

**City of Crystal Lake Economic Development Committee**  
**June 14, 2016 – 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 Dalzell, DeHaan, Maule, Reece, Saidler, Schroll, and Fowler were present. Members Affrunti and Leech were absent.

Heather Maieritsch, Economic Development Manager, Katie Cowlin, Planner, and Pat Eagle, Social Media Coordinator, and Brynn Jeffries with Joe & Associates were present from staff.

**Approve Minutes of the April 26, 2016 Meeting**

Mr. Saidler asked to update page 2 paragraph 5 from Ms. Saidler to Mr. Saidler.

Mr. Reece moved to approve the minutes from the April 26, 2016 EDC meeting as amended. Mr. Dalzell seconded the motion. On voice vote, members DeHaan, Maule, Reece, Saidler, Schroll, Fowler voted aye. Mr. Dalzell abstained. Motion passed.

**Public Participation**

There was no one present who wished to speak.

Ms. Cowlin introduced Heather Maieritsch the City's new Economic Development Manager, who started yesterday. The Committee members introduced themselves. Ms. Maieritsch gave her background and she looks forward to working with the Committee.

**I Shop Crystal Lake report**

Ms. Cowlin said staff had sent information to eight companies regarding the I Shop Crystal Lake contract and received five replies. After evaluation of the companies, Joe & Associates was awarded the contract.

Ms. Jeffries said they are always asked "Who is Joe?". The answer is that Joe is your customers. The only opinion that matters is Joe's opinion and it is her job to get inside of Joe's head. She said that many business owners feel they know what Joe is thinking, but they don't. Ms. Jeffries added she loves market research.

Ms. Jeffries reviewed the plan for the upcoming year including getting to know what Joe reads, watches, etc. They will continually measure what is doing well and what is not and discontinue platforms that test low. She added that they need to know the City's goals, but also keep an open mind. They will use the 80/20 rule which is 80% of the posts are useful, interesting to the audience, and something the audience wants to read and share. Then the 20% is information about sales, etc.

Ms. Jeffries said people take pride in being a "townie" and there could be a "Townie Tuesday" showcasing profiles of business owners who have history in Crystal Lake. Also sharing old photos, not necessarily historic photos, gets high engagements. Those types of posts bring back memories and are most often shared. This also can be cross-promoted with historic photos and events. Ms. Jeffries said she has been in contact with Diana Kenney of Downtown Crystal Lake. They are also suggesting a scavenger hunt. There could be something hidden, i.e. a gift card, and clues lead the users to the hiding place at a business. If the hunter goes to that business and gives the "secret phrase" they will receive the prize.

Ms. Jeffries also suggested a feature on businesses and their owners. Why they started their business, etc. She is suggesting we re-launch the program with an e-mail and that we can use the contact information that we have for many of the businesses that was first put together when the I Shop Crystal Lake program started.

Ms. Jeffries said that the reports she provides to the Committee will be based on the information that is asked for by the members.

Mr. Fowler thanked Ms. Jeffries and said he feels that the I Shop Crystal Lake program is county-wide. He said they are trying to attract shoppers from the surrounding areas. Now the Committee has a minimal budget and their goal is to promote shopping in Crystal Lake. The residents who have been here for a number of years know what we have here. The problem is the differences between Crystal Lake and Algonquin. Mr. Dalzell said many years ago Crystal Lake was the only large shopping area. Mr. Fowler said until Randall Road expanded.

Ms. Maule said they need to look at Crystal Lake as a destination. She said that McHenry has a diminished retail business environment and those people are driving to either Wisconsin or Lake Zurich. Mr. Saidler said when the I Shop program started and they were giving gift certificates to people who spend a certain amount, we had information on what communities the shoppers were from. Ms. Cowlin said she will look for that information. She added that Crystal Lake has an advantage of having both thriving small businesses as well as big box stores. Ms. Maule said the question is how to balance the downtown area with stores on Route 14 and Route 31. Mr. Fowler said the people who live here benefit from all who shop here. The sale tax dollars go to the general fund so there is no additional tax on your real estate taxes.

Ms. Maule asked how many people who live in Crystal Lake shop on Randall Road. Mr. Scholl said it depends on what is being purchased.

