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The following are summary minutes for the meeting of the **City of Las Cruces – Economic Development Policy Review Committee** on November 18, 2020. The meeting was held via Zoom.

Members Present:

- Kassandra Gandara, Mayor Pro-Tem
- Yvonne Flores, Councilor
- Gil Sorg, Councilor
- Ana Berrun, Member
- Kathy Hansen, Member
- Debbi Moore, Member
- Mary Ulrich, Member

Members Absent:

- Sandra Espiritu, Member
- Darlene Lopez, Member
- Davin Lopez, Member

Others Present:

- Dr. Griselda Martinez, Economic Development Director
- Dr. Francisco Pallares, Economic Development Deputy Director
- Cilicia Villegas, Real Estate Services Specialist Senior
- Elizabeth Teeters, Economic Development Administrator
- Dania Soto, Executive Administrative Assistant
- Cynthia Villanueva, Administrative Assistant
- Daniela Cazares Rodriguez, NMSU
- Kyle Eagar, Economist
- Andy Hume, Airport Administrator
- Cynthia Campo, Management Analyst

- 1. Call to Order: Councilor Flores called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.**
- 2. Conflict of Interest:** None.
- 3. Acceptance of the Agenda:** Mayor Pro-Tem Gandara motioned to approve the agenda; seconded by Member Ulrich. The next meeting date is scheduled for December 16th at 10:00 a.m. Motion passed unanimously.
- 4. Minutes for Approval:**
 - a. Economic Development PRC Meeting of October 21, 2020:** Mayor Pro-Tem Gandara motioned to approve the minutes of October 21, 2020; seconded by Member Ulrich. Motion passed unanimously.

1 **5. Discussion:**

2 **a. Five minute agency spotlight:** Griselda Martinez presented. This is a
3 new discussion where the Members can highlight the agency they represent
4 and receive updates from the partners with the Economic Development
5 PRC. She showed a list of potential agencies to highlight and requested
6 recommendations of other agencies that should be included.
7 Recommended agencies include the Bridge, the Bridge Workforce
8 Collaborative, Goodwill Industries, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation,
9 Health and Human Services, and representation from medical, tech, and
10 aerospace entities. Additional recommendations can be e-mailed to Dr.
11 Martinez.

12
13 Member Moore commented that she would like to see initiatives with
14 veterans and how to help and promote them finding jobs, improving skill
15 sets, or starting a business. There are businesses that aid with that and
16 should be included in the agency spotlight. Dr. Martinez stated that the
17 agency spotlight is for agencies within the mission of the PRC which
18 includes business components, workforce, commercial real estate, and
19 entrepreneurship. There was agreement that having the agency spotlight
20 is a good thing. Member Moore commented that oftentimes commercial
21 real estate people may be looking at how to start a business; this could be
22 an entrepreneurship opportunity.

23
24 **b. Elevate Las Cruces Work Programs for Economic Development:**

25 * **Goals: short and long-term:** Dr. Martinez explained that they are
26 working towards strategic goals and utilizing past work to plan for the City
27 and community as a whole. The City's Comprehensive Plan, Elevate Las
28 Cruces is designed to give a road map for the next 20 years as to what the
29 community needs. Dr. Martinez brought the list of Economic Development's
30 section of the Plan for everyone to look over. With the knowledge and
31 expertise of the Committee, they can guide the policy discussion. Today's
32 discussion will be broader and then will use future meetings to have specific
33 deeper discussions on the policies. There was a suggestion of having small
34 working groups to select a few action items and work toward their policies.

35
36 Dr. Martinez began with the background of Elevate Las Cruces. It was
37 broken into three large items; community environment (CE), community
38 prosperity (CP), and community livability (CL). Each large items were
39 broken into a long term vision. Community environment broke down to Las
40 Cruces believes in balanced development and Las Cruces embraces and
41 preserves our natural setting. Community prosperity broke down to
42 economic prosperity, social partnerships, and vibrant neighborhoods.
43 Community livability broke down to vibrant neighborhoods, livable
44 community, social partnerships, and cultural crossroads. From there
45 foundational planning topics were considered for each item.

46
47 The next step was to consider the challenges to the community in the three
48 aspects. This was broken into four elements; challenges to economic

1 prosperity in Economic Development, housing, education, and human
2 services. Some highlights of the economic development items are
3 perceived hurdles to starting a business in the community, low economic
4 output, high unemployment, and high poverty relative to the nation. One
5 highlight in education is NMSU located outside of the municipal City limits.
6 After the challenges it moved to topics and goals. Economic Development
7 goal is to have a ready workforce, have economic equity, entrepreneurship,
8 and diversification. These items were brought forth by public input and
9 captures the community's values. Education includes education for all age
10 groups and community schools. Housing includes attainable housing,
11 special housing needs, and housing diversity. Human services includes
12 community health and underserved populations.

13
14 Community environment was broken into four areas. Regionalism was the
15 closest area to the Economic Development PRC; how to define the role of
16 Las Cruces and Doña Ana County in the larger region with three shared
17 borders to different states and nations as well as how to take advantage of
18 the position and assets available. Challenges include how to coordinate
19 across jurisdictional boundaries, how to better coordinate with state and
20 federal entities, and how to expand the working relationship with immediate
21 neighbors Juarez and El Paso. Topics and goals include balancing the
22 growth, create centers and corridors that continue to give a sense of
23 community that provide spaces of social interactions, sustainable
24 processes, keeping air quality and natural features and habitats and open
25 spaces for the future, and continue to work on the regional vision
26 collaboration.

27
28 Community livability included assets and challenges that assisted the
29 direction of economic growth and vitality. Parks and Recreation focus on
30 this area including multi-modal connectivity which adds to opportunities in
31 neighborhoods. There is also focus on the arts and cultural to leverage on
32 what is available. A slide was shown listing the challenges in relation to
33 community livability. The topics and goals related to Economic
34 Development include continue to support arts, culture, and tourism, how to
35 continue to engage the community in general, and how to continue to
36 address the deep routed challenges in the community through public health,
37 mental health, and environmental justice.

38
39 The next level is work programs. After identifying community environment,
40 prosperity, and livability the next item is goals and then policies and actions.
41 Each action is categorized in five areas; an investment, an operation, a
42 procedure, a regulation, or a study. Dr. Martinez pulled the elements related
43 to regulation, procedure, and investment to prioritize to City Council. The
44 terms are short term, mid-term, long term, and ongoing; for Economic
45 Development each work programs break down to six regulation, 17
46 procedure, nine investment, nine study, and 32 operations. Regulation, with
47 the exception of three items, are either ongoing or short term; this means

1 for them to begin work within the next 12 to 36 months. Actions are
2 assigned to a department or entity.

3
4 The first policy highlighted is policy CP-2.1: incentivize Economic
5 Development projects in economically depressed areas of the City. Two
6 actions are CP-2.1.1: continue to utilize TIDDs, Qualified Opportunity Zones
7 to spur redevelopment and investment and CP-2.1.4: develop new
8 incentives to encourage development along the mixed use corridors
9 identified in the Future Development Plan. There was a suggestion for the
10 Members to take notes on policy they could see being relevant for all of the
11 actions. The second policy highlighted is policy CP-2.2: support efforts to
12 connect vulnerable populations to job opportunities. The action is CP-2.2.2:
13 identify and promote places of employment to minimize commutes and
14 increase accessibility to other transportation modes to create a jobs-
15 housing balance.

16
17 There was discussion on how much information there is to digest. There
18 was a suggestion of having one slide with a list of all the policies in order to
19 view them all in one spot. Mayor Pro-Tem Gandara asked if they could re-
20 examine the policy of the proposed tax increment development district in
21 the Three Crosses area. She would like to add some performance
22 measures and other helpful items; incentives such as Wi-Fi for the
23 downtown area. Using census data in terms of unemployment and poverty
24 in the areas would also be helpful to see where the most needs are.
25 Member Moore commented that there is a GRIP incentive and asked if it
26 was part of these actions or in another division of the Elevate Las Cruces.
27 The GRIP is not involved with the City or Elevate Las Cruces. They can
28 review what incentives are currently in place and find how those tools can
29 help accomplish the goals. Councilor Sorg has a list of incentives for
30 encouraging development from Director Larry Nichols; he will share it with
31 the committee. Dr. Martinez will send out a survey to all Committee
32 Members to rank what the priorities are in order to begin working groups.

33
34 Returning to the policy CP-2.2, Mayor Pro-Tem Gandara asked if they could
35 create a map related to the transportation modes and hubs. Perhaps
36 combining it with the county information as well. She suggested working
37 with the Transportation, Sustainability, and Infrastructure PRC to combine
38 efforts. The Economic Development Department will find how to make the
39 actions happen in relation to the policy. The PRC will then make policy
40 recommendations to City Council.

41
42 The third policy highlighted is CP-3.1: encourage entrepreneurship by
43 creating programs that support residents wishing to start a business. The
44 action is CP-3.1.3: adjust development regulations to allow live-work units
45 in additional zoning districts. There were comments of approval. Member
46 Moore asked for the word encourage to be defined as it relates to supporting
47 residents. As this is the framework it's incumbent to the PRC to define it in
48 more detail, keeping in mind there is the opportunity to recommend a policy

1 to get to the goals that are being aimed for. Perhaps the QOZ and special
2 zones could be a part of this encouragement as looking at the zoning
3 districts; the incentives could overlay how they encourage
4 entrepreneurship. There was discussion on how entrepreneurship in the
5 area needs to have succession plans.
6

7 There was discussion on the links between the action items and policies;
8 how they link to concentrational businesses and housing related to that.
9 The commercial broker perspective is zoning can be a tool for opportunities
10 or limitation. Mayor Pro-Tem Gandara agrees that they should define what
11 encouragement and support looks like in this PRC as a basis for moving
12 forward. As they work more with Elevate Las Cruces they may need to
13 create stronger language or definitions to help make policies and actions
14 clearer; they could create an amendment if need be. Chair Flores agrees
15 with Member Moore's comments of defining encouragement and support as
16 well as letting new residents or encouraging present residents to offer
17 incentives to relocate in the area. The City could work with the realtors in
18 order to make incentive programs available and showing what is available
19 to those wishing to open a business. There may not be a need for stronger
20 language as Elevate Las Cruces is more the basics and the policies created
21 are to be more specific; it would be a burden to show the minute details.
22 The purpose of the PRC would be to create the programs or have a
23 department create the programs to further encourage.
24

25 Councilor Sorg suggested beginning with research on programs already
26 being used then devising new programs; create a list, evaluate the
27 programs, then pick what they wish to try. An example is remote work from
28 home and programs that help promote that such as an incentive to move to
29 a better city and work from home. Member Hansen asked for clarification
30 that they will need to create tasks under each action and work with partners
31 to implement them. The purpose of this Committee is to help advise City
32 Council on policies that will relate back to the policies and actions. The next
33 best step would be to evaluate the existence of programming and find the
34 gaps in place. From there they would create or revise policies to bring to
35 City Council. Some action items in Elevate Las Cruces are not necessarily
36 policy related items so it will be important to define which ones are policy
37 related and bring policy recommendations to City Council.
38

39 Member Ulrich pointed out that there may be some misunderstanding as
40 there are several other actions related to the policies even though Dr.
41 Martinez is highlighting only those that relate to this Committee. For
42 example there are other actions that discuss the programs in place with
43 supporting and expanding them if needed. The larger context of the policies
44 show more of what the big picture is. Dr. Martinez will send out a survey
45 with the policies in context for the Committee Members to rank priorities.
46 They will be able to begin deeper discussions into those items at the next
47 meeting; put the pieces together and begin moving forward on policies.
48

1 The fourth policy highlighted is CP-4.1: focus and coordinate efforts to
2 recruit businesses and industries to Las Cruces that enhance economic
3 vitality and standard of living. The action is CP-4.1.1: make information
4 about incentive criteria available to businesses and industries seeking to
5 locate in Las Cruces. The fifth policy highlighted is CP-4.3: support
6 continued revitalization efforts of downtown that generate employment
7 growth. The action is CP-4.3.5: consider implementation of a business
8 improvement district to assure sustainable management of downtown
9 businesses.

10
11 These items are related to regulation. The next category prepared will be
12 procedure and then investment. Dr. Martinez suggested digging deeper
13 into the regulation part and break it into pieces by categories. The next
14 meeting can be planned to discuss regulation related items. Member Ulrich
15 asked if there are some resources that are available to look at some
16 regulations as they exist. Dr. Martinez stated that after the survey of
17 priorities they can send out the policies related to what they are working on
18 in order to not inundate the Committee with too much information.
19

20 **6. Future Discussion:**

21 **a. Topics to be Discussed:** Additional information will be brought to the next
22 meeting to allow deeper discussion into the policy specific items.
23

24 **7. Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at approximately 11:23 a.m.**
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30 Chairperson
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34 Approved: 12/18/2020