



**ECONOMIC VITALITY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES**

March 17, 2022

7:30 a.m.

Via Zoom – Recording Link

[https://cityofpleasanton.zoom.us/rec/share/B6m](https://cityofpleasanton.zoom.us/rec/share/B6mG2YGIR7VOGIMwMcKrfYyeu0JfFUKGDzKn2al_wy3G2nLAgpdHNqK59uufEmQA.5k3hLgZDCJienG9e)

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JienG9e](https://cityofpleasanton.zoom.us/rec/share/B6mG2YGIR7VOGIMwMcKrfYyeu0JfFUKGDzKn2al_wy3G2nLAgpdHNqK59uufEmQA.5k3hLgZDCJienG9e)

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CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Meeting called to order at 7:34 a.m. by EVC Chair Tracy Farhad followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Present: Councilmember Jack Balch, PUSD Trustee Kelly Mokashi, Steve Van Dorn, Ellen Pensky-McGraw, Steve Baker, Tracy Farhad, Will Doerlich, Brian Wilson, Michael Li, Tiffany Cadrette, Reena Gupta, and Sylvia Tian. Andres Ripa and Steve McCoy-Thompson joined after attendance was taken.

Absent: Shareef Mahdavi, Harsh Gohil, Daniel Watson, Roderick O’Brien, Laura Brooks, and Amos Nugent (non-voting attendee).

City staff: Economic Development Manager Lisa Adamos, Deputy City Manager Pamela Ott, and Economic Development Office Assistant Cailin Gavagan

AGENDA AMENDMENTS

No agenda amendments were made.

CONSENT CALENDAR

The February 17, 2022, meeting minutes were approved as presented on motion by Will Doerlich and second by Steve Baker by a vote of 14-0-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

PUBLIC HEARINGS AND OTHER MATTERS

City Council Liaison Report

Councilmember Jack Balch provided the following updates:

- At its February 24 special meeting, the City Council:
 - Approved a district-based elections map
- At its March 1 meeting, the City Council:

- Extended the 15 percent cap on commission charges by third-party food delivery services on Pleasanton restaurants for six months
- Adopted a resolution accepting the midyear FY 2021/22 operating budget and amended the FY 2021/22 operating budget accordingly
- At its March 15 meeting, the City Council:
 - Proclaimed March 2022 as Arts in Education month and April 2022 as Arts, Culture and Creativity month
 - Proclaimed March 2022 as March for Meals month in Pleasanton
 - Approved the Outdoor Dining Installation Grant Program to provide financial assistance to restaurants interested in constructing a semi-permanent outdoor dining area
 - Approved the Ken Mercer Skatepark final conceptual design
 - Discussed which housing policy topics to include as a part of the 2023-2031 (6th Cycle) Housing Element Update, including the Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance, Lower-Income Housing Fund, Workforce Housing, Affordability by Design, and other housing programs
 - Advanced Stage 2 Water Drought Rates beginning May 1
 - Approved an agreement (with modifications) between the City of Pleasanton, City of Livermore, and Dublin San Ramon Services District for a Temporary Joint Residential Recycled Water Fill Station
- A special City Council meeting is scheduled for April 12 to prioritize capital improvement projects (CIP) included in the City's Priorities Work Plan.

Business Needs/Recovery Survey Results Overview

FM3 Research Partner and Chief Operating Officer Curt Below provided an overview of the results from the Business Needs and Recovery Survey that was conducted from January 18, 2022 – February 19, 2022:

- Survey Specifics and Methodology
 - Conducted 313 total interviews (both online and phone interviews)
- Sampling Approach
 - Sample was obtained from the City business license database, which included phone numbers and email addresses
 - The database also included key information about each business allowing FM3 to set quotas to ensure the sample represented the composition of businesses overall, such as: zip code, number of employees, and category (e.g., business services, retail, etc.)
- Profile of Business Respondents
 - Many respondents represented small businesses (86%) and businesses headquartered in Pleasanton (74%)
 - Respondents also included woman-owned businesses (42%), minority-owned businesses (32%), and LGBTQ+ owned (4%)
 - Three in ten respondents have been in business in the city for at least 21 years
 - Most of the business respondents have small spaces in Pleasanton
 - The typical respondent also had five or fewer employees in Pleasanton and none located outside of Pleasanton
 - Most respondents worked in the “business services” category (35%)

- Four out of five businesses will likely still be in Pleasanton two years from now, and most anticipate having more revenue in the next two years, but about the same number of employees and square footage of space
- Doing Business in Pleasanton
 - 84% of businesses gave “excellent” or “good” ratings for Pleasanton as a place to do business
 - Those rating Pleasanton as a “fair” place to do business cited taxes, housing costs, and parking as the reason for their rating
 - Businesses gave Pleasanton’s location high marks for attracting and accessing customers and vendors, but lower marks for attracting and retaining employees
 - Businesses rated roads and utilities as “good”, and public transit ranked lower as many are unfamiliar with available transit services
 - Businesses valued Pleasanton’s downtown, recreational activities, and restaurants and shops, but were unhappy with housing costs
 - About half of businesses were interested in working with local students. Those most interested are in food service, education, and tourism businesses.
 - Public safety was considered a critical city service (99%)
- Experiences with the Pandemic
 - Three in five businesses rated the City’s communication with business owners through the pandemic as “excellent” or “good” (61%)
 - About half of businesses rated the services provided by the City to support and aid businesses through the pandemic as “excellent” or “good” (47%)
 - Larger and newer businesses reported slightly higher levels of satisfaction with city services throughout the pandemic
 - Many businesses broadly introduced more flexibility, remote services, and working from home in response to the pandemic
 - Nearly half of respondent businesses said they received a PPP loan
 - Two in five respondents believe their business is doing worse financially than before the pandemic, but nearly one third are doing better
 - Businesses that have been open more than two decades were facing more financial challenges versus newer businesses that have only been open five years or less
 - The Personal Services segment faced more challenges due to the pandemic (69%) versus other business types. Healthcare (increase 37%) and Trade Services (increase 39%) segments were marginally more positive
 - Business owners’ most substantial concern throughout the pandemic has been employee health
 - 61% of businesses stated that a lack of technology and web resources to complete online sales proved to not pose as a big challenge for businesses
 - Respondents involved in the building permitting process and interactions with the City gave City staff high ratings for courtesy, fairness, and helpfulness
 - Among those with a preference, online permitting was preferred over in person (34%)
- Views of Internet and Phone Service
 - Businesses overwhelmingly saw reliable and high-speed internet and phone service as important

