

Town of Richlands  
Industrial Development Authority  
February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2022

The Richlands IDA held a regular monthly meeting on February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2022 at 6:00 P.M. with the following members present:

Blake Ray	Jan White
Craig Earls	Gary Jackson
Adrienne Cordle	Cody Elswick

Members Absent: Larry Johnson  
Town Staff present: John O’Daniel  
Other Guests:

Blake Ray called the meeting to order.  
Cody Elswick gave the invocation.  
Jan White let the pledge of allegiance.

Jan White made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Craig Earls seconded the motion. All voted “Aye”. Motion carried.

Craig Earls presented the minutes from the February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022 meeting. Cody made a motion to approve the minutes. Adrienne seconded the motion. All voted “Aye”. Motion carried.

**New Business:**

Economic Development Updates:

Pop-up Richlands: John O’Daniel advised that we have 9 participants, and more have expressed interest. Registration will be open until the first class starts. The SBDC sends us notifications on who is registering for the program. The town also submitted funding request for \$25,000 to the Thompson Charitable Foundation. The town, and Tazewell county, funded the first 2 rounds (spring/fall). Additional grants will be needed to fund years 2, and beyond. Ashely has worked very hard on the program, and we thank her for all her help.

Greenway Pavilion Project: John O’Daniel advised that the IDA no longer works with the Greenway project, but this will be completed in a few weeks.

Grant Applications: The town is also looking at a USDA Revolving Loan Fund that has a town match of \$5,000 to receive \$75,000. These loans can be based on the prime rate, plus another amount decided by council. The application for these funds was submitted today. The Thompson Charitable Foundation grant for \$25,000 was also submitted today and will be decided in April.

Spearhead Trails:

Blake Ray, John O’Daniel, Jerry Gilbert, Shanna Plaster, and others met to discuss the Spearhead Trails and how we can help. We discussed that Blake can go to the Tazewell County IDA

meeting for assistance in drafting ordinances for side-by-sides on the roadways, based on VDOT approval. The Town of Richlands will need a resolution of support for allowing these on town roads. Our goal is to have the town work with VDOT when they make their decision. There are a lot of people that will travel from out of town to gain access to these trails. This will only be for side-by-sides, and not for small ATVs. Blake also mentioned that in a lot of areas they charge an occupancy tax for “short term” rentals (for example: AirBNB, hotels stays, etc.) Towns can use these as a way to support the local economy for travelers coming into the areas. The trails are planned to come into town via the West Fork area. Blake requested permission to attend the next Tazewell County IDA meeting for support for the Spearhead Trails. Gary Jackson made a motion to allow Blake Ray to go to the next Tazewell County IDA meeting to ask them to draft the resolution of support and the accompany ordinances to support access to the trails. Cody seconded the motion. All voted “Aye”. Motion carried.

#### Old Business – Business Incentives:

Adrienne Cordle assisted John O’Daniel in finding the list of previous business incentives that the town gathered information for. Based on the research, five were focused on: 1. Real estate tax exemption 2. Revolving loan fund 3. Occupancy tax for AirBNB, and other temporary “short-term” housing 4. Personal property tax exemptions. 5. BPOL tax scaling.

Blake mentioned that we should look at utility deposits as well. The group discussed that deposits seem high and the town keeps the deposit until the end of service. The group discussed the occupancy tax for “short term” housing for tourists and other visitors. Blake requested permission to discuss the occupancy tax opportunity at the next Town Council meeting.

Adrienne Cordle made a motion to allow Blake Ray to discuss the potential for an occupancy tax for “short term” housing like AirBNB/Hotels at the next Town Council meeting. Cody Elswick seconded the motion. All voted “Aye”. Motion carried.

The group also discussed the potential for incentives for real estate tax adjustments for improvements to existing structures. This will work well with the revitalization project. The group discussed that this requires commitments from the businesses.

#### Other Business:

Blake Ray advised that he will need to be in DC 3 days a week for his job, and will be out the next 3 meetings. The group discussed an alternate time.

Craig Earls made a motion to move the next IDA meeting to March 28<sup>th</sup> at 6:00P.M. Cody Elswick seconded the motion. All voted “Aye”. Motion carried.

Gary Jackson made a motion to adjourn. Jan White seconded the motion. All voted “Aye”. Motion carried.

Next Meeting March 28 at 6:00 P.M.