

# **City of Rowlett**

Regular Meeting

## **Economic Development Advisory Board**

**Thursday, April 24, 2008**

**8:30 A.M.**

*City Hall Conference Room, 4000 Main Street*

## **Meeting Minutes**

### **I. Call to order**

Greg Sims called to order the **Rowlett Economic Development Advisory Board** at **8:38 A.M.** on **April 24, 2008** in **City Hall Conference Room at 4000 Main Street, Rowlett, Texas**. In attendance: Mayor John Harper, Greg Sims, Drew Howard, Craig Owens, Ben White, John Spor, Larry Glick and Mary Alice Etheridge.

### **II. Welcome and Introduction. Item 2 on Agenda**

Greg Sims welcomed everyone to the meeting.

### **III. Consider approval of minutes from March 28, 2008. Item 3 on Agenda**

Motion was made by Drew Howard to approve the minutes from March 28, 2008 and second by John Spor. All approved motion carried.

### **IV. Directors Update. Item 4 on Agenda**

Ben White gave a brief update on current projects. The total number of new jobs created in March 2008 was 14. Sports Clips granted a certificate of Occupancy. 7-11 complete and open for business. Preferred Powder Coating considering expansion. A detailed report was placed in the notebooks prior to the meeting.

### **V. City Update. Item 5 on Agenda**

Mayor John Harper spoke of the plans to have a ground breaking ceremony for the Eastern Extension of the President George Bush Turnpike. We are still on schedule exactly as planned. Mayor Harper believes we have 95 percent of what we are looking for from Dart and there is still 5 percent at risk. Mayor Harper believes we are being treated very fairly by DART and we will continue to work on it. Mayor Harper thanked Drew and Mary Alice for having the City Manager, Economic Development Department and the Mayor at the Chamber Board meeting. Craig Owens attended the latest DART meeting and reported that DART adopted the 20 year plan which supports the double tracking in Rowlett. Mr. Owens indicated that is the 95 percent the Mayor is referring to. Mr. Owens stated there may be some difficulty getting the grade separation at Rowlett Road and that is the 5 percent the Mayor is referring to. We may be trading for some other amenities in the area because we are looking at hard numbers.

### **VI. Chamber Update. Item 6 on Agenda**

Drew Howard thanked staff and the Mayor for attending the Chamber Board meeting and commented on the importance of the partnership and working together to achieve the goals of the Strategic Plan. Mr. Howard gave an update on events coming up and passed around handouts for everyone's convenience. The events included the ribbon cutting May 1, 2008 for Rowlett Regional Cancer

Center. The Mayor is an honored guest at the event and will also speak. Ben White will be the next speaker at the Biz n Perks meeting at the Chamber. The annual Chamber Awards Banquet will be held at the Bella Harbor Hotel in Rockwall May 8, 2008. June 11, 2008 will be the Chamber and City partnership luncheon at the Rowlett Community Center. May Bell will be taking over as Chairperson for the Chamber after May. Mr. Howard will remain a board member. July 9, 2008 will be the Chamber Luncheon with Tom Stellman presenting the Rowlett Next plan. Mary Alice Etheridge reported the Rowlett Economic Development Foundation will sponsor that luncheon. Chamber Newsletters were passed out to the group.

**VII. Garland Independent School District Update. Item 7 on Agenda**

Larry Glick spoke of specialized schools such as "Non Traditional High School" in within GISD. There will be discussion to consider closing Memorial Prep School. The school is designed to help kids in jeopardy of dropping out of school or kids struggling get back on track. Drew Howard talked about his knowledge of the program and kids he has witnessed personally that were able to turn their lives around as a result of the program. Mr. Glick stated this will be the first meeting to discuss the possibilities for the school.

**VIII. Jack R. Towers, SRA – Question & A Real Estate Professional. Item 8 on Agenda**

Greg Sims introduced Mr. Towers to the board. Mr. Towers indicated that at current time Rowlett is stable and in the past has remained stable in the residential markets for real estate. Mr. Towers gave statistics on the surrounding areas seeing harder times than Rowlett. Mr. Towers works five counties and indicated that other cities are not doing well. Rowlett does not have that many foreclosures in the MLS and that is his only source of reference. Mr. Towers indicated we can expect to see more foreclosures in the future. There has been a change with the banks requiring certain percentages to close deals with the current market downturn. Mr. Towers did a report to gage trending for the last year in Rowlett. Houses up to \$100,000 were \$54.00 a foot and at \$55.00 currently. Houses up to \$150,000 were \$72.00 a foot and \$74.00 with an average sale price of \$127,000. Houses up to \$200,000 were \$69.00 a foot with a sale price of \$179,000 and currently \$71.00 a foot dropping a couple of dollars. Houses up to \$250,000 listed for \$72.00 a foot with a sale price of \$220,000. Rowlett had 101 sales in this range in the past twelve months. In the \$300,000 range the sale price was \$78.00 with the sale of 45 homes in this range. Homes \$350,000 and over we had 14 sales with a sale price of \$79.00 currently and \$82.00 a foot the year before. In the homes ranging \$250,000 or more there were no foreclosures in Rowlett. The market in Rowlett for housing real estate is stable but we can expect to see some change. Mayor Harper spoke of the break even cost for City services for new homes for Rowlett is in the range of \$300,000. The problem we face with housing is the average home in Rowlett is \$180,000. This poses a problem for Rowlett with the tax burdens and the only way to offset this is to grow our commercial tax base.

Ben White gave a brief description of a local restaurant wanting to develop a strip center and move the restaurant into the new facility. Neal Jones, the developer for the business owner spoke of a 10,000 square foot strip center and naming the center Primo Plaza. The cost will be 2.45 million dollars. Neal Jones spoke of a possible bank, specialty wine shop, cake shop, title company and Costa Nostra. The location is the south side of 66 immediately in front of the trailer park. It is on a 1.5 acre lot. Greg Sims asked for a rendering of the project. Neal Jones said

they are working on that but do not have one ready as of yet. Neal Jones stated the strip center will have some Tuscan influence. Mayor Harper requested the applicants give a brief description of the incentives they are requesting. Neal Jones spoke of a private sewer line that will require relocation and then become a city utility. Craig Owens asked the applicant what modifications to the plan will be made if you are not able to secure these incentives. Neal Jones stated he is not sure where they would go from there. The project would take on an inexpensive look. Neal Jones said he would not be able to state if the project would move forward.

**IX. The Economic Development Advisory Board shall convene into executive session pursuant to §551.087 of THE TEXAS GOVERNMENT CODE regarding Project Primo Item 9 on Agenda**

**X. Reconvene into open session Item 9A on Agenda**

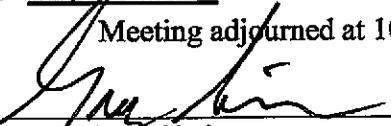
Greg Sims requested staff to continue to work on the project and put together more information so the board may make a better informed decision. Mayor Harper requested the business owner to work with staff to gather more information for the project to present to the board at the next meeting.

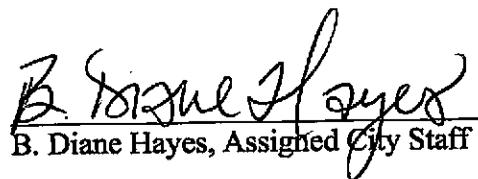
**XI. Members of the Economic Development Advisory Board may request topics for the future agenda meetings. No member of the board or commission may discuss any of the requested subjects until such matter has been properly placed on a posted agenda.**

Next meeting set for May 29, 2008.

**XII. Adjournment.**

Meeting adjourned at 10:35 A.M.

  
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Greg Sims, Chairman

  
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B. Diane Hayes, Assigned City Staff

5-29-08  
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Date Approved: