

**Fairfax County Economic Advisory Commission
Meeting Summary
J. Hamilton Lambert Conference Center Room 11
October 18, 2022**

On October 18th, 2022, a meeting of the Economic Advisory Commission was convened at the Fairfax County Government Center's J. Hamilton Lambert Conference Center in room 11.

1. Welcome (10 minutes)

EAC Chairman Supervisor Foust opened the meeting with a review of the meeting's agenda and informed the commission of the administrative actions they would be required to take.

2. Virginia Freedom of Information Act (VFOIA) Policies (20 minutes)

The EAC adopted two new policies to meet requirements set by the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (VFOIA) to govern how virtual public body meetings may be held without an in-person option, and how members may participate remotely. The policies were put in place to comply with new amendments made during the 2021-2022 Virginia General Assembly legislative session. Louis Nuzzo, Assistant County Attorney, gave a brief overview of the legislative changes specific to convening public boards, authorities, and commissions meetings. After Board of Supervisors (BOS) Chairman Jeffrey McKay motioned to recommend that both policies be adopted, and the motion was seconded by EAC Chairman Supervisor Foust, the EAC voted to put in place the Economic Advisory Commission Policy for All-Virtual Public Meetings and the Economic Advisory Commission Policy for The Remote Participation of Members.

Both policies are to be implemented when there is not an emergency declaration in place. Under the all virtual public meetings policy, the EAC may hold non-consecutive all-virtual public meetings twice annually, or 25% of meetings per calendar year, whichever is greater. Additionally, the commission will be required to provide access to the meeting through electronic means and in a manner that allows all members to be heard. The remote participation policy sets standards for participation during meetings where a quorum of the public body is assembled in person. Remote participation must be approved by the EAC chairperson prior to the meeting.

3. Place Led Economic Development: Supporting Competitive Communities (60 minutes)

The second agenda item, "Place Led Economic Development: Supporting Competitive Communities", was an exploration of place-led economic development efforts in Fairfax County and findings from EAC work sessions on the subject. The presentation was made with the purpose of identifying actions that could be taken to enhance the County's current place-led economic approach. The discussion was framed by the question, "How can Fairfax County create economically vibrant places where businesses thrive?". The item was introduced by Rebecca Moudry, Director, Department of Economic Initiatives and presented by Scott Sizer, Division Manager, Catalytic Development.

Economic Advisory Commission members had been engaged with the topic of place-led economic development through work sessions. The workgroups were arranged to explore which aspects of place-led economic development are relevant to competitive, economically vibrant localities and discuss processes that can be deployed to empower communities in Fairfax County. The sessions' thesis was that businesses

invest in communities that offer workers, residents, and visitors unique features. Like the challenge statement posed to the commission, the workgroups were asked two questions: 1. “What aspects are important to creating and maintaining an economically competitive community?”, and 2. “What processes can Fairfax County use to empower communities with these efforts”. In addition to the questions, staff sought to identify approaches that were all inclusive, unique, and informed by county-wide strategic efforts.

The work sessions featured speakers from entities that are leading place-led development efforts in the County. Findings from the work groups found that community, topic/issue-focused, and other existing organizations are carrying out a significant amount of place-led economic development activity. The groups validated the primary topics to support place-led economic development. Findings from the workgroups were that the efforts are not always coordinated and lack sustained impacts. Development gaps in several districts were also identified during the discussions. And the need for an engaged, local partner. One solution proposed during the workgroup meetings was the need for credible, community-led organizations with leadership and ownership of the communities they serve.

During the discussion the Board of Supervisors and EAC members were asked to consider additional aspects of place-led economic development, best practices, and areas of improvement within existing approaches. Supervisor Foust opened the discussion with hopes that Fairfax County will be a place where people are excited to relocate to. Chairman McKay echoed Foust’s sentiments and asked for specifics about the final deliverable and specific outcomes. Sizer reiterated that the solution, and its outcomes, would be co-designed and established through a “community of practice”. Supervisor Palchik resonated with the department’s intention to engage community members, businesses, and other stakeholders to develop an approach.

Supervisor Alcorn also expressed support for inclusive engagement approaches, as he believes it will set an expectation for board investment. Supervisor Lusk spoke to the benefits of using a community-led approach to draft new comprehensive plans that draw on the strengths of the communities in Fairfax County. An EAC member recommended that the county’s magisterial districts identify priorities through SWOT analyses, so that any efforts implemented will be unique to the communities served. One EAC member asked that diversity, equity, and inclusion be the primary focus of any proposal developed. Other members suggested that unconventional stakeholders, like realtors, may be able to offer valuable perspectives during planning.

Supervisor Storck acknowledged the importance of the human centered elements of place-led economic development such as natural attractions, livability, walkability, and events. Similarly, an EAC member asked the group to consider environmental resiliency as a key aspect of a place. Supervisor Smith spoke to placemaking as a proactive way to maintain economic vitality and avoid the need for revitalization. Supervisor Gross suggested that any recommendations developed through analyses of the commercial corridors be nimble and small scale. Supervisor Herrity agreed with Gross and Lusk and added that place-led development efforts should be developed with respect to affordability.

As next steps, the Department of Economic Initiatives will continue to collaborate with county and community partners to further place-led economic development activities and programs already in the works. In the long-term, the department will analyze existing commercial areas to assess the economic health and identify a typology of the areas. The Department of Economic Initiatives will work with the Board of Supervisors, county partners and community stakeholders to determine initial commercial locations for analysis. Data from the analyses will be used to draft proposals to address gaps specific to

the areas studied. The Department of Economic Initiatives will return to the board with proposals for consideration.

4. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned after the discussion of place-led economic development.