

City of Crystal Lake Economic Development Committee
October 27, 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 Affrunti, DeHaan, Haleblan, Leech, Maule, Reece, Saidler, and Fowler were present. Mr. Dalzell was absent.

James Richter II, Planning and Economic Development Manager, was present from staff.

Approve Minutes of the September 23, 2015 Meeting

Mr. Reece moved to approve the minutes from the September 23, 2015 EDC meeting as presented. Mr. DeHaan seconded the motion. On voice vote, members DeHaan, Haleblan, Leech, Reece, Saidler, and Fowler voted aye. Members Affrunti and Maule abstained. Motion passed.

Public Participation

There was no one present who wished to speak.

Presentation - First Institute's Training Programs

Mr. Richter said he received a call from First Institute late last night. They will not be able to come to this meeting and would like to come to the next meeting at the beginning of December.

Business Anniversaries and Manufacturer Tour Update

Mr. Richter said the business anniversary awards were presented to Dr. Kathy Schroeder / First Dental Smiles, Piano Trends, and Thunderbird Preschool. If there are businesses that are celebrating a milestone anniversary next year to please let us know so we can research the business and contact the owners.

Mr. Richter said he is working to set up a tour of Mathews Corporation. Also they have not heard back from Martin Chevrolet yet for presenting their Community Investment Award.

Mr. Richter said the next tour will be Curran on November 10 at 4 p.m.

City EDC and Crystal Lake Chamber of Commerce Collaboration

Mr. Richter said when the Chamber's committee was reviewing their goals, it was clear that there is overlapping goals with the City/EDC and that together, the Chamber and EDC could work together to pursue completion of some of these goals.

Create a welcome packet for businesses to distribute to new employees

Mr. Richter said we could jointly create a "Welcome" packet for new employees at larger employees, particularly manufacturers. The City and Chamber would contribute items to the packet. His question is what would we like to see added to the packets? Mr. Reece asked what could the City add to the packet. Mr. Richter said we may be able to provide a folder for the information and a letter from the Mayor. Mr. Saidler asked how many Three Oaks passes could the City give up. Mr. Richter said he wasn't sure that could be added but that he would check. Mr. Reece suggested one family pass for up to 5 people to enter the area. Ms. Maule suggested they create a "Top 10" things you need to know about the City such as vehicle stickers.

Mr. Reece suggested that items from the library and Park District be added as well. Mr. DeHaan said a recent copy of the City newsletter would be helpful. Ms. Saidler said their employees who live outside of Crystal Lake always shop at lunch. It would be helpful to give them information on shopping areas. Mr. DeHaan suggested adding demographic and school information. Ms. Maule said both of those would be included in the Chamber's information.

In response to Mr. Saidler's question regarding how businesses will know that these are available, Mr. Richter suggested that they send letters to the businesses that they have toured. In addition to reaching out to see how they are doing this provides an opportunity to inform them that the welcome packets are available. Ms. Maule said that the Chamber makes them available as well. Mr. Fowler asked that a draft packet be available to review for the next meeting.

Create targeted focus groups within the manufacturing community.

Ms. Maule said the Chamber's idea would like be to hold small round table discussions four times a year to get conversations started regarding manufacturer needs in this community. She said we would need to draft questions and help facilitate the discussions at the round table. Mr. Reece suggested holding these in the Chamber's Board room. Mr. Affrunti said this sounds more like an MCEDC project. Ms. Maule said the visions are different. Theirs is Countywide while ours is Crystal Lake. She would like McHenry County College to attend since some comments from employers are that the workforce is not prepared.

Mr. Reece suggested that they ask businesses why they chose Crystal Lake over other communities and why are they staying here. That will tell us what we are doing right and what need to improve on. He added that this is a long term goal and it should not be for manufacturing only. Ms. Maule said they would like to include all larger employers and perhaps hold different groups for different sectors, manufacturing, technology, medical, etc.

