quick updates. The AEDO Accreditation application has been submitted and hopefully the EDC will receive an accreditation in a few months. The website revamp is still on track for launch in Q2. We are focusing on small business and local residents. The FY2020 Annual report is out and available on our website. He encouraged board members to share with their networks. He continued with a Redevelopment update: Shaw Avenue – Board reauthorized reconstruction of Shaw and halfway through there was the Livable Centers Study and they recommended,

based on community feedback some changes that we implemented. There is Phase 1, which are typical road improvements, and Phase 1a is more of redevelopment to make some quality of life improvements. Phase 2 is something we're looking at to work with Public Works to see what we can do on the stretch from Little Vince Bayou to Pasadena Blvd and Carl Street to Richey Street. This should be coming to you sometime during the summer. He continued with the Shaw updates by showing some pictures of the Murals going up in the area. Another update he provided was for the Vince Bayou Greenway. He stated we really want to make sure to get community input and hope to have some sort of implementation play by May. He finalized the redevelopment update with the monument on 225 and Richey. There was a bidder that submitted a proposal that our consultant Freese & Nichols was happy with so this will be coming for board approval in April. The last slide he covered was Items coming to the Board for approval. In April the Monument Sign, in June/July the Shaw Enhancements, in August the Richey II improvements (ROW) and in October the Trails. That's something that we will need to budget for to make that a reality. Some Upcoming events are a groundbreaking ceremony by PSC; on April 1st a ribbon cutting for the new courthouse and finally our next board meeting on April 22nd where he will be beginning the budget cycle and ask for input from the board.

Agenda Item Nine: Comments by Board Members

The EDC was presented with a recognition from Healthy Living Matters for the work that Sheena has been spearheading and Carlos showed it to the Board before they began with comments.

Rick Lord –Commended everyone for the murals. He thinks it's pretty impressive and looks forward to continuing with the walking trail. He appreciates staff for keeping it going.

Steve Phelps – Appreciates Staff efforts to partner and also wants to thank Marilyn for reminding him he needs to get more business cards.

Ernesto Paredes – Congratulated Staff for the job they are doing. Stated that Carlos and his team are really putting in the effort. He was also very impressed with the murals going up on that side of town. He encouraged the other board members to go check it out.

Salvador Serrano, Jr. – Is super excited about adding the murals and color, planting seeds for what could be on that side of town. He's on the steering committee for the Trails so he's excited about it creating connectivity from one side of town to the other. It's also going to connect the schools and have a community garden and places to do exercises. He shared a story about his mom walking down from Pasadena High School to Abel's Pharmacy and walking by Shaver so now that kids can get back and forth safely he's very impressed by it. He added comments regarding the Google workshop and that it taught you things you may not have known. He also wished everyone a Happy Easter.

Marilyn Wilkins -.She's delighted by all the hard work staff is doing, but is also stunned to see in print the economic impact of what's gone on over the last year. She is delighted to know that we have the information, focused on it and implementing programs to stem the tide. She's hoping the 30% that may have to close in the next 6 months won't have to. *Steve Cote added that those numbers are sobering.* She asked if there is some element of this effort that potentially we ought to focus on real estate? She's seeing so many For Lease signs driving around town and wondered what strategies we could come up with to try to help that. Steve added that's a tough topic because most people don't want the EDC in the real estate business.

Emilio Carmona – He stated that a strong partnership between the Chamber and the EDC is good. We should continue reaching out to all small businesses. He said he's excited about the new courthouse opening April 1st. He also wished everyone a Happy Easter.

Steve Cote – He stated that the partnership with the Chamber is reflective on what we've talked about from early on. We have partnerships with the Economic Alliance and BAHEP and they have a lane they drive in. The Chamber has a lane they drive in as well as the EDC. It's a matter of working with all of our partners and staying in our lane; not getting into things we can't do, but still being able to support and complement everyone so that where there's a need we can still play a part and help our community. He appreciates what Suzette, the Chamber and Sheena have done. He likes seeing the results of what we've

been talking about and seeing the timeline of things that are going to get voted on and the work getting done on Shaw and Richey Phase 2 and the Trails that are going to be really nice. He also wished everyone a Happy Easter!

Agenda Item Ten: Executive Session

****NOTE** 3:48 PM** – At this time, President Steve Cote announced that the Board will be going into a separate Zoom meeting for an Executive Session and will return to the meeting upon conclusion to adjourn.

- Rick Lord did not participate in the executive session
- a. Convene in executive session pursuant to Section 551.087, Texas Government Code to deliberate regarding economic development negotiations for Business Attraction/Retention Projects.
- b. Convene in executive session pursuant to Section 551.072 and 551.087, Texas Government Code to deliberate the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property and to deliberate regarding economic development incentives – Project #2002.

Agenda Item Eleven: Reconvene into Regular Session

****NOTE** 4:37 PM** – At this time, President Steve Cote reconvened the Regular Board Meeting.

The Board will reconvene into Regular Session, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 551 of the Texas Government Code, to take any action necessary regarding:

- a. Deliberation regarding economic development negotiations for Business Attraction/Retention Projects.
 - No deliberation
- b. Deliberation regarding real property – Project #2002.

PEDC RESOLUTION 21-010 – Authorize Staff to negotiate and execute an agreement with National Development Council (NDC) in an amount not to exceed \$50,000.00.

Ernesto Paredes made a motion, seconded by Marilyn Wilkins that PEDC Resolution 20-010 be passed, approved and adopted. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUS.

PEDC RESOLUTION 21-011 – Authorize Executive Director to execute a real estate sales contract amendment for the real property on the terms as discussed in executive session.

Salvador Serrano, Jr. made a motion, seconded by Ernesto Paredes that PEDC Resolution 20-011 be passed, approved and adopted. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUS.

Agenda Item Twelve: Adjournment

President, Steve Cote called for a motion to adjourn the March 25, 2021 meeting at 4:38 pm. Marilyn Wilkins moved, seconded by Ernesto Paredes. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUS.