



## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION COUNCIL

### CITY OF ALBUQUERQUE

CHAIRMAN: DON POWER MEMBERS: ISAAC BENTON  
VICE CHAIRMAN: DEBORAH JOHNSON TRUDY JONES  
EX-OFFICIO: GARY OPPEDAHL GILBERT MONTANO

MINUTES from December 16, 2013

ATTENDEES:	STAFF:	GUEST:	ABSENT:
Chairman Don Power	Gary Oppedahl	None	Councilor Isaac Benton
Vice Chair Debbie Johnson	Deirdre Firth		
Mayor Richard J Berry	Doris Duhigg		
Councilor Trudy Jones	Jenny Walters		
Gilbert Montoya	Delaney Woodward		

**Call to Order**—The meeting was called to order by Chairman Power at 11:40 a.m.

**Mayor Comments/Update**—Mayor Richard J Berry appointed Gilbert Montano (Deputy Chief Administrative Officer) to be his representative as a voting member for the EDAct Council. The Mayor has asked the new Director of Economic Development, Gary Oppedahl to bring new ideas to the Council on making the highest and best use of the EDAct Funds.

There was discussion on previous EDAct meetings and the EDAct vision moving forward.

**Additions/Changes of Agenda and/or Minutes**—There were no changes to the Agenda and no one present for Public Comment.

MOTION: Approval of July Meeting Minutes By Councilor Jones  
SECOND: Vice Chair Deborah Johnson  
MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

**Review of Council history and actions**—Deirdre Firth provided an update on several items regarding the EDAct Council and Funds. The EDAct Council makes recommendations to the Economic Development Director in terms of how the funds should be spent. The City Council approved the EDAct legislation which includes four key areas to be considered when looking at funding: an expanded marketing program promoting the Albuquerque area as a positive business location, a closing fund to assist significant economic development projects through the Local Economic Development Act (LEDA), expand the community's programs for the retention and expansion of existing economic base companies, and the growth and development of technology-based entrepreneurs, and finally support for workforce development programs.

One page “guiding principles” were established: funding for Albuquerque area projects, areas of focus (4 key areas listed above), leverage other assets, high quality jobs, alignments of efforts, and viability.

One specific action that was taken in 2013 was to fund ThriveABQ. ThriveABQ is an easy-to-use, searchable database of all registered businesses in Albuquerque. The primary purpose of the website is to increase local purchasing at all levels, from large buyers to local residents (business to business, business to consumer). So far ThriveABQ has implemented a radio campaign, internship program, and water authority insert. A billboard campaign is still in progress along with a website update/redesign. Website traffic has increased twofold and business profile registrations have increased 10% since September. With the additional contacts collected by the interns and program elements still waiting to be launched, we are anticipating a sizable increase in registrations in 2014.

At the July 2013 EDAct meeting the council reserved up to \$4 million that could be used for a Job Creation Fund/Closing Fund, however it is pending the potential for other project recommendations that may come forward.

In regard to Albuquerque Public Relations/Metro Albuquerque Regional Marketing, DCI was only on contract for 3 months, conducting surveys with 250 site selection consultants with a 27% response rate. They set up meetings for Mayor Berry and a local company (Lavu) in New York with Bloomberg Business Week, The Wall Street Journal and The New York Times. Vice Chair Debbie Johnson helped with focus groups including Recruitment, Tech Start-up and Retention/Expansion, determining what are the positives, strengths, and challenges to growing or starting a business here. Ms. Firth had discussions with some regional marketing and local marketing developers that are trying to work with the Mid-Region Council of Governments (MRCOG) program to promote the region. She and Gary Oppedahl will continue to have discussions with these regional parties to further the efforts of promoting the region.

There was discussion regarding the local versus regional marketing in the metro Albuquerque area.

Councilor Jones inquired about the ThriveABQ funds being delayed until October 2014. It was determined to be a typo that should say October 2013. Gilbert Montano inquired if the ThriveABQ campaign had a social media aspect to the program. Ms. Firth replied that Christopher Chavez with the Economic Development Department could better answer the question posed, and she will ask for a report for the next meeting.

**Vision Moving Forward**—Gary Oppedahl, Director of Economic Development provided some new ideas on what might be the highest and best use of the EDAct funds for the City. These ideas are just in the early stages and Mr. Oppedahl will work on getting them in a complete format to be discussed in future meetings. He has some ideas and vision for the EDAct fund that could be important to create some needed momentum that many people will support. First, a coherent, clear, consistent message campaign (marketing) for the City and State could help change the mindset of not only the locals but also those outside the community. Second, expansion and retention is going well and can show a proven ROI that we may want to support. Third, a place where inventors can go to use a welder or band saw to make prototypes (TechShop). Some of these places in other

States have a brand name. One advantage of having a brand name is the potential of bringing the City some notoriety, however this could be done on our own. Idea: A TechShop (minus) for the solo-preneurs who need a back office with access to a webmaster and an accountant, as well as a TechShop (plus) for those who need access to laser optics and high-tech, high-end equipment (clean room). Assets at Intel, Sandia and Honeywell which are not being utilized could be made available for an entrepreneur to utilize and that then would bring in economic based dollars to the City/State. The TechShop plus and minus would not only help support entrepreneurs but also convey the idea that this City is the best place to be an entrepreneur.

Lastly, Mr. Oppedahl discussed mentoring one on one to educate graduating seniors that they own their own economic development, they can be entrepreneurs in this town, show them the assets and the opportunities we have here, so that our high school kids are aware of what is here and want to stay. Also, building off what is already going on. For example, the junior achievement program is in many schools and potentially we could add an entrepreneurial aspect to the program that starts K-12 and through college. Then when they graduate instead of being the “generation wait”, meaning they can’t find a job in their respective degree field, they can have a job in Albuquerque. Whether it is as an intern for an existing business or expanding JTIP for every Albuquerque graduate, or putting a group of them in a cubical type setting and say go start a company and make it work. There is a need in Albuquerque to overcome cultural barriers that look negatively on risk taking/failures. Instead we need to foster a culture that appreciates failure and understands that 6 businesses have come out of the failed one and having a mentoring and education program can help overcome some of these barriers. Mr. Oppedahl suggested we meet again in January and February where he will have a completed plan and vision that he hopes to engage in meaningful discussions with the Council in regards to the ideas he has put forth today just as an introduction.

There was discussion on the history of entrepreneurship in Albuquerque, support for marketing a better image for Albuquerque locally and regionally, the importance of keeping the younger generations in mind and to include one or two of the ideas proposed today to be presented at the next meeting.

**Update on EDAct Financials**—Canon will be submitting an application for LEDA funds in the amount of \$200,000 dollars that will be going before the City Council for approval. There are 2 more projects that are pending. One falls under retention/expansion and the other falls under the reserve fund.

There was discussion on creating an advisory group/person from the younger generations who could bring insight and advice to the Council. Gilbert Montano indicated he would look into who might fit the mold and let the Council know at the next meeting.

**Adjourn**—Meeting adjourned at 1:02 p.m.

MOTION: To Adjourn by Chairman Power

SECOND: Councilor Jones

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

Minutes Submitted By: Deirdre Firth Date 4-14-14  
Deirdre Firth, Deputy Director  
Minutes Approved By: Don Power Date 4-14-14  
Don Power, Chairman