Mr. Leech said each type of business has different needs. Mr. Richter said this is a three-step process: crafting the questions; sending invitations; and attending the round-tables. Ms. Maule added that there would also be follow up. Members Affrunti and Leech said they would volunteer to assist with this initiative. Mr. Reece said he would need to check his schedule but is possibly interested.

Begin to build bridges within other organizations to meet with manufacturers, working with the McEDC and the City.

Mr. Richter said the EDC is currently building bridges with our tours. They try to have a tour per month.

Suggestions for possible future tours are: General Kinematics, TC Industries new facility, Knaack, Altran, and Spartan Adhesives.

Develop a strategy for manufacturer attraction.

Mr. Richter said this can be completed after the focus groups when more information is available.

Increase like group programming for targeted groups such as franchises.

Mr. Richter said at the ICSC, the City is informed about companies who are looking for franchisees. Ms. Maule suggested to send a letter to investment groups. Mr. Leech said he is not sure why those companies are having an issue attracting franchisees. Mr. Richter said when companies are asked about coming to Crystal Lake, sometimes their immediate reply is they don't have the franchisees for our area and ask for help locating franchisees.

Mr. Leech asked if there is a national average for the number of restaurants per population. He said that many people feel they are over restauranted.

Ms. Maule said they are looking for people with high incomes that want to diversify. Mr. Leech said we want businesses to flourish in Crystal Lake not just to attract businesses.

Mr. DeHaan said they need to be careful so it doesn't look like the City is endorsing those investments. He suggested sending the letter to attorneys and CPAs not to investment counselors. Mr. Leech said with the smaller/cheaper franchises you are working for the company and not yourself. He added that they companies need to be registered with the UFOC.

Mr. Richter said he will draft a letter for their review.

Mr. Fowler asked why other Wendy's in the areas such as Algonquin and Cary have been remodeled and not ours. Mr. Haleblian said it might be the ownership of those stores.

I Shop Crystal Lake Update

Mr. Richter said there has been a slight drop in "likes" for I Shop. The consultant is suggesting spending money on advertising. He said there are posts daily. In response to the video contest, Ms. Maule suggested for the videos that they do a "man on the street" type interview instead of people having to think up something clever, video tape it and post it on the website. That takes time. This would be simpler.

Mr. Leech suggested using video of the holiday parade to promote Crystal Lake. That is an amazing event. He also suggested that it be promoted outside of the City limits. He doesn't know of any other community close by that has such a parade. Mr. Reece said someone videotaped the entire parade last year and we could possibly use 30 seconds of it. He would prefer it not be longer than that.

Comments and Suggestions from the Committee

There were no comments from the Committee.

Organization reports:

Downtown Crystal Lake

Mr. Fowler said Johnny Appleseed was record breaking this year. Mr. Haleblian has heard that the Thursday night "Ladies Night Out" has been very successful.

Mr. Reece asked how the Business Recycling seminar went. Mr. Richter said he will get the information to the members.

Chamber of Commerce

Ms. Maule said the Community Harvest will start next month. It will be in the same location as last year which is the former Monkey Joe's site next to Hobby Lobby. She added that Fresh Thyme is also providing donations of fresh meat and fruits/vegetables to the Food Pantry.

City of Crystal Lake (Staff)

Mr. Richter said Garfields will be moving across the street and take over the soon to be vacated Aldi. The new Aldi location will be opening on November 12. He added that Container International will be moving from Palatine to the former Brew & Grow on Route 176. They are planning to build an addition.

Mr. Richter said Pauly Toyota is selling their former site on Route 14. He handed out copies of the executive summary for these properties. Staff takes these materials to groups such as ICSC and sends them directly to restaurants and developers. The executive summary includes the property information as well as the City's vision for that area.

Mr. Richter said they recently met with 25 N Coworking, which offers remote temporary office space. Ms. Maule said it is mostly for virtual workers who miss the community of an office. This has a lot of nice perks. The owner stated they have a very successful business in Geneva. The ideal location would be on Woodstock Street near the train station. Mr. Haleblan said he was thinking of doing that to a portion of his building. The Committee was aware of the concept and the track record of the proprietor and suggested diverting resources to attract other businesses instead.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 a.m.