



**ECONOMIC VITALITY COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES**

**October 21, 2021**

**7:30 a.m.**

Via Zoom – Recording Link

[https://cityofpleasanton.zoom.us/rec/share/Fj\\_VT6OYp9wN6RqkAgR1ACXmrNWghMln-QPJi\\_puhc9gxX-tKPHDoMlqgeURPa1pK.K-V8lcpWr4h9mRVa](https://cityofpleasanton.zoom.us/rec/share/Fj_VT6OYp9wN6RqkAgR1ACXmrNWghMln-QPJi_puhc9gxX-tKPHDoMlqgeURPa1pK.K-V8lcpWr4h9mRVa)

Passcode: a%EK9ish

**CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Meeting called to order at 7:33 a.m. by EVC Chair Steve Van Dorn followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

**ROLL CALL**

Present: Councilmember Jack Balch, Steve Van Dorn, Brian Wilson, Daniel Watson, Ellen Pensky-McGraw, Harsh Gohil, Shareef Mahdavi, Steve Baker, Tracy Farhad, Kelly Mokashi, Reena Gupta, Steve McCoy-Thompson, Zac Grant, Roderick O’Brien, Sylvia Tian, and Amos Nugent. Patsy Sanquist joined by telephone.

Absent: Tiffany Cadrette, Will Doerlich and Michael Li

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 September 16, 2021, meeting minutes were approved as presented on motion by Steve Baker and second by Ellen Pensky-McGraw by a vote of 15-0-0.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS AND OTHER MATTERS**

**City Council Liaison Report**

Councilmember Jack Balch provided the following updates:

- At the September 21 meeting, the City Council:
  - Ratified new City Commission appointments

- Received second reading of urgency ordinance for a 15 percent cap on commission charges by third-party food delivery services on Pleasanton restaurants for six months
- Approved the Planning Commission's recommendation to amend the Downtown Specific Plan to update the Active Ground Floor Use Overlay from 25 percent active to 100 percent
- Adopted a resolution declaring the City of Pleasanton's intent to transition from an at-large election system to a district-based election system
- Reviewed the final housing sites selection criteria for the 6<sup>th</sup> Cycle (2023-2031) Housing Element Update
- At a September 30 Special Meeting, the City Council met with Pleasanton Unified School District (PUSD) Board of Trustees to discuss the Student Resource Officer (SRO) Program
- At the October 5 meeting, the City Council:
  - Declared a Local Drought Emergency, mandating a 15 percent reduction in water usage compared to 2020
  - Reviewed designs for expansion of the skatepark at Ken Mercer Sports Park
  - Reviewed designs for the All-Abilities Playground at Ken Mercer Sports Park
- At the October 19 meeting, the City Council:
  - Received the Business Anniversary Recognition Presentation
  - Reviewed the results of the 2021 Pleasanton Community Survey
  - Reviewed Housing Element Update and housing related policy items

### **Business Needs/Recovery Survey Discussion**

Economic Development Manager, Lisa Adamos noted that the Business Survey is one of the action items in the Economic Development Strategic Plan. The purpose for surveying the City's businesses is to measure satisfaction for being a business located in Pleasanton, measure satisfaction with City services, assess future expectations, and to explore business perceptions and expectations relative to specific topics (e.g., internet and cell phone service in 2017, COVID recovery in 2022, etc.).

Ms. Adamos provided an overview of the methodology that was used for the prior surveys in 2012 and 2015. For the 2012 baseline survey, the methodology included focus groups of small and medium-sized companies, 376 telephone survey interviews, and an online survey with 176 participants. The 2015 survey was conducted with focus groups of small and medium-sized companies and 352 telephone survey interviews.

The survey categories covered in the previous surveys and for consideration for the 2022 business survey are:

- Pleasanton as a Place to Do Business
- Pleasanton's Location
- Pleasanton's Infrastructure
- Amenities in Pleasanton
- Important and Evaluation of City Services
- The Permitting Process
- Future Predictions.

Conclusions for the 2015 Survey found:

- 9 in 10 businesses anticipate staying in Pleasanton two years from now

- City services were perceived as very important, with public safety as a priority
- Ratings of staff interactions are exceptionally high
- The City's permitting process is very or somewhat easy.

Ms. Adamos highlighted the 2022 survey selection process which included a formal bid process. The City received four proposals in response to the City's Request for Proposal (RFP) and based on a review process the contract was awarded to Fairbank, Maslin, Metz & Associates (FM3). FM3 conducted the City's 2021 Community Survey and has extensive experience with conducting business surveys for city government, including the following the City of Torrance Business Survey in 2019 and the City of Sacramento COVID-19 Business Survey in 2020.

Ms. Adamos introduced Project Manager and FM3 Partner and Chief Operating Officer, Curtis Below and Assistant Project Manager and FM3 Vice President, Miranda Everett to help lead the discussion. Ms. Everett provided a summary of the dual-mode methodology FM3 plans to use to provide multiple opportunities through which survey response can be received. Ms. Everett noted that a key component of a scientific survey sample is that it is random and representative. To ensure the data is random, FM3 will obtain a business contact list from the City's Business License division to use as a starting point and expects to yield 300 to 400 interviews. To ensure the survey is representative, FM3 sets quotas (e.g., questions about business characteristics, size of the business, industry type, etc.).

