



# CITY OF RIDGECREST

100 W. California Avenue  
Ridgecrest, CA 93555

## Economic Development Committee –MINUTES

June 8, 2022 • 5:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. • Council Chambers

### *Committee Members*

Kyle Blades, Chairman | Solomon Rajaratnam, Vice Chairman | Bernie Mondragon, Planning Commissioner | Bill Farris Jr., Planning Commissioner

**Call to Order** – 5:00 p.m.

**Roll Call** – Absent: Bernie Mondragon

**Approval of Agenda** – All in favor

**Approval of Minutes** – All in favor

- Draft minutes from Regular Meeting on 4-13-2022

**Public Comment of Items Not on the Agenda-** none

### **New Business -**

- ICSC Conference Review (May '22)  
Staff Report (McKenzie):
  - Overview of Recruitment Process
    - Contact/Recruitment (points of contact, demographics, market info, etc.)
    - Site Selection (traffic counts, visibility, zoning, size, etc.)
  - Update from HdL Consultants:
    - Many positive meetings including but not limited to: Wendy's, Panera, Jersey Mike's, Ross, Smart & Final, WSS, Five Below and with Benderson/Collins Co. re: Kmart site
    - Need to push the Ross, Burlington and possible Smart & Final transactions forward at aggressive economics for Kmart development
  - Update from Collins Company re: Kmart site:
    - Five Below: Likes the site and wants to move forward (we just need to identify our anchor first)
    - Aldi: Felt the site was a tough sell (since they are only 20,000 sf.)
    - Target: Not on their list of focused areas for the next 12 months – we'll keep working it but it's nothing that will happen soon.
    - Ross: Gave it a green light and they will produce an LOI.
    - WSS: William Argueta, VP RE said they would entertain an end-cap or freestanding building.
    - Burlington: They did not commit but still want to be sold. Consultants will come up with some sales numbers of local competitors to entice them moving to the next step. Benderson will work on preparing a detailed report of some of their smaller market stores to discuss
    - Smart & Final: Same as Burlington – we will continue to work this and try to get an LOI.
    - Party City: The broker had a family issue and needed to cancel our meeting. We will continue to discuss off-site.

### Committee Comments:

- Blades: importance of developing relationships over time

- Strand: interest in community due to momentum following Earthquake Recovery efforts; challenge to compete with other markets
  - Strand: City staff relationships important for recruitment – potential to make decisions re: development opportunities
  - Farris: changes in development = more appeal to Ridgecrest market; future growth is long-term process (i.e. Panda, Chipotle, etc.); success of recent development helps drive recruitment
  - Blades: Placer.ai data useful with outreach data (i.e. City of Tehachapi); potential for Ridgecrest to invest in similar software
  - Farris: importance of connecting with regional reps. (i.e. City of Tehachapi) re: strategy for outreach/recruitment
  - Strand: HdL Consultant to assist with setting meetings and gathering data
  - Rajaratnam: Moving in the right direction for the future
  - McKenzie/Strand: primarily retail focus at ICSC; City reps explore all options for entertainment opportunities; difficulty in recruitment based on demographics to be financially viable; (i.e. Gymnastics, Trampoline); reliance on City govt. to provide entertainment services (requires staffing and funding)
- Public Comments:
- Nick Wakley: question re: potential for city run programs? Can other local residents/businesses qualify?
  - Blades/Strand: difficult to match potential/idea with capital to turn profit

### Old Business -

- Economic Development Outreach/Resources – Update  
Staff Report (McKenzie):
  - New resources added to economic development page: <https://www.ridgecrest-ca.gov/449/Unique-Location-Untapped-Market>
    - Ridgecrest Community Profile: Provides a more in depth overview of Ridgecrest, including information about location, demographics, traffic, retail sales, and recent development projects.
    - Economic Outlook Report: Provides detailed information and projections for the demographics and economy of Ridgecrest and the surrounding areas. Prepared for the Chamber of Commerce by the California Economic Forecast and presented at the Economic Outlook Conference in February 2022.
    - Commercial Development Opportunities & Available Retail Properties: Provides information about commercial properties available for development, including location, surrounding tenants, zoning & size, and contact information. Features the most high traffic sites, not a comprehensive listing of all available properties, contact the Economic Development Department for more info or to request an addition.
  - Upcoming Business Development / Projects Map Updated May 2022
    - Next projected update: August 2022
    - Contact the Economic Development Dept. to suggest additions/modifications
  - Franchisee Outreach
    - Potential conferences: IFA, Franchise Expo West – most likely not beneficial for City reps.
    - City staff will work on developing local outreach specific to UPS Store including outreach to nearby franchise owners (testimonials, potential expansion), sharing company info for potential franchisees, connecting interested parties with UPS reps, & coordinating site visits

Committee Comments:

Public Comments:

- Nick Wakley: More entertainment options @ IFA conference?
- McKenzie: more focus on connecting franchises with potential franchisees
- Strand: need to continue to improve quality of life to encourage recruitment/retention
- Blades/Strand: potential to discuss economic forecast for long-term development strategy (i.e. Finance Committee); need to address future challenges in funding for sustainability

**Future Agenda Items -**

- Placer.ai Platform
- Balsam St. Rebranding: Potential for street name Change or other Improvements (requires public/private partnership with City and affected businesses)
- Active Role in Community Events (i.e. Fireworks Show)
- Inventory/Status of Vacant Buildings/Properties

**Announcements -**

**Adjournment – 5:52 p.m.**

**Meetings are currently open to the public. To participate remotely, please call: 1-650-479-3208, meeting access code: 182 348 6283.**