

MINUTES

CITY OF GROVES EDC

JANUARY 17, 2023 at 5:50 p.m.

Meeting called to order by President Rob Vensel

In Attendance:

Rob Vensel, Rhonda Dugas, Paul Oliver, Mark McAdams, Sidney Badon, Lance Billeaud, Brandon Monk.

Approval of Minutes:

The minutes from the EDC meeting of December 5, 2022.

Motion made by Mr. Mark McAdams and seconded by Mr. Sidney Badon to approve the minutes of the last EDC meeting December 5, 2022. All voted aye.

Citizen Comments: None

Reports: Interim City Manager Lance Billeaud

ICM Billeaud gave a report on the sales tax for the City of Groves.

Mr. Billeaud reported the City of Groves is having a record year in sales tax. Our sales tax was \$214,247.60 for December.

This is from our businesses, the well established and the new businesses that we have in Groves. President Vensel commented this will help to continue to fund small businesses and help with improvements.

EDC Business:

Item VII.

Pizza Artista and a discussion item on whether or not to allow outside furniture to be included as Exterior Remodeling.

Pizza Artista purchased tables and umbrellas for the outside patio and bolted the tables down to the concrete. The umbrellas are removable.

Mr. McAdams asked if these items were listed in the guidelines for EDC. These specific items are not listed. Mr. Badon commented that several years ago when we started pushing the EDC to help fund these businesses with signage to dress up their business to help

look better for the City of Groves to attract people. Mr. Badon said he could not find the guidelines. On the guidelines the biggest thing was that they had to be attached to the building. The reason is if the business relocates to another place in Groves, or to another city, or go out of business and take those items, they were funded by the EDC. This was normal practice until 3 or 4 years ago. Mr. Badon said the guidelines must be fair to all the other businesses. He suggested EDC advertise so Groves businesses can participate in the program. Mr. McAdams commented we need to stick by the guidelines and rules. Mr. Oliver asked if we need to modify the guidelines and does this help them to promote their business where people can sit outside. Mr. Vensel said if the table were not outside you could not sit out there. Mr. Oliver suggested maybe having a \$500 cap on outside furniture that would be attached. More and more businesses are using outdoor eating areas. Mr. Vensel asked if there were any more suggestions. Ms. Dugas read the current guidelines for assistance with exterior remodeling, construction, security, safety, and signage. It reads: this includes cameras, additional lighting, fencing, landscaping and parking improvements. This is for items that add to the outside appeal of the building such as awnings, decorative brick, and any other outside amenity that adds to the curb appeal of the business. 40% reimbursement on approved items (\$5,000 cap.) Ms. Dugas asked would that be included, and Mr. Vensel said the tables and umbrellas would add to the appeal of the outside of the business. Mr. Oliver said could we limit the dollar amount? It is already 40% of the total amount a business spends up to \$5,000. Mr. Badon commented that this has worked for a long time. Merle Norman was a business that was downtown and the EDC helped with interior remodeling such as shelves and when she moved the business she took the shelving with her. It improved the looks of the lobby. Ms. Dugas said that interior projects are not covered. Mr. Vensel brought the conversation back to what is in question. The advertising is not in question, the exterior portion is in question. Mr. Vensel took a vote and asked all in favor of including exterior furniture and umbrellas say aye 3 for 2 against. Opposed were Paul and Sidney. Mr. Vensel then said we can modify this. We have changed signage with a limit of \$2,500. We can keep it in line with what we have for signage and advertising as a cap of \$2,500. With a cap it will still help with the look of the outside of the restaurant not attached to the building. Mr. Oliver asked what if we label it as outdoor furnishings? Mr. Vensel said we would need to put that on the application. They have put lighting out there that is not attached to the building. Would we include that as outdoor furniture? We would need to be specific and define it and put a cap on it. Would we put a cap on it of

