

Town of Richlands
Industrial/Economic Development Authority
February 3, 2025

The Richlands IEDA held its regular monthly meeting at 6 p.m. with the following present:

Dr. Brandon Buskill	Lynna Mitchell
Craig Earls	Joseph Vance
Jeff Casey	Cody Harman
Dillon Smith	

Members Absent:

Town Representatives: Ronnie Campbell, Kiesha Cole, Laura Mollo, Jordan Bales, Mike Thomas

Guests: Dr. Glen Harrison

Dr. Brandon Buskill called the meeting to order.

Lynna Mitchell advised that we need to add approval of the December minutes to the agenda. Joseph Vance made a motion to approve the agenda with the addition. Lynna Mitchell seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the agenda was unanimously approved.

The minutes from the December 2nd meeting were presented for approval. Craig Earls made a motion to approve the minutes. Lynna Mitchell seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the minutes were unanimously approved.

IEDA By-Laws

Dr. Brandon Buskill: Printed the group the by-laws and requested that the group look at and recommend changes. We would like to get some examples from other towns. Craig Earls will email Tazewell's example to the members.

Real Estate Acquisition – Teen Venture

Dr. Brandon Buskill: Hi, Dr. Glen Harrison, welcome to the IEDA. Do you want to speak?

Dr. Glen Harrison: In the past, I was a coordinator in building the Teen Center and Critterville. Teen Venture was made a 501c3 in 2001. We raised approximately 1.3M dollars to renovate the old town hall and build the second building with the skate park. For the most part, the building was remodeled by the community. All new electricity and plumbing had to be constructed from scratch. We were happy to get it, and it served the community well. During COVID, it really knocked us for a loop, and out of COVID, we went through a lot of staff turnover. We are currently in the process of opening, and we have 27 kids signed up along with a new security system. This system was put in place last November. We also finished the kitchen and will be working with Feeding SWVA to provide food for the students.

The Town Council proposed selling the building to Teen Venture for \$50,000, with the option of selling the building back to the town if Teen Venture no longer exists. We did get \$60,000 from the Thompson Foundation, which gave us some funds to operate. If the IEDA agrees to sell Teen

Venture the property, we have a grant application that we intend to send out tomorrow. We need grant money to pay for the building. The roof will also need to be fixed; during the last snow, we had water in the art room. We applied for funding for this, but did not get it last year. We want to get a grant to pay for the building and to get more kids in. Based on the grant cycles, this can take till the end of the year. The tricky part for us with the fundraising to purchase the building is that if we do not get other grants to operate, then we will lack funding to stay open.

(The group discussed the Teen Venture sources of funding)

Jeff Casey: How long do you think it will take for your requests on grant money?

Dr. Glen Harrison: Generally, the ones we want need a letter in February, then ask us to apply if they are interested. Then in July, they usually meet to decide who is awarded. We feel we can get a grant to purchase the building this year. It is easier to get larger chunks of money if you will have the physical location.

Lynna Mitchell: Do you recruit kids to come?

Dr. Glen Harrison: The idea was to build things in one building that typically would go out of business if separate. We have primarily relied on the schools and word of mouth mostly. We currently charge \$5 per month. We are working to get additional volunteers as well.

Dillon Smith: When was Teen Venture approached to buy the building?

Dr. Glen Harrison: Last summer, but more serious discussion really took place in early December. However, no formal deal or contract was offered.

Dillon Smith: So, the timelines are not movable.

Dr. Glen Harrison: There is a yearly cycle for most grants, but some are throughout the year. We do have a grant writer and have had good success so far.

Cody Harman: How long did they (Town Council) tell you have to get the money to purchase the building?

Dr. Glen Harrison: Six months, but most grants are over six months to get into the funding cycle. All our grants are looking for \$50,000 to purchase the building, but we can split grants and other things to make up if one large grant does not get awarded. Again, the hard part with the fundraising in a short time is that it can take from our operating expenses.

Keisha Cole: Do you do any fundraising?

Dr. Glen Harrison: We have done a few coupon things that the kids can sell, and it helped cover the monthly fee for the kids as they bring in the money from selling. We currently have a lease that auto-renews with the town. We opened in 2009.