EVC member questions and comments included:

- Do you look at industries and questions asked from the previous surveys and make those same recommendations?
  - Ms. Everett confirmed that FM3 can evaluate differences in responses between past surveys and the 2022 survey.
- Is it a part of your process to promote that the City is doing a survey and ask for participants?
  - Ms. Everitt responded that it is important to preserve the randomness, therefore it is best to not post a live link on social media because that could potentially skew the data.
  - Mr. Below added that it does not mean that communication channels would not be used to notify the community that there is a survey being conducted so if they get contacted, they know it is a legitimate survey request to improve response and cooperation rates.
- To obtain information on how culturally diverse our businesses are, can this be included as a survey question?
  - Ms. Everitt responded that it is very common to ask about the characteristics of the person taking the survey and it may be appropriate to phrase it such as "do you define your business as a small business, a woman-owned business, a home-based business, etc." and to have the person check all that are applicable.
- Can we assume that members of the EVC that own a Pleasanton-based business will be excluded from the survey?
  - Ms. Everitt confirmed that those involved in the survey development would be excluded, to reach those new to the process.
- Does the survey include businesses from every sector?

- Mr. Below responded that the Business License list received from the City includes the number of employees as well as the sectors they represent, and the survey sample will be created to represent each of those sectors.
- Are you going to look at the distribution of businesses based on the number of businesses or are you going to weigh the businesses based on their reported revenues or their number of employees?
  - Mr. Below responded that they want to have a representative number of businesses based upon the criteria as well as the Business License database (i.e., number of employees, sector, etc.).
  - Mr. Below further noted that they would not skew the results to over represent the opinions of businesses with bigger revenue numbers.
  - Ms. Everitt added that there are other research tools that FM3 offers and can apply (i.e., focus groups) once the initial survey is completed.
- Mr. Baker commented that we want to make sure we have good representation from the life sciences sector.

Mr. Below asked EVC members if they had any reactions from the previous surveys conducted or if there were any recommendations to consider:

- Do we ask businesses if they're members of the Chamber of Commerce to see if there is a difference of opinion between non-Chamber versus Chamber members?
  - Ms. Ott responded that we have not in the past, but some consideration will be given.
- Will the survey include questions regarding to COVID-19 and the impact to businesses as well as what type of government assistance businesses took advantage of (i.e., PPP Loans, ERC credits, rent relief, City grants/loan programs, etc.) and the resulting impact?
- Recommendation to keep some questions about communication/cell phones, etc. similar to what was asked in the 2015 business survey.
- What are some of the businesses' reactions to Pleasanton's ability to help them attract and retain talent? Additionally, how does Pleasanton's housing situation affect their ability to attract and retain talent?
  - Mr. McCoy-Thompson asked what factors are constraining talent retention and attraction?
  - Ms. Farhad further noted that Pleasanton's housing situation is not just affecting C-suite employees at companies, but also poses a problem for the service industry.
- Recommendation for some survey questions to focus on job opportunities, workforce experience, CTE programs, apprenticeship, etc. for students.
- What are the challenges businesses are experiencing in keeping their business in Pleasanton? Are there any concerns with keeping their businesses in Pleasanton? Are they planning to expand their business in Pleasanton?
- A recommendation to ask businesses what would make the downtown more attractive.

Mr. Below asked EVC members what type of questions related to COVID recovery/transition period:

- Ms. Farhad noted that it is not just COVID recovery support to consider but all types of crisis-recovery support.
- What percentage of Pleasanton businesses are returning to the office and when do they expect to return full-time?

- Ms. Gupta asked if there was an opportunity to assist with any programs to help businesses?
  - Ms. Ott noted that the final survey results may provide some insight into types of programs or strategies that may help.

Additional EVC member questions and comments included:

- How will these results be shared?
  - Ms. Ott responded that the results will be shared with EVC and City Council as these results will help inform the next Economic Development Strategic Plan.
- When do you expect the survey results?
  - Ms. Ott responded that the survey will be conducted in early 2022. FM3 will conduct the survey in roughly three to four weeks, so results will be available in the spring.
  - Mr. Below added that there is roughly a two-week data collection window and then an analysis of the poll results; in total about four weeks after fielding data.

Ms. Ott noted that while the City has an opportunity to use the survey results to better understand how the City can assist/support the business community, it's also important that businesses recognize that the City may not be able to address individual responses or impacts noted through the survey.

### **Economic Development Information/Updates**

Ms. Adamos acknowledged the information items provided in the packet. The Business Anniversary video will be posted on the City's YouTube account; staff will provide that link once it's available.

Mr. Van Dorn added there will not be an EVC meeting in December. Topics for the November meeting are currently being reviewed. Councilmember Balch noted that the City needs to continue to think of innovative ways to support our community.

### **MATTERS INITIATED BY ECONOMIC VITALITY COMMITTEE**

None were noted.

### **MEETING ADJOURNED**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:52 a.m.