

City of Crystal Lake Economic Development Committee
July 24, 2018 – 8:00 a.m.
Municipal Complex – City Council Chambers Conference Room

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 a.m. by Mr. Fowler.

Roll Call/Attendance

Members Affrunti, Leech, Maule, Reece, Saidler, and Fowler were present. Ms. Maule arrived at 8:20 a.m. Members DeHaan and Schroll were absent.

Heather Maieritsch, Economic Development Manager, and Councilman Haig Haleblian were present.

Approve Minutes of the June 12, 2018 Meetings

Mr. Reece moved to approve the minutes from the June 12, 2018 meeting as presented. Mr. Affrunti seconded the motion. On voice vote, members Affrunti, Leech, Reece, Saidler, and Fowler voted aye. Ms. Maule had not arrived yet. Motion passed

Public Participation

There was no one present who wished to speak.

I Shop Crystal Lake Update

Ms. Maieritsch said this is the first month that I Shop Crystal Lake did not gain any new followers on Facebook. For the past several months there was a significant increase. Staff has been notified that our consultant has taken a new position and they will see how this will impact our contract.

Business Investment Awards and Business Tours

Business Tours and Ribbon Cutting

Ms. Maieritsch said on Thursday, July 26 there will be a brief tour and plaque presentation for Sunset Logistics.

Mr. Fowler said they made the presentation to Willow Crystal Lake. Ms. Maieritsch said this is a great reuse of the space and it draws people to the downtown area. Mr. Reece asked if we know that people are coming to the downtown from Willow Crystal Lake. Ms. Maieritsch said they are using some of the downtown businesses for their catering. Mr. Fowler added that the church has reached out to the downtown merchants to see how they can help.

Mr. Fowler asked who would be attending the presentation at Sunset Logistics on Thursday. Mr. Reece and Mr. Leech said they would be attending.

Organization reports:

Downtown Crystal Lake

Mr. Fowler said they have received requests for different events and bringing back the car shows in the downtown area. They are not sure they want to have them in the downtown again. Mr. Saidler said he drove by the current location and it seemed cramped. Ms. Maieritsch said from her experience car shows don't often bring the merchants more business.

Ms. Maule arrived at this time.

Mr. Haleblian said they could consider holding an annual car show downtown modeled after the show held in Geneva.

Chamber of Commerce

Ms. Maule said the Chamber has experienced a turnover in staff recently which makes a significant change for everyone. They will be hosting several forums for the candidates. Finally the Independence Day parade went off without a hitch.

McHenry County EDC

Ms. Maule said she is working with McEDC to pull together companies with 50+ employees as a focus group and hold an Open House at their facility on October 4 for District 155 families. Already G & M and General Kinomatics have agreed. Also the Northwest Herald will have an article on the event. They are also planning on creating a manufacture event mimicking the signing day for athletes going to college with a signing day for students who commit to go directly into the workforce. She said that McEDC is trying to pull together all of the Chambers from the county and have a round table.

City of Crystal Lake

Ms. Maieritsch said Plum Garden has revamped their menu and will now serve lunch Tuesday-Friday. The former Hines Lumber site at 95 Crystal Lake Avenue will be going up for auction and the bids are being accepted until August 15th. Mr. Reece said there is also adjacent property available which could help with the design of the project.

Ms. Maieritsch said staff is reviewing a concept plan for apartments and townhouses for the property to the west of City Hall at 110 W. Woodstock Street. The petitioner is looking at 3 or 4 buildings 3 or 4 stories high. She said that both Pets Supplies Plus and 7-11 with a gas station are moving forward. There are several potential uses looking at the former Wendy's restaurant on Routes 31 & 176.

Mr. Haleblian asked about the gas stations on Route 14 and Popeye's. Ms. Maieritsch said the gas station at Route 14 and McHenry will be opening soon as an Amoco and Popeye's is moving forward with their permits.

Ms. Maule said the Steinhafels will not be opening until 2019. The plans keep getting adjusted.

Ms. Maieritsch said there are three parties interested in the former Boston Market space and Cooper's Hawk is interested in the Crystal Court center where Walmart was previously. Mr. Leech said that Mariano's has proven that Crystal Lake is a viable market and draws from surrounding areas.

Ms. Maieritsch said there is another business interested in the former Sports Authority building. She said the use would be an entertainment venue similar to Pinstripes. Ownership wants to close on the property by the end of the year.

Ms. Maule said she has been approached by a Chamber member to ask the City to reconsider the number of gaming machines from 3 to 5. Ms. Maieritsch asked if it was Fire Bar since they had recently reached out and were contacted by the City Manager's office regarding that request. Ms. Maule said it was and they had received the reply. The owners were asking the City to reconsider. They recall that when the gaming was approved the Mayor stated that they will start with a maximum of three machines and it could be increased to five. Ms. Maule said she does not recall that being said. She added that the owners would prefer the number of machines allowed be based on the square footage of the business's space.

Ms. Leech said Cottage On The Go at 256 Oak Street will be opening September 10th. They will have carry out and catering from that location.

Ms. Maieritsch said there has been no luck as far as filling the available restaurant on William Street that closed due to the owner's health issues. There have been several businesses interested in the space and have been informed that they have not received any response from the owners. Mr. Leech said it is very small inside the building and the use needs to appeal to the downtown movement.

Ms. Maieritsch said the Olympic Restaurant and the apartment above is for sale. Also Wickham Interiors is also for sale. They are both retiring. She added that the book store of for lease and the gift shop next to the ice cream shop is also looking for a sublease.

Mr. Leech said when he first joined the EDC his vision of the downtown area was to have it a pedestrian area with outdoor cafes with limited vehicle traffic. Ms. Maule said Libertyville did something similar along Milwaukee Avenue and it has been very successful. Mr. Affrunti said Chicago did that many years ago with State Street. It was closed to traffic and was a pedestrian area. It has since been turned back to allow traffic. Mr. Leech said it is more the image and the feel and is something to consider. Ms. Maule said there are large employers in Libertyville that contribute to that area being successful after work. Mr. Haleblian suggested Mr. Leech come to a City Council meeting and present his suggestion.

Comments and suggestions from the Committee

There were no comments from the members.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 a.m.