

MINUTES OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
January 20, 2020

The virtual meeting of the Libertyville Economic Development Commission was called to order at 7:30 a.m. via GoToMeeting (Motion-Marks/Second-Werdell).

Members Present: Commissioners Brian Grano, Thomas Kreuser, Dan Marks, Steve Martin, Sara Rolsma, and Edward Werdell.

Members Absent: Chairman John Cortesi and Commissioner William Abington.

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

Others Present: Michael Comilla, Resident

The Commission elected Commissioner Kreuser as Chairman Pro Tem (Motion-Werdell/Second-Marks).

Minutes: The Commission approved the minutes of the November meeting (Motion-Grano/Second-Marks).

COMMUNICATIONS AND DISCUSSION:

COVID-19 Local Impacts – Updates & Discussion: The Chairman requested updates from staff. Ms. Rowe noted that as of this week the state changed the Restore IL metrics allowing Region 9 to move to Phase 4, Tier 2. This expands group size to 10, opens up fitness classes, etc. Details are in the Commission packet. Metrics are trending in a more positive direction which will hopefully translate into reduced restrictions. The federal PPP program reopened with a 2nd draw option and eased restrictions, webinars explaining the application procedures will be shared with businesses. A National Main Street grant will open tomorrow for a brief period. One local business was successful with this grant in the last round. There have not been new business closure announcements, though staff is aware of weakness in the business community.

The Commission discussed restaurant status. Commissioner Grano indicated that a reopening to 25% will greatly help the restaurants. Commissioner Martin noted the number of fitness businesses in town, and that any increase in their operations will make a great difference in revenues. The commission discussed prohibitions on evictions and that these only are tied to residential structures.

Mr. Mostardo reviewed current Village financials and sales tax information, and the upcoming budget process. The non-home rule sales tax is going to allow needed capital projects to proceed. He then reviewed the sector specific sales tax figures for the last available quarter. Automotive, Drugs/Misc Retail, and Non-Restaurant Food sales were consistent or even slightly higher than 3rd quarter last year. Drinking & Eating Places revenues were down quite a bit. Furniture/Household/Radio and General Merchandise/Clothing/Misc goods were down 2nd quarter but rebounded some in the 3rd quarter. Lumber/Hardware rebounded a bit in 3rd quarter, and was up for the period from 2018. Overall 3rd quarter saw some rebound but was down around \$200,000 from the prior year. He then reviewed Non-Home Rule revenues. The Commission discussed internet revenues.

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Economic Development Strategy: The Chairman noted that the Commission has been reviewing the strategy annually for updates to help guide staff efforts and Village decision making. Ms. Rowe noted that the strategy recommendations have been integrated into the draft 2030 Comprehensive Plan. The Chairman asked staff to provide an update on activity at the key development sites listed. Ms. Rowe and Mr. Spoden provided the following updates which the Commission commented upon:

- **Libertyville Sports Complex Land:** the land is under contract to an industrial and retail developer, preliminary approvals were granted, the industrial party has applied for final considerations (continued by the Plan Commission until February), closing is anticipated later 2021.
- **Trimm:** the property is under contract, the developer proposes single-family attached and detached products, conceptual plans including a land swap were reviewed with staff, but timing for their project is undetermined.
- **Foulds:** the property is out of litigation and has sold to a gentleman that owns other Libertyville commercial properties, he doesn't have a specific plan yet for the site but has stabilized it for the winter, his broker is marketing the site as available for tenancy or redevelopment, a clear title will help move activity forward on the site, there has been a number of interested parties, the draft Comprehensive Plan includes several site concepts and suggests a mixed-used redevelopment inclusive of some residential on upper floors.
- **Young Property:** the landowner is under contract to sell the rear of the site to an experienced residential developer who proposes an attached residential concept, he proposes extending utilities/access roads/stormwater to the remaining commercial property along Milwaukee Ave which the Young family can market for future commercial development.
- **Innovation Park:** the building is near 80% occupancy, most of the employees of their tenants are not in the building due to COVID but the tenants are still committed to their leases, Avexis and Valent Biosciences have already expanded within the building, Medline has reworked their buildout plans but is making progress towards construction/occupancy, EVBox has already requested additional office space, Intermatic is relocating offices from Spring Grove, RollUp is making progress in leasing small warehouse/light assembly type business suites, and Innovation Suites recently opened making available small office spaces with shared amenities.
 - Comments: The Commission recommended moving this to priority #11 given that it is now redeveloped and actively leasing up.
- **Former Mitsubishi/Infiniti Sites:** Napleton Auto Group purchased the former Mitsubishi property but has not yet announced plans for the site. Infiniti is completing new dealership construction near Green Tree and expects to be relocated by end of March. Their building is for sale/lease, and the Village has had inquiries from a party interested in acquiring the property for auto sales.
- **Liberty Theater:** The Board denied the property owner's request for certificate of appropriateness, they would still have the right to reapply for consideration of economic hardship to proceed.
 - Comments: Several commissioners questioned whether the building is reusable and expressed that they do not want an extended vacancy on the site. They expressed that a concept with ground floor commercial and residential above may be more financially viable. Height considerations would be important to look at to help make the project successful.
- **Mallory Industrial Campus:** the site has been identified as desirable for employment generating uses. There's about 50 buildable acres. The property remains available, but the site is not being actively marketed. There are a number of sizeable recapture costs due on the site with development. A party has recently been inquiring about the property and staff has connected them to ownership.

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- Comments: The commission noted that speculative construction may be unlikely at the site given costs and location on the edge of Village borders. They felt this site may sit awhile before developed.
- **Prairie Crossing Station Commercially Zoned Land:** The draft 2030 Comprehensive Plan opens up the possibility of a residential component once the adjoining landfill closes.
 - Comments: the remoteness of the site may indicate it will sit for awhile until other nearby development occurs.
- **Meyer Farm:** The land investor continues to hold the property and isn't actively marketing though they do have a broker. The Village gets infrequent inquiries, this may change with the development of other nearby properties.
- **Southeast Corner Milwaukee & 176:** The property owner has shown the Village a concept for development for their business enterprise, includes some assembly.
- **Milwaukee Ave Redevelopment – Rt 176 to Rockland:** The draft 2030 Comprehensive Plan looks at this corridor closely, and it is a focus of the South Milwaukee Avenue Corridor Study now underway, the intent is to evaluate what type of redevelopment or improvements could occur, and what level of investment the Village is interested in considering. The owner of the True Value property and the corner parcel continue to market a land lease option which hasn't been well received by interested parties who prefer traditional land acquisition.
 - Comments: The Commission noted that redevelopment would work best on the TrueValue block if the various landowners cooperated. This is difficult now since they have different disposition approaches. It may be helpful to look at alternate uses such as a residential component, though height may be more difficult to achieve here given adjoining single-family.
- **Other Commission Comments:**
 - The Commission noted that a major consideration in site prioritization should be revenue implications on the Village. Also of importance would be employment, tourism, and other uses that bring people to the community.
 - The Village should look at ways to remove impediments to development, be it process or zoning, or otherwise.

Ms. Rowe indicated the staff will provide edits to the Strategy for the Commission's consideration at the next meeting.

Comprehensive Plan: At the Chairman's request, Mr. Spoden noted that the draft Plan was presented to the Village Board the prior evening and will come back to the Board for adoption.

Development Activity: Mr. Spoden noted that Kinzie Real Estate's townhome proposal at the former credit union site on Fourth Street will go to public hearing Monday evening. The Commission discussed the potential for Libertyville Days to proceed later in the season and were hopeful it could proceed in some form.

With no further business the meeting was adjourned at 8:50 AM. (Motion- Grano/Second- Rolsma).

Respectfully submitted,

Heather J. Rowe, AICP
Economic Development Coordinator