

CITY OF RIDGECREST

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES

City Council Chambers
100 West California Avenue
Ridgecrest, CA 93555



June 5, 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 – 5:15pm

ROLL CALL – all present

APPROVAL OF AGENDA – R/F; All in Favor

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – F/M; All in Favor

1. Approve draft minutes of the regular meeting dated 5-1-2023.

PUBLIC COMMENTS OF ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA –

DISCUSSION ITEMS –

2. ICSC Conference Recap (May '23)

- Attended professional development workshops including Mixed Use Development, Utilizing Economic Incentives, etc.
- Included meetings/follow-up with HdL (consultant), Ross, Panera, Smart & Final, Burlington, Wendy's, WSS Shoes, & Five Below
- City staff will continue to work with HdL to provide info for tenant recruitment, site selection, demographic info, etc.
- Vendors on site included community event resources i.e. Xmas decorations
- Blades: workshop re: economic incentives beneficial for resources to encourage growth; preference for local organic growth vs. franchise recruitment (i.e. fast casual dining)
- Farris: workshop re: mixed use development beneficial for downtown redevelopment

3. Recruitment & Development Updates

- Economic Development Map – updated 6/5/2023
- Commercial Property Inventory – Outreach for Info/POCs, Create Google Map - plan to begin with Balsam Street/Ridgecrest Blvd. (see Item 5)
- Development Inquiries – Staff following up on case-by-case basis

4. Kern County Updates/Info

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

- Resource Fair – scheduled 6/23/2023 @ KMCC
 - Partnership w/ Kern County + CoR; invite local resource groups (i.e. Women’s Center, Veteran’s Affairs, etc.)
 - City staff will be working on the map/layout of venue, outreach to local resource groups for participation, informational flyer for distribution mid-late May
 - Public outreach to include social media posts, website updates, and press release(s)

5. Downtown Balsam Street Revitalization

- Night on Balsam (#2) hosted Friday, May 19th
 - Public Feedback Survey: 103 responses received to date
 - Over 90% scored the event a rating of 3 or higher on 1-5 scale
 - Satisfied with wineries present, wristband process, wine ticket process, venue, and music
 - Visitors shopped 20/27 Balsam area businesses
 - Fee Form Responses - aggregated: Need more beer; Need more water and restrooms throughout the event; Need more food vendors, to help with long lines; Requests for product/small business vendor booths; Expand street closure (down to RC Blvd); More cold drinks; Some want kid-friendly activities/Others Don’t want kids there at all; Better organize the layout to even out the crowds.
 - Mondragon: Prefer to keep NoB as adult event; additional community events for family-oriented households
- Farmer’s Market – potential relocation/transition to operating on Balsam St.; City staff will continue discussions to determine feasibility, logistics, etc.
 - Staff will coordinate with Tehachapi to research potential model for Farmer’s Market
- City staff is working on logistics/budget for additional lighting; fittings for (36) light posts to enhance venue for continued community events to drive traffic/exposure
 - Brackets nearing completion; next steps to order necessary materials for installation
- CGI Banner Program: CoR will receive minimum of 25 banners (at no cost) for City owned posts (Balsam/Ridgecrest Blvd) – businesses will have opportunity to participate as sponsors (1/3 bottom of banner)
 - Staff moving forward with planning for logistics, design, etc.
- Vacant properties (8) for tenant recruitment; potential to use event data to support recruitment efforts on Balsam; potential to provide support services to incentivize development
 - Coordinate with Small Business Association to support local development efforts
- City staff will work on creating a conceptual design of Balsam street redevelopment components as resource for potential shovel-ready project(s) (i.e. grant applications)
- Mondragon: question re: relocation of Farmer’s Market to Balsam; McKenzie: ongoing discussions with staff and current owner – need to determine new ownership/roles in transition (i.e. Chamber of Commerce, City of Ridgecrest, etc.)

STAFF/COMMITTEE ANNOUNCEMENTS –

- Rajaratnam: question of City support for effort to restore air service to Inyokern Airport; Strand: statement of support from NAWSCL to demonstrate need for service to be feasible

ADJOURNMENT – 5:51pm

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CITY OF RIDGECREST

PUBLIC MEETING PROTOCOL

City of Ridgecrest Committee meetings are OPEN to public attendance.

VIRTUALLY ATTEND MEETING

*City of Ridgecrest Economic Development Committee meetings are OPEN to public attendance. Although Chambers are OPEN, public participation is still encouraged via livestreaming, call-in, or via written correspondence. **To participate remotely, please call: 1-650-479-3208, meeting access code: 182 348 6283.** On the city's homepage (<https://ridgecrest-ca.gov/>) is a quick link to 'Virtually Attend Committee Meetings.' When you follow the link you will see the log in information for City Org. If you log in online first you can enter your Caller ID when you call in.*

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Pursuant to Government Code section 54954.3 members of the public are afforded the opportunity to address the Committee. This time has been set aside for the public to address the Committee on items NOT listed on the agenda. The Committee will not act upon these items at this meeting other than to review and/or provide direction to staff.

HEARING MATERIALS

Any writings or documents distributed to a majority of the members of the Committee regarding any open session item on this agenda will be made available for public inspection in the City Clerk's Office located at 100 W. California Avenue, during normal business hours. These writings or documents will also be available for review at the meeting.

Persons unable to attend a hearing may submit comments regarding a scheduled item to Megan McKenzie, 100 W. California Avenue, Ridgecrest, CA 93555. Written comments received by the close of the business day prior to the hearing will be brought to the attention of the Committee and made part of the official record.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact Megan McKenzie at (760) 499-5061. Notification 48 hours prior to the meeting will enable the City to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to this meeting. (28CFR 35.102-35.104 ADA Title II)

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