Laura Mollo: Town Council has a copy of it, and the lease ends in 2045. The lease was not renewed formally over those years.

Craig Earls: Is it set for auto-renewal?

Mike Thomas: Yes, but this year it is up for renewal.

Jeff Casey: Can you give them a tentative agreement that they can purchase?

Mike Thomas: If both parties agree.

Jordan Bales: Do you have any hard assets?

Dr. Glen Harrison: No, we do not have a steady income. We are mostly dependent upon grants.

Cody Harman: Do you have a volunteer board?

Dr. Glen Harrison: Yes, we have a full board of 9. The Executive Director is a non-voting member.

Dillon Smith: What is a home run situation for you?

Dr. Glen Harrison: We want an official offer (contract) that we can put into a grant application. We want to apply to the foundations to cover the expenses. Until we have an official offer, we cannot act on it. However, keeping the lease as-is instead of the purchase is also an option.

Cody Harman: We can't make the offer yet because we do not have it.

Lynna Mitchell: The consensus is that the Town Council is okay with this.

Joseph Vance: What was the initial offer?

Dr. Glen Harrison: \$250,000 was the initial offer and I took it to the board, and they did not feel we could do that. We can possibly do it over several years.

Jeff Casey: How much investment do you have?

Dr. Glen Harrison: The investment over the years is approximately \$1.3M.

Joseph Vance: So, what is the current lease?

Dr. Glen Harrison: I think we started in 2005, then the 5-year auto-renewal.

Dillon Smith: Before you shut down, how many kids did you have?

Dr. Glen Harrison: We had 50 a day at some points prior to COVID.

Lynna Mitchell: How many from inside the town?

Dr. Glen Harrison: Most are from Richlands or Cedar Bluff, but most do not drive. They can also ride the bus to the Teen Center after school.

Keisha Cole: Do you ever rent the building?

Dr. Glen Harrison: Yes, but mostly to larger groups like the Scouts and church youth groups. The lease allows us to use two areas as sublet. Also, Feeding SWVA will be feeding the kids in the community from Teen Venture. They provide all the food. We did have snacks for the kids prior. We also have a youth pastor that comes in and provides pizza as well.

Craig Earls: What is a reasonable time for you to fund the \$50,000? It seems like closing a deal like this prior to the end of June is unachievable based on the typical grant cycles.

Dr. Glen Harrison: We won't know until the end of the year.

Dillon Smith: What if you don't get the deal by the end of the year?

Dr. Glen Harrison: We will need a lease to continue to operate.

(Group discussion for the options presented.)

Dr. Glen Harrison: We are looking forward to knowing by the end of January 2026 if we can get the grants. Some are awarded throughout the year.

IEDA Closed Session:

Dr. Brandon Buskill made a motion to enter a closed session to discuss the following:

- Pursuant to Section 2.2-3711(A)(3) – Real Estate
- Pursuant to Section 2.2-3711(A)(7) – Legal Matters

Lynna Mitchell seconded the motion. All voted "Aye". Motion carried. The IEDA proceeded into a closed session.

Upon concluding the closed session, Craig Earls made a motion that the IEDA return to the regular session. Lynna Mitchell seconded the motion. All voted "Aye". Motion carried.

Craig Earls made a motion that the IEDA only discussed the following items during closed session:

- Pursuant to Section 2.2-3711(A)(3) – Real Estate
- Pursuant to Section 2.2-3711(A)(7) – Legal Matters

Lynna Mitchell seconded the motion. All voted “Aye”. Motion carried.

Dr. Brandon Buskill: Do we have any actions to take after the closed session?

Joseph Vance: In the interest of soliciting public engagement on this matter, I make a motion that the IEDA does not wish to take conveyance of the Teen Center property from the Town of Richlands with the intention to go into an agreement with Teen Venture to purchase said property for \$50,000. Dillon Smith seconded the motion. With no further discussion, all voted “Aye”. Motion carried.

Dr. Brandon Buskill made a motion to adjourn. Jeff Casey seconded the motion. It was unanimously approved, and the meeting adjourned.

Next Meeting: March 3rd, at 6 p.m.