

CITY OF RIDGECREST

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES

City Council Chambers
100 West California Avenue
Ridgecrest, CA 93555



October 2, 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 – 5:15 p.m.

ROLL CALL – all present

APPROVAL OF AGENDA – M/S, Rajaratnam/Farris

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – M/S, Mondragon/Farris

1. Approve draft minutes of the regular meeting dated 8-7-2023.

PUBLIC COMMENTS OF ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA –

- Scott O’Neil (IWV EDC): Inyokern Airport Commercial Air Service
 - Re: study assessment of Inyokern Airport commercial/regional air service needs i.e. frequency, destination(s), etc.
 - Partnership w/ Interflight Global - familiar w/ route, climate, & community needs
 - Local amenities exist for air space, pilots, and demand (local industry i.e. installation/RRH for travel/recruitment)
 - Study effort supported by local installation (NAWS) – w/ primary connecting destinations at Las Vegas & Phoenix; potential for charter service to include primary air service(s) operating w/i region for additional flexibility
 - Potential to improve tourism with additional routes from LV to Inyokern area; potential to capture regional markets for airfare services i.e. Lancaster
 - Major concerns/benefits: security and established travel schedules (NAWS) → formal dialogue/public feedback for funding study & understanding of requirements to develop strategy moving forward (i.e. community wants/needs)
 - Phase 1 – develop strategy & identify community needs ~ \$50k (SEEKING FUNDING SUPPORT – Currently ~10% of funding committed to study)
Phase 2 – develop market plan & begin outreach efforts; create implementation plan
Phase 3 – implementation of Phase 1&2 components

Committee Comments:

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

- Farris: Follow-up @ RACVB Board meeting for further input/feedback
- Rajaratnam: Confirm installation support for study prior to moving forward;
O'Neil: installation support instrumental in moving forward w/ study
- Blades: question re: process for installation support, cost vs. revenue / supply vs. demand
O'Neil: statement of support from regional airlines (i.e. security) and supporting industries (NAWS, RRH, etc.) – potential to expand service as demand dictates
- Blades: concern re: pilot supply to fuel increased demand; Farris: potential to build revenue stream for pilot training on regional routes
- Strand: benefits to Inyokern Airport (financial incentive) – i.e facility rental, rental car services, etc.
- Farris: scalability re: limits to charter service;
O'Neil: type of question that will be addressed in Phase 1 study
- Mondragon: potential for commercial expansion;
O'Neil: pending success of reinstated air service study

DISCUSSION ITEMS –

2. Recruitment & Development Updates

- Economic Development Map – updated 10/2/2023
 - Recruitment Efforts - HdL Updates
 - Updated Void Analysis Report, projected delivery October/November '23
 - ICSC Conference – San Diego
 - Updated Commercial Property information
 - Annual Comprehensive Financial Report
 - FY 23-24 Economic Development updates
- Committee Comments:*
- Blades: on track with economic development goals; committee direction
Rajaratnam: CLA mtg expressed that City direction w/ QoL improvements are having benefits w/ installation recruitment efforts
 - Rajaratnam: focus on housing needs;
Stand: quality of life will drive housing market

3. Kern County Updates

- East Kern Economic Alliance – September meeting update(s)
 - SCE Roundtable: Develop timeline for projects to meet power capacity for rural projects; vs. 5-10-year projections
- Sierra Shared Spaces – Coworking Vision
- KEDC Aerospace Defense Industry Sector Video
 - Staff continues to coordinate with NAWSCL representatives to determine content to include, key speaker interviews, additional footage, etc. to move forward with confirming schedule for filming
 - KEDC provided rough footage (not for public release) of 'Episode 1' in the series at Mojave Air & Space Port to NAWSCL reps as reference to assist in the review/planning process for installation approval

4. Downtown Balsam Street Revitalization

- Night *off* Balsam (#4) scheduled Saturday, October 28th 7pm @ City Hall
 - Location at City Hall due to ongoing road detours on Balsam (sewer work); Intention to return to Balsam St. for future NoB events

- Future potential to expand Farmer’s Market
- CGI Banner Program
 - CGI Project Manager: Robert Barto (rjbarto@cgicompany.com, 585-645-5986)
 - All identified post(s) claimed by local businesses for sponsorship opportunities
 - Potential to expand footprint in future years to incorporate additional downtown area(s); include additional posts surrounding City Hall for ‘free’ ad space (i.e. Fire Dept, PD, etc.) per City designation
- Balsam St. Conceptual Redesign
 - Urban Field Studio provided conceptual renderings of Balsam street redevelopment components- to be used as resource for potential shovel-ready project funding
 - Staff exploring potential funding sources (i.e. Round 3 Clean CA grant program) for phasing of project components

STAFF/COMMITTEE ANNOUNCEMENTS –

ADJOURNMENT – 6:39pm