

MINUTES OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
November 18, 2020

The virtual meeting of the Libertyville Economic Development Commission was called to order at 7:31 a.m. via GoToMeeting (Motion-Marks/Second-Werdell).

Members Present: Chairman John Cortesi and Commissioners William Abington (joined 7:54am), Brian Grano (phone only), Thomas Kreuser, Dan Marks (left 8:20), Steve Martin, Sara Rolsma, and Edward Werdell.

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: John Spoden, Director of Community Development; Nick Mostardo, Finance Director; and Heather Rowe, Economic Development Coordinator.

Others Present: Kevin Considine, Lake County Partners; Stephanie Katsaros; Chris Popjoy; and Michael Comilla.

Minutes: The Commission approved the minutes of the August meeting with a correction noting Commissioner Werdell absent (Motion-Kreuser/Second-Marks).

COMMUNICATIONS AND DISCUSSION:

Consideration of Proposed 2021 Meeting Schedule: The Commission approved the calendar (Motion-Werdell/Second-Kreuser)

Village Finance Director Update: Chairman Cortesi introduced Mr. Mostardo to review current Village financials and sales tax information. Mr. Mostardo provided the following highlights and answered related questions:

- The Board adopted an amended budget in October and financial statements show accounts are tracking 99% on budget against the benchmark.
- Beginning December through March staff will commence the budgeting process for FY2021-22.
- November sales tax distribution received based on August sales shows a \$50,000 revenue loss compared to prior year. November distribution of August non-home rule sales tax receipts were approximately \$205,000 (roughly \$50,000 less than anticipated for the month).

Lake County Partners Update: Chairman Cortesi welcomed Kevin Considine, President, Lake County Partners who provided an update on county business conditions and assistance available. Mr. Considine provided the following highlights and participated in a discussion with the Commission.

- Lake County unemployment has recovered some from April, at 7.7% in October, down from a peak around 15% in the year. Chicagoland is seeing approximately 11% unemployment.
- Most larger corporations have their office staff working from home.
- County distributed its last round of checks for the small business recovery grant program on Friday, with a total of \$17 million given to 1200 businesses. 33% minority owned and 44% women-owned businesses benefited. There was wide geographic distribution of funds. Approximately 126 Libertyville businesses received \$1.27 million in funds.
- Other financial assistance available includes the state's BIG grant, Comcast minority owned business grant, and a ComEd assistance program.
- Industrial space demand continues to be strong.

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- Questions surrounded grant distribution, federal assistance, unemployment extensions, etc.

Dining: Chairman Cortesi inquired how things are going with restaurants and asked for update on local supports. The following was noted:

- Village extension of out-door dining permits through winter. Several tent applications received.
- Board authorized refund of 50% of liquor license fees, checks have been mailed.
- Discussion included: phasing impacts on indoor/outdoor dining, triggers for moving out of Tier 3, feasibility of using tents with restrictions and weather conditions.
- Village continues to promote shopping locally and dining options and is working on a winter-long promotional campaign.
- The Commissioners noted their appreciation of the Village Board's support of the restaurants.

Libertyville Rewards: The Chairman noted that the program is underway, with the customer eligibility period ending a couple weeks ago. Commissioner Marks indicated that the majority of the dealers fully utilized their vouchers, the advertisement gave a positive outlook on the Village dealerships and the program, sales were robust in October, and he thanked the Village for their assistance with the program. The Chairman felt that the Village did a good job marketing and promoting the program, which was very visible. Ms. Rowe noted that customer data has been entered and gift certificates should be mailed within the next week. Approximately 100 businesses are participating and will receive further redemption instructions by email. The Commission then discussed general vehicle sales. Commissioner Marks noted that November sales have been a bit quiet comparatively. They discussed the vacant Mitsubishi dealership, noting that the property had been sold to a dealer group but no specific plan for occupancy yet announced. They also discussed potential for a new dealership at the site which Infiniti will vacate.

Comprehensive Plan: At the Chairman's request, Mr. Spoden noted that the Plan is complete and that the Plan Commission gave unanimous recommendation for approval on November 9th. The next step is a Committee of the Whole meeting with the Village Board in January.

South Milwaukee Avenue Corridor Study: Ms. Rowe noted that the study stems from priorities and discussions in the Comprehensive Planning process. The Village hired SB Friedman, a sub-consultant of the Comprehensive Plan project to assist in the endeavor. The goal is to look at the area roughly 176 just south of Rockland to see what level of improvement and redevelopment is appropriate, whether this can be supported by the private sector or if a financial tool is required to activate change, and what type of tool might be needed and supportable. A kick-off meeting has been held, data provided, a staff concept discussion is scheduled, and the next step is discussion with elected and appointed officials.

The Commission discussed the challenges of small narrow lots, numerous property owners, numerous driveways, limited frontage, roadways with heavy traffic, and high price points. Several commissioners noted that increased structure height may be needed to make the redevelopment cost feasible.

Development Activity: Mr. Spoden and Ms. Rowe reviewed and discussed development activity with the Commission. The following was highlighted: earthmoving has begun for the Encompass hospital development, Advocate is discussing building out the fifth floor of the hospital tower, Midwest Industrial received ARC approval of their industrial project which now goes on to public hearing before the Plan Commission, staff has met with the contract purchaser of the Foulds building, staff has been in active discussion with a potential residential developer for the rear portion of the Young property,

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the County has not set a timeline for making decisions on the Winchester House property, the theater property owner has not yet applied for “economic hardship” demolition consideration, the Village has a short-term lease of the Sports Complex to GLSA, and residential building permits are active.

The Commission expressed their opinion that there is value in moving swiftly with consideration on any applications received by the theater property owners, as having an active site is more beneficial to the downtown. They Commissioners also mentioned the limited feasibility of reuse of the structure. Should redevelopment of the property be proposed, they suggested that residential units on the upper floors would have the benefit of bringing additional customers to the downtown.

The Commission would like to review the Economic Development Strategy in the first few months of 2021. When reviewed, they would like to move the theater site to the top five sites on the list and they would like to review the Sports Complex activity.

With no further business the meeting was adjourned at 8:44 AM. (Motion- Abington/Second- Kreuser).

Respectfully submitted,

Heather J. Rowe, AICP
Economic Development Coordinator