

**MINUTES OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
AND VILLAGE BOARD
March 15, 2023**

The meeting of the Libertyville Economic Development Commission and Village Board was called to order at 7:30 a.m. at the Libertyville Village Hall, 118 West Cook Avenue, Libertyville, Illinois.

Members Present: Chairman John Cortesi and Commissioners Brian Grano, Andrew Herrmann, Thomas Kreuser, and Dan Marks.

Members Absent: Commissioner Dmitry Dukhan, Steve Martin, and Edward Werdell

Board members present: Mayor Donna Johnson; Trustees Adams and Connell.

Staff Present: John Spoden, Community Development Director and Heather Rowe, Economic Development Manager.

Others Present: Jennifer Johnson of Main Street Libertyville, Bruce Ponsaran of Baxter Credit Union, and Dan Schlicksup of Joyful Gourmet.

Minutes: The Commission approved the minutes of the February meeting (motion-Marks/ second-Kreuser/ abstain-Grano).

Business Recognition Program Recommendation

Chairman Cortesi summarized the prior meeting discussions relative to Commission interest in starting a business recognition effort, and he referred to the memo in the meeting packet outlining a potential approach. The Chairman requested Commissioner feedback. A suggestion was made to add an additional award category to recognize notable new businesses (minimum of 1 year in operation). The Commission felt running the awards once a year was appropriate so not to dilute the award value. After additional discussion, the Commission recommended proceeding with the program as outlined in Staff's memorandum, but with the added category (motion-Grano/second-Marks).

A suggestion was made to reinstitute an annual Business Breakfast at which the awards could be presented. There was interest in combining this with a veteran's recognition. Additional discussion occurred regarding the need to brainstorm the program for the breakfast to bring value to attendees. The Chairman indicated that further discussion on the Business Breakfast would be the focus of a future meeting.

Ms. Rowe noted that Staff has arranged to incorporate the previously suggested Mayor's business highlight article in each VillageViews newsletter starting with the upcoming edition.

Dining Promotions Update

The Chairman referenced the Dining website traffic memo included in the Commission packet. At the Chairman's request Ms. Rowe reviewed website activity. She pointed out that figures clearly show how paid Google and Facebook ads are driving strong customer traffic to the dining website and that while on the website the average user spends a considerable amount of time previewing restaurant offerings. Ms. Rowe also noted that the activity level clearly picked up in the beginning of the fiscal year when the Village's consultant, Beeline, began incorporating animated and photocentric ads. Based on the activity, Staff plans on continuing a similar pattern of advertisement into the new fiscal year.

Ms. Rowe also displayed the draft Libertyville Dining Guide which is being finalized for print and distribution. She mentioned it is a popular piece which is regularly requested. 35,000 copies are distributed to area hotels, businesses, tournaments facilities, etc.

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In response to Commissioner inquiries relative to Shop60048 paid advertising, Staff noted that they will be brainstorming with Beeline as to how to better address Shop60048 advertising which hasn't seen the same level of customer response given its broader category of business types. While paid advertising in this area has been paused in the interim, Shop60048 messaging is still being incorporated into Village communications.

The Commission generally discussed how to help businesses better promote and present themselves to customers and online (how can they use the web and social media, update Google descriptions, thank customers for patronage, etc.).

Other Communications and Discussions

Mr. Spoden provided an update regarding local development activity including: an outpatient surgery group's purchase of the former Daily Herald office building, the granting of final development approvals to the Lake County consolidated 911 center and CPAH's senior living facility, Lake County's application for a 5-year update on their Libertyville property long-term plan, Advocate's completion of the ICU expansion at Condell and their renovation of existing rooms, Liberty Junction construction, Trimm site interested developer discussions, sale of the Sports Complex to Canlan, and the Theater site status and owner discussions. Discussion ensued relative to the Theater property condition and ownership plans.

Ms. Johnson mentioned that the Main Street organization held a successful volunteer night, and welcomed more volunteers to assist with their upcoming programming.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:36 AM (motion-Grano/ second-Marks).

Respectfully submitted,

Heather J. Rowe, AICP, MLAI
Economic Development Manager