

City of Crystal Lake Economic Development Committee
September 23, 2015 – 7:30 a.m.
Municipal Complex – City Council Chambers Conference Room

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 a.m. by Mr. Fowler.

Roll Call/Attendance

Members DeHaan, Haleblian, Leech, Reece, Saidler, and Fowler were present. Members Affrunti, Dalzell, and Maule were absent.

James Richter II, Planning and Economic Development Manager, was present from staff. Pam Cumpata with McHenry County Economic Development was also present.

Approve Minutes of the August 25, 2015 Meeting

Mr. Haleblian moved to approve the minutes from the August 25, 2015 EDC meeting as presented. Mr. Reece seconded the motion. On voice vote, members DeHaan, Haleblian, Reece, and Fowler voted aye. Members Leech and Saidler abstained. Motion passed.

Public Participation

There was no one present who wished to speak.

Presentation - First Institute's Training Programs

Mr. Richter said that due to the date change for this meeting, a representative from First Institute will be at the next meeting in October.

Presentation – McHenry County Economic Development Corporation

Ms. Cumpata said she was recently asked by a reporter about what phone apts will do to the workforce and what it will look like in the future. It is hard to keep technically savvy people. The McEDC recently conducted a survey looking at why younger people don't want to live out in this area. If it is because there is no "Wrigleyville" type areas or are there other reasons. They are currently compiling the findings.

Ms. Cumpata said they have been working with Boone and Winnebago Counties to attract businesses. They are working on how to better position themselves. There are grants available for communities for various things but we needed to do CEDS to be allowed to go after the available grants and to have CEDS we must be part of a multi-County group. Mr. Richter said Boone and Winnebago counties are both needier than we are and would that hurt McHenry County. Ms. Cumpata said she doesn't believe it hurts us. Winnebago County has more brown fields and we need more infrastructure. She said the EDA is looking for projects with the most impact.

Ms. Cumpata said they have an open meeting on November 17 to discuss various items. They need to be mindful of how the discussions develop.

Ms. Cumpata said the State of Illinois is the State and with no budget there are not many positive things at this time. She said there are companies asking themselves if they should expand in their current location or if they should move elsewhere since they are being actively "courted" by neighboring states. A positive is that some communities are seeing movement in vacant properties.

Mr. Richter asked if the new leadership in the DCEO is better. Ms. Cumpata said it is getting better and she is trying to get a new representative for our region that would be more helpful. She added that the DCEO is trying

to make changes. Also there was a bill pending to make the State's EDC a public/private partnership. Unfortunately there were many "add ons" to the bill that didn't belong and it's stuck in limbo.

Ms. Cumpata said School District 155 is launching new programs for internships, etc. One of the programs is patterned after the successful program in Barrington High School. There are also small grants available to small businesses who are thinking of expanding their business internationally. The grants are for translating materials, etc. The grants are sponsored by JP Morgan/Chase and are not for large sums but the money could offset some expenses.

Mr. Richter asked about the certified sites program. Ms. Cumpata said there has been good traffic on the site but locally and internationally. They need to find out who has been looking so they can contact them directly. She added that the amount of time spent on the site by one person is very good. They need to add more sites to the "inventory" and hope to do that by reducing the required amount of information for each site.

Mr. Haleblian asked about Plum Tree National Golf Course in Huntley. He had heard that it was going to be turned into a music venue such as Ravinia. Ms. Cumpata said she had heard that as well and there would be a concert held there soon. Mr. Reece said there aren't many places in that area to eat or purchase food to take to the venue. Mr. Haleblian said this could be good for Crystal Lake since we are the last area that has a variety available.

Mr. Richter said the McHenry County Sports complex on Ridgely Road has approval to hold small concerts but there are several upgrades to the building that must be completed prior to the concerts being held there.

Ms. Cumpata said the annual dinner will be October 27. Next year will be their 25th year and they have special things planned. Mr. Fowler asked if the nominating applications were received for the Crystal Lake businesses. Ms. Cumpata said they were received but she had not looked at them.

Mr. Richter said he is still trying to set up a date for the tour of Matthews Corporation. He will keep everyone informed.

Business Anniversary Update

Mr. Richter said the presentations will be made at the October 6th City Council meeting. He would appreciate any of the members to attend.

Mr. Richter said he has the plaques for Community Investment for Martin Chevrolet, Regal Showplace and Inland Real Estate. He said the property for Regal Showplace was recently sold by Inland after they invested in all of the upgrades for the property. The members suggested that the plaque be given to Inland since they made the initial investment in the property.

Manufacturer Tour Update

Mr. Richter said that was discussed when Ms. Cumpata was present.

Business Development Update

Mr. Richter thanked Mr. Saidler for the contact information for Union Pacific regarding a possible rail spur. Mr. Saidler said if the site the company was looking at is not conducive for a rail spur, he suggested the vacant property just east of Main Street and north of Congress Parkway. That might be an area where several businesses could share a rail spur which would reduce the cost for all of them.

Mr. Richter mentioned several other businesses that were relocating to Crystal Lake from other communities. There is also a possibility that the former Food Warming building on Route 31 north of Pauly Toyota will be purchased by a company relocating from a Fox River Grove. He added that Comcast – X-Finity will be occupying the two smaller tenant spaces next to Best Buy.

Mr. Reece asked about Black Diamond relocation. Mr. Richter said the site that Black Diamond was looking at had several issues that needed to be resolved and that they found a site elsewhere that was a better fit.

Mr. Richter said there are three parties interested in the former Sports Authority building and several hotels interested in the former Silver Nugget property both on COG Circle. The Switzer building on Route 14 and Pingree has a new owner – the son purchased the property and is currently upgrading the façade.

Mr. Reece suggested that both Burlington Coat Factory and the property owner be given Community Investment Awards. They have both invested a lot of money in that building. The members agreed.

I Shop Crystal Lake Update

Mr. Richter asked if any of the members would like to contact businesses to give small gift cards - \$5 to \$25 – to be used as prizes for the I Shop Crystal Lake video contest. Mr. Leech said he would give Mr. Richter a few gift cards, and Mr. Saidler offered to assist with that as well.

Comments and Suggestions from the Committee

The members did not have any comments.

Organization reports:

Downtown Crystal Lake

Mr. Fowler said Johnny Appleseed is this weekend. Mr. Leech said the Cottage will be holding a pumpkin carving contest for the kids to be held at 11 a.m.

McHenry County Economic Development Corporation

Mr. Fowler said this was discussed when Ms. Cumpata was present.

Chamber of Commerce

Mr. Richter said there will be a town hall meeting at Park Place tomorrow at 7:30 a.m. and there will be 4 areas discussed that relate to businesses.

City of Crystal Lake (Staff)

Mr. Richter said they have been contacted by a company who provides satellite locations to rent office space for short periods of time. He had spoken with the President of the company who is looking forward to expanding into this area. Mr. Reece said there are other businesses that do this as well and these satellite locations are big business.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 a.m.