Mr. Fowler said they had talked in the past about an I Shop Crystal Lake gift card but it would have been too expensive to accomplish. Ms. Cowlin said there are I Shop Crystal Lake checks which can be purchased. Ms. Maule said many merchants don't give change back if the purchase is under the amount of the check. Mr. Fowler added that the checks can be used at businesses within the City unlike gift cards which could be used anywhere.

Mr. Fowler thanked Ms. Jeffries for attending the meeting and looks forward to working with her.

### **Business anniversaries and tour updates**

Ms. Cowlin said the City recently celebrated six business anniversaries. There can be more awarded in the fall. If the members have any suggestions to please let staff know so we can follow up. Also portions of the proclamations were published in the City's newsletter. Mr. Fowler said many of the businesses are very proud of the plaques they receive and have them displayed for their customers to see. He suggested that photos of the displayed plaques or from during the presentations be added to the I Shop or Crystal Lake social media.

Ms. Cowlin said they have reached out to several businesses about tours of their facilities. The next tour is set for Tuesday, June 28 at 3:30 p.m. at Vo-Tech.

Mr. Fowler said he will follow up with Mr. Haleblian regarding the tour of Althoff. Ms. Maule said she has not heard back from Knaack. Ms. Cowlin added that Container International would like to hold off on a tour until they have moved in which would be in the fall.

**Organization reports:**

Downtown Crystal Lake

Mr. Fowler said a question was raised about services that the City provides to the downtown area that are not provided in other portions of the City. There was a discussion at City Council regarding a special service area for the downtown to pay for those services. He was not sure what happened during that discussion.

Ms. Cowlin said the annual trolley tour was this past weekend and all of the tours sold out. Also the recent event held at the Raue Center went well.

Mr. Fowler said they are planning to hold the second annual Gazebo raffle dinner. They are waiting for the approval from the City and Union Pacific.

Chamber of Commerce

Ms. Maule said their annual dinner was a sell out and many people stayed after to network. She reviewed the awards that were given out. Ms. Maule said they have been contacted by the US Chamber of Commerce. There will be an award given to Senator Mark Kirk on August 19<sup>th</sup> in the afternoon. Also there will be an economic development forum held at Park Place on June 16 and the next will be on August 11<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Maule said an upcoming mixer will be held at Three Oaks. She added that Mike Splitt will be the Grand Marshal of the Independence Day parade.

McEDC

Ms. Maule said there will be a series of events put on by the Makers Movement to help others starting out in business.

City of Crystal Lake

Ms. Cowlin said the City has given out two grants for Aroma Café and Bentleys Pet Shop. She added that there will be a new business, Welder's Supply, that will be moving into the used car dealer on South Main Street. The business is from Wisconsin and they have one other store in Rockford.

Ms. Cowlin said Retro Bistro will have a soft opening tomorrow. Ms. Maule said she has heard great things about their other restaurant. Mr. Saidler suggested that the City hold a "restaurant week". It is done in Chicago and many other communities. Mr. Dalzell suggested contacting the McHenry County Restaurant Association.

Ms. Cowlin asked if the members had any suggestions for the City's newsletter to let her know. They don't want to show favoritism to any particular business or area. Mr. Saidler asked if the newsletters are sent to the businesses. Ms. Cowlin believes they are sent using the water billing addressing. Ms. Maule suggested that an article be done as to why shop stores in Crystal Lake vs. other communities. What is the benefit to all. Mr. Scholl suggested continuing noting new businesses. Mr. Saidler added that it should be all businesses not just retail. We should highlight manufacturing and industrial companies too. Mr. Reece suggested professional services. Mr. Scholl said there are businesses in Crystal Lake that most people have no idea are here.

Mr. Fowler asked if the City has a sales database. Mr. Saidler said a CRM would be valuable. Ms. Maieritsch said the City doesn't have a business license but there is some information that can be retrieved from the State.

**Comments and suggestions from the Committee**

Mr. Fowler asked about the opening of the wakeboard park. Ms. Cowlin said there has been a delay. They were not able to get as much work done over the winter as they would have liked.

Ms. Maule said there are many communities that have a program called “Home Town Heroes” which will be going before the City Council on June 21 for discussion. It consists of a banner that is put up for 6 months and she was informed that there are banner brackets along Route 14 that could be available to use. She said this program would go through the VFW.

**Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 a.m.