

City of Crystal Lake Economic Development Committee
March 28, 2017 – 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. Reece.

Roll Call/Attendance

Members DeHaan, Leech, Saidler and Reece were present. Ms. Maule arrived at 7:35 a.m. Members Affrunti, Dalzell, Schroll, and Fowler and were absent.

Heather Maieritsch, Economic Development Manager, and Pam Cumpata, President of the McHenry County Economic Development, were also present.

Approve Minutes of the February 28, 2017 Meetings

Mr. Reece stated that a quorum was not present at this time and the approval of the minutes is tabled until there is a quorum.

Public Participation

There was no one present to speak.

I Shop Crystal Lake Update

Ms. Maieritsch said things are going well and they have had success with the current consultant. They have spoken with the City Manager about extending this contract for an additional year and then go through the RFP next year. There was a provision in the contract for an extension and staff is waiting for the decision.

Business anniversaries and tour updates

Ms. Maieritsch asked the members to let staff know about anniversaries of 25 years or more from last year that have not been recognized. The presentations are made to two businesses at one Council meeting.

Ms. Maule arrived.

Ms. Maieritsch said they are moving forward with the Investment Awards for Auto Tech, Aldi, Garfield's, and Amish Furniture. They will be reaching out to the businesses regarding tour dates and the plaque will be presented to them at that time.

Mr. Reece said they now have a quorum for the approval of the minutes from the previous EDC meeting.

Approve Minutes of the February 28, 2017 Meetings

Ms. Maule moved to approve the February 28, 2017 EDC minutes as presented. Mr. DeHaan seconded the motion. On voice vote, Members Maule, Saidler, and Reece voted aye. Members DeHaan and Leech abstained. Motion passed.

Organization reports:

Downtown Crystal Lake

Ms. Maieritsch said Olive Tap has new ownership and they will be hosting a grand re-opening event on April 21 from 4 to 6. There will be raffles and a 15% discount during the event on products. Benedicts To Go will be moving to the former Blue Ridge Mountain Outfitters space. There is someone interested in moving into that vacated space.

Chamber of Commerce

Ms. Maule said April 22 will be the annual Community Clean Up Day. This year they will also have a shredding event, and collection of used shoes, fabric, and pharmaceuticals. The Chamber is also taking nominations for their annual awards. The nominations are due April 4th. Also the Chamber will be sending out an alert to their members to encourage their employees to vote in the local election. These local elections have the greatest impact on residents and their daily lives.

McEDC

Ms. Cumpata said the local elections across the County are very important. There is a lot that can change in the County with the elections.

Ms. Cumpata said one of the best properties for sale in Crystal Lake has reduced their asking price. Also the information regarding the Harvard property was leaked out. It will be hard for the business to get a workforce. She added that McEDC has been working with the high schools on an incubator program and the “final pitch” will be given soon. She said it is important for the business community to get involved with the schools. Ms. Cumpata said she has seen a lot of talent in the schools and the schools are embracing the business community.

Ms. Cumpata said an event was recently held for trucking companies to help fill the need for truckers. It went very well. Healthcare will be hosting an event in May. These events are not job fairs but provide educational information about openings and areas of growth within the field.

Ms. Cumpata said they need to get the word out about Metro Chicago Exports. There are grants available for businesses exporting products not services. There will be a round table discussion on April 12. The application is not difficult to complete and it takes the businesses to the next level.

Ms. Cumpata said there are established businesses overseas that are purchasing companies in the U.S. that are already established and have assets such as buildings, distribution, etc. We are in a unique location that we are close to both Rockford and O’Hare airports with easy access to both. There are not many places that are close to two international transportation hubs.

Ms. Cumpata said she recently testified in Springfield about the tax credit program which will be expiring in April. We need this tool to help retain companies. There is pending legislation that will extend that program.

Ms. Cumpata said staff has done a great job to help keep companies in the City. McEDC has been very successful with bringing businesses and the City together to discuss and make a plan of attack to meet the needs of both parties.

Ms. Cumpata stated that they have subscribed to Lighthouse 360 which is an attraction tool. When someone clicks on that e-mail, the County is given their e-mail address so we can contact them to find out what they are looking for and to see where they can help.

Ms. Cumpata said the City is considering a Tech Park on the north side of Crystal Lake near MCC. The City is moving forward with fiber optic in that area. They need to be sure there is water and sewer capacity in that area.

Ms. Cumpata informed the Committee that the State is looking into expansion of Route 47 but the issue is the train viaduct. There have been discussions of a roundabout just south and north of the viaduct.

Ms. Cumpata said retail, as we know it, is changing due to the on-line shopping. This will change funding streams for communities. Ms. Saidler said he heard on the news this morning that Amazon will be charging sales tax starting in April. Ms. Maieritsch said retailers are being hurt by the returns from on-line purchases. Currently in-store transactions have greater per person sales than on-line purchases. The retail market is changing and retailers are scrambling to adjust. They don't have a spot to display the merchandise and they don't have the setup to continue sending the merchandise back to their warehouse.

Ms. Cumpata stated that things are very active recently.

Mr. Reece thanked Ms. Cumpata for coming to speak to them.

City of Crystal Lake

Ms. Maieritsch said the City is putting together a brochure for the Tech Park showing that we have the infrastructure needed, housing for employees, skill set, and people that would prefer to work local don't necessarily want to travel hours a day to work. Ms. Maule asked who they are marketing this to. Ms. Maieritsch said they are trying to narrow that down but they don't want to exclude anyone. They plan to attract larger employers. Ms. Cumpata said they need to be sure there is water and sewer capacity in that area.

Mr. Leech asked if there is any movement on the property at the southwest corner of Main Street and Crystal Lake Avenue. Ms. Maieritsch said development had stalled for a time since the lead member was out of the office. They are now starting to move forward again.

Ms. Maieritsch said Bucky's is moving forward again now that the weather has broken. They have poured the concrete and hope to be open in April. Also Tommy's has received their permit and are moving forward. Breaking Bread will also be opening a second location at Country Corners. In addition, the former Teddy's Liquors building is in the process of being sold and torn down to build for a restaurant with drive-through. Ms. Maieritsch said both Jimmy John's in Crystal Lake are under new ownership.

Comments and suggestions from the Committee

Ms. Maule said there will be a discussion on April 17 regarding the culinary arts program at MCC and they are looking for restaurant owners input and feedback.

Ms. Maule said there is legislature pending requiring employers to provide sick time for employees whether full or part time. It is stuck in committee at this time.

Mr. Reece said California was considering legislation on using prevailing wage for both public and private projects. Usually it takes 5 to 10 years for that to be everywhere.

Mr. Leech said he recently contracted a different garbage company. The one he was with did not recycle and he throws away several hundred cases of beer bottles a week. This new company does recycle his glass bottles which is reducing the amount of garbage his business creates which also saves him money, as well as being more environmentally friendly.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 a.m.