

Friendswood Community and Economic Development Committee

Meeting Minutes

May 1, 2013

The Friendswood Community and Economic Development Committee met on Wednesday, May 1, 2013, at 8:30 a.m., in the second floor conference room of City Hall, 910 S. Friendswood Drive, Friendswood, Texas, with the following members present: Chair Skip Evans, Vice Chair Pauline Moore, Tony Annan, Brett Banfield, Mark Conrad, Jeremy Magnuson, and Dr. Hilmar Zeissig. Liaisons present were Councilmember Pat McGinnis, Friendswood Chamber of Commerce President Carol Marcantel, and Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership Executive Director of Special Initiatives Dan Seal.

Absent from the meeting was Bill Provenzano.

Staff member present was Karen Capps.

Also present were Friendswood residents Marcus Perry and Paul Hahn, and Friendswood Journal reporter Jeff Newpher.

1. **Call to Order.** The meeting was called to order by Chair Skip Evans at 8:32 with a quorum present.

2. **Roll Call.** Roll call was made.

3. **Approval of Minutes.**

Tony Annan made a motion to approve the April 3, 2013 meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Hilmar Zeissig and it passed unanimously in the committee.

4. **Discussion and possible action, but not limited to the Community and Economic Development Committee's strategic plan, goals, and action items.**

Tony Annan gave a report on five meetings with FM 528 landowners and/or their representatives. The first property report was regarding a six acre tract abutting FM 528. The owner does not live in Friendswood and reported that his development proposal was shut down by City Council due to pressure from neighborhood property owners in the adjacent subdivision. The landowner reported that he has no hard feelings for the City and that it turned out to be a blessing that the project didn't get approval since the economic downturn began a few months later. The landowner likes the FM 528 Strategy and reported that he wants to sell his property. The property is located on a hard corner with all utilities available.

The second meeting was with a landowner who lives in Friendswood with approximately 17 acres for sell. He is not happy that the City erected a water tower and dog pound adjacent to his property which he believes, lowers his property values and ability to sell. His vision for the property is a retirement community. The landowner likes the FM 528 Strategy. He believes the city has an anti-commercial stigma to overcome.

The third meeting took place at Tony Annan's office with a broker. The broker is also an investment partner with the owner of tract located at FM 528 and FM 518. The owner pays over \$100,000 annually of property taxes on the vacant lots. He believes the City is not developer friendly and all proposals for development of the property have been met with resistance by the adjacent residential subdivision.

The fourth meeting was with a broker who represents a landowner in Florida who has owned a 25 acre tract for over twenty years. There are no utilities to serve the property and due to the configuration of the property and its location next to a radio tower, the broker believes the highest and best use for the property is a storage facility. The broker likes the FM 528 Strategy and remarked that he sees that most cities have some sort of development strategy.

The last meeting was a conference call with two representatives of a bank-owned property that was foreclosed on about four years ago. The 135 acre tract has approximately 3,824 linear feet of frontage along FM 528 and about 5,135 feet along Clear Creek, and is on the tax rolls with an agriculture exemption. About 123 acres are under contract by a home developer and the bank would retain just less than 13 acres of commercial in the front for future development. The property is zoned a mixed-use planned unit development and is in the City's future land use map as mixed-use commercial emphasis. It was relayed to the bank that due to the property's prime commercial location, zoning, and proposed zoning in the future land use map, the residential development proposal would be met with resistance by the CEDC. The residential plan has no real commercial development emphasis. The bank's representatives said that they appreciated the committee reaching out to discuss the FM 528 Strategy with them and that Texas is the only state that seems to have a progressive approach and collaboration for development.

Tony said, in summary, to recap information provided from these meetings, there is still a negative stigma that was expressed regarding development in the city. None of the property owners want to develop the tracts themselves, they want to sell. The #1 prospect looking to purchase is churches, #2 retirement/assisted living communities, and #3 is residential use. Most of the properties don't develop because of the lack of available utilities to serve the properties: storm water, sewer, and water. Finally, there was no resistance to the FM 528 Strategy, they all thought it was a good idea.

5. Discussion regarding available economic development tools and incentives.

Karen Capps gave an overview of local incentives including property tax abatement, Chapter 380, neighborhood empowerment zones, and Freeport tax exemption. This discussion will continue at next month's meeting to review the tax abatement guidelines since they will expire soon and must be renewed every two years by City Council.

6. Reports:

City Council

City Councilmember Pat McGinnis stated that depending upon the May election, this may be his last meeting as CEDC liaison and said he learned a lot during the past months.

Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership

Dan Seal reported on the Citizens for Space Exploration trip. Barbara Cutsinger attended the Bio tradeshow in Chicago. The OTC Conference starts later this week in Houston. Dan also remarked about Houston's rankings as the #1 place to move, live, and do business.

Friendswood Chamber of Commerce

Carol Marcantel report there was a great amount of support for the April 20 Fig Fest and Car Show. The majority of the classic cars that participate in the show come from Friendswood residents. The event helps promote folks to shop in Friendswood. Tomorrow is the Chamber's monthly membership luncheon where the Chamber awards \$6,000 in scholarships to Clear Brook and Friendswood High School students. The Chamber currently has approximately 580 members.

City Staff

Karen Capps asked the committee to start thinking about who wants to be Chair and Vice Chair. She also reported that the incentive agreement for the restaurant will be on the May 6 City Council's agenda for approval.

7. Adjournment.

The meeting adjourned at 10:06 am.