- Majority of respondents did not see obtaining reliable cell phone service, reliable internet service, and high-speed internet service as a problem in Pleasanton, however, some reported challenges with the cost and availability here
- Two-thirds of businesses believed the City should have a role in developing internet and cell phone services in Pleasanton
- Businesses offered a wide variety of feedback on doing business in Pleasanton, such as:
 - Supporting more/different types of businesses (20%)
 - City is doing well (11%)
 - COVID-19/mandates (7%)
- Overall, Pleasanton businesses were happy with City's location and services provided.

EVC member questions and comments included:

- On the ratings for services, was "public communication" explained to the businesses what it was or was it just asked as is?
 - Mr. Below responded that they read this statement: "I'm going to read the same list of City of Pleasanton services. This time, please tell me whether the City is doing an excellent, good, fair, or poor job of providing it."
- How many businesses were on the list that the City provided to FM3 for the survey?
 - Ms. Adamos responded that there were over 4,400 businesses listed on the commercial business list
- Mr. Below added that there were a little less than 4,400 businesses once businesses that did not provide any contact information were removed
- What were the business types that were not interested in working with local students?
 - Mr. Below responded Business Services and Professional Services
- Mr. McCoy-Thompson asked if PPIE could work to identify which of those businesses were interested in working with local students?
 - Mr. Below responded that as this is an anonymous survey that specific information is unavailable
 - Ms. Ott added there may be an opportunity to figure out the subset of businesses within a category where some outreach can be done
- Were there specific business types that were more satisfied than another?
 - Ms. Ott responded noted staff would explore that
- Appearing there were mostly small businesses versus larger companies, could that have skewed the results at all?
 - Ms. Ott responded that the Pleasanton business community is comprised largely of small businesses, and that will be reflected in the number of businesses surveyed for the survey to be statistically valid
 - Ms. Ott added that the City's large employers list, consisting of employer with 100 or more employees, includes about 40 to 50 companies out of the 4,000 or more in-town commercial companies in Pleasanton
- Was there segmentation on the location of the businesses responding?
 - Mr. Below responded that the businesses were only segmented by zip codes so that was not included initially, however, the City's database would have more specific address information which could potentially be analyzed
- Ms. Ott noted that staff and FM3 may not be able to provide answers to all questions at the meeting, although they can be researched
- Mr. McCoy-Thompson stated that PPIE is actively working with the Pleasanton Unified School District (PUSD) to engage businesses and would like to collaborate with those businesses that were interested in working with local students

- Pleased with the results the City received for services and for being courteous and helpful
- Surprised at the low number of businesses that responded regarding working with the Permit Center
 - Ms. Ott added that the low number may be because the Permit Center saw more activity with residential projects rather than businesses focused on trying to get through the pandemic
- It appeared there were some differences in the satisfaction between some of the newer businesses and the older businesses which may warrant some additional review
- Internet and cell phone service seem to still be a challenge for businesses; what more can the City do to make headway on that?
- Important to remember to be inclusive to our residents and businesses
- What were some of the City staff's takeaways and what you see as opportunities?
 - Ms. Adamos responded that results will be shared with the Community Development Department/Permit Center to see how the City might consider prioritizing online services, etc.
 - Ms. Adamos added that the financial assistance which the City provided with the business loan and new grant programs will be helpful toward considerations in updating the City's Economic Development Strategic Plan
 - Ms. Ott added that it appears the City can do a broader job of communicating with our businesses through a variety of channels; this point will help in planning for an update to the City's Economic Development Strategic Plan.

Ms. Adamos noted that an executive report of the finalized survey results will be shared with the EVC and City Council.

Economic Development Information/Updates

Ms. Adamos noted that item number four on the cover sheet was mislabeled as "Sales Tax Update", but the attachment within the packet is "City of Pleasanton Popular Annual Financial Report".

Ms. Adamos also called out item number five within the packet which highlights an ad the City included in the 2022 Visit Tri-Valley *Inspiration Guide*. Copies of the guide were mailed to all committee members. Ms. Farhad further noted that Visit Tri-Valley's Inspiration Guide is also provided on the Visit Tri-Valley website.

MATTERS INITIATED BY ECONOMIC VITALITY COMMITTEE

Ms. Farhad noted that Mr. Van Dorn will be retiring at the end of April and thanked him for his service as the Pleasanton Chamber of Commerce director, as well as on the EVC.

MEETING ADJOURNED

The meeting was adjourned at 8:51 a.m.