

# CITY OF RIDGECREST

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES

City Council Chambers  
100 West California Avenue  
Ridgecrest, CA 93555



April 3, 2023  
5:15 p.m.  
REGULAR MEETING

### **CITY ORG COMMITTEE:**

Kyle Blades, Chairman; Solomon Rajaratnam, Vice Chairman; Bernie Mondragon, Planning Commissioner; Bill Farris Jr., Planning Commissioner

**CALL TO ORDER – 5:16 p.m.**

**ROLL CALL – all present**

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA – S/M, all in favor**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES – F/M, all in favor**

1. Approve draft minutes of the regular meeting dated 3-8-2023.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS OF ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA - none**

**DISCUSSION ITEMS –**

### **2. Recruitment & Development Updates**

- City staff is exploring feasibility for industry/manufacturing opportunity– seeking appropriate site for size/zoning requirements
- City staff is working to identify local business grants for Balsam street development per local inquiry – connect to K. Bearden for more info
- City staff is following-up on inquiry for prospective businesses w/ interested individual for more info re: requirements/next steps
- Internal discussions w/ Oasis developer re: Phase II entertainment components/timeline
- Development Updates: [Economic Development Map](#)  
Committee Discussion:
- Blades: entertain City incentivizing small local businesses (i.e. Balsam development) – begin thought process/conversation
- Rajaratnam: definition of ‘help’ re: finances, location services, etc. / Blades: direct financial support
- Mondragon: not in support of direct financial support, agree with help in terms of assistance with connection/outreach for grants, etc.
- Strand: potential to support @ small-scale (i.e. short-term rental costs), case by case basis per community need, business model, etc.

*This agenda is available on the City of Ridgecrest website at <https://www.ridgecrest-ca.gov/agendacenter>*

- Farris: likes idea with interest of showing returns to community (i.e. infill development, benefits vs. costs to community, etc.); potential to assist by off-setting costs of development fees
- Strand: most beneficial option for exploration is small-business loans sector

### **3. Kern County Updates/Info**

- STEMposium & Career Expo (4/28/23)
- Kern Economic Summit (5/13 @ 6pm) - Virtual
- Kern County Park Improvement Projects – Leroy Jackson Park
- Resource Fair – City/County collaboration to coordinate resource fair event; working to confirm timeline and venue; community collaboration (i.e. Women’s Center, Veteran’s Affairs, CCCC, etc.)
- Aerospace Defense Industry Outreach Video – collaboration with KEDC & Base reps for coordination of filming/content discussion (4/6/23)

### **4. Downtown Balsam Street Revitalization**

- Night on Balsam – Feedback Survey, Future Events
  - In process of planning second in series, tentative date of May 19<sup>th</sup>
  - Similar style/structure with focus on improvements per community feedback (i.e. more vendors, better organization, more space, etc.)
- Commercial Property Inventory - Staff will continue to work on gathering an inventory of Balsam street businesses for future outreach/event coordination
- Street Lighting – staff is looking into the potential to run power/fiber to existing light poles to provide additional lighting/ambiance for events
  - Update from Ron – fixing current infrastructure for cost estimates, etc.

### **5. ICSC Conference Preparation (May ’23)**

- May 21-23<sup>rd</sup> in Las Vegas; Reservations confirmed.
- HdL Appointments: see notes from last meeting for follow-up; potential interest in the lots N. of Home Depot – staff followed up w/ D. Erickson for updated property info
- Staff will be working on updating ‘Community Profile’ to better highlight prime commercial properties (i.e. China Lake Blvd) for recruitment meetings @ ICSC
- Placer.ai demo/meeting TBD – follow up with Corey at City of Tehachapi for presentation at May meeting
  - Blades: request Placer.ai demo from sales rep. at May mtg.

### **STAFF/COMMITTEE ANNOUNCEMENTS –**

- McKenzie: Community Outreach Opportunities: Summer Reading Challenge, Prize/Donations to R/C Library; VX-9 Autism Awareness Fundraiser (4/15); RRH Community Clean-up (4/15)

### **ADJOURNMENT – 5:58am**