less than \$5,000? Ms. Dugas said a cap would be good if we are going to do it. Would we make it the same as the advertising and signage for \$2,500? Mr. McAdams said the 40% for Pizza Artista is \$1,958. Mr. Vensel replied without the advertising it would be close to \$5,000, they purchased expensive tables. Ms Dugas said \$2,500 would work. Ms. Dugas said if we put a cap on it of \$2,500 we would be assured it would not go over that amount. Mr. Oliver said they would have to be anchored; it cannot be movable and must be made permanent. Mr. Vensel then took a vote. All in favor of making a cap of \$2,500 for outside furniture say aye. Paul Oliver, Mark McAdams, Rhonda Dugas, Rob Vensel all voted aye. Opposed was Sidney Badon. Passed and carried. No vote was taken on the application amount of \$4,895.98 this will be on the next agenda.

Item VIII. LaComb Health and Wellness

The item was tabled due to an absent representative.

IX. TWFG Villa Insurance, 4316 Lincoln Avenue.

Signage \$845.72

Mr. Vensel stated he went by the building and saw the sign. Ms. Dugas asked if the representative could please come up to the podium and introduce herself. Hailey Villia stated she owns the business and said she opened the business in that location on October 31st. She also said she has been with the company for five (5) years and opened up her own agency. Congratulations all around. Mr. Vensel took a vote and all voted aye. The motion passed. No one opposed. Motion carried.

X. Texas Proud H2O, 6169 32nd Street.

Dan Varella introduced himself as the owner of the business. The business started on Howe street 9 years ago. We then bought the property of 32nd street and built the building and moved in March of 2021. It was a blessing and I am grateful to be here. Mark McAdams made a motion to approve the item and Paul Oliver Seconded. No questions. All were in favor. No opposed. Motion carried.

Mr. Vensel commented he saw an application for this business last year that was never presented to the EDC Board. Mr. Varella would have maxed out on outside improvements last year. He should have gotten \$5,000 last year for the improvements and if it's approved Mr. Varella could turn in the application for the money he should have been able to receive on the last budget. In our next budget in October, Mr. Vensel will get the application filled out we will table it until then.

The paperwork was there but never turned into us or put on the agenda. We will vote on the additional funds in October when the new budget is in place.

XI. United Board of Missions/Missions Attic located at 3300 Twin City Highway. Security \$803.92, Signage \$2,500, Lighting \$1094.00. Total \$4,397.92, Ms. Debbie Perkins represented the business.

Ms. Perkins stated that Juan Esparza painted the Mural. Mr. Esparza is also a tattoo artist. No questions were asked. Just thanked her for attending the meeting. Mark McAdams made a motion to approve the application amount and Sidney Badon seconded. All voted aye. No Opposed. Motion carried.

XII. Discuss and take-action on EDC Guidelines Advertising. We are discussing amending the advertising Incentive to include T-Shirts, coffee mugs, pens, sweat shirts, etc. Groves Texas must be printed on the promotional item in order to qualify for the reimbursement. Ms. Dugas read the wording of the amended incentive as: Advertising is 100% reimbursement. (\$2,500 cap). This includes traditional radio, tv, and print advertising as well as promotional items. T-shirts, coffee mugs, pens, sweat shirts, etc. Groves Texas must be printed on the promotional item in order to qualify for reimbursement. That is the wording of it. Mr. Vensel stated if you have T-Shirts with Groves, Texas printed on it that would qualify for advertising. Mr. Varella asked if we put a banner down the side of the building would it have to have Groves, Texas on it. Mr. Vensel stated not on the sign just your business name. Pens mugs and t-shirts would and Ms. Dugas said yes it would. Mr. Vensel said the cap would still be \$2,500 as it would be advertising. Ms. Dugas asked if anyone would like to add anything to the wording. Mr. Badon asked the limit to the proposed amended inclusion. The answer is \$2,500 as it would fall under advertising. It would be \$2,500 a year and would be added to any other advertising, print, social media, radio, tv etc. Mr. McAdams asked if internet advertising is included and it is as advertising. The proposed changes were agreed upon.

XIII. EDC Member Comments

No Comments

Meeting Adjourned at 6:14 P. M.

Minutes by Rhonda Dugas