

City of Crystal Lake Economic Development Committee
June 11, 2019 – 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, DeHaan, Leech, Magit, Rainwater, Reece, Saidler, and Fowler were present. Mr. Schroll was absent.

Heather Maieritsch, Economic Development Manager, was present from staff. Jeffery Poynter with McHenry County Workforce Development was also present.

Approve Minutes of the April 23, 2019 Meetings

Mr. Reece moved to approve the minutes from the April 23, 2019 EDC meeting. Mr. Saidler seconded the motion. On voice vote, members Affrunti, Leech, Magit, Rainwater, Reece, Saidler, and Fowler voted aye. Mr. DeHaan abstained. Motion passed.

Public Participation

There was no one present who wished to speak.

Guest Speaker

Ms. Maieritsch introduced Jeffery Poynter with McHenry County Workforce Development. Mr. Fowler said that Mr. Poynter should be included in all of their business tours in the future. That will give him an opportunity to meet the business owners.

Mr. Poynter said the McHenry County Workforce Development is a Federal funded program run by McHenry County. They help with job training of employees and work with employers to find what their needs are to help fill vacant positions. They have a business resource team that has members from many business areas, who share ideas on how to service businesses. He said they also help employers cover the cost of job training. Mr. Poynter said they also provide training for current employees for the technical changes that have taken place in businesses.

Mr. Poynter said the Workforce Development also provides a wage study for employers. The survey comes out in November and they have past studies available on the website.

Mr. Affrunti asked if most of the inquiries are for blue collar workers. Mr. Poynter said they are mostly blue collar but they also see adults and out-of-school youth. They are also working with high schools in McHenry County to share alternative opportunities to college.

Mr. Leech asked if they get involved with unions. Mr. Poynter said they work with IBEW and McHenry County Building Trades. Mr. Leech asked how people learn about apprenticeships. Mr. Poynter said the IBEW apprenticeships are for 3 years and then a full time job with commitment to be a union member for 6 years. Mr. Leech asked if they have presented to schools. Mr. Poynter said the high schools are very aware of this program and the unions do go to the schools regularly. Mr. Leech asked what is the major shortage in McHenry County. Mr. Poynter said we need more employees but that is not just in McHenry County, it's all over.

Mr. Reece said he has used this program several times and it is great.

Mr. Fowler thanked Mr. Poynter for coming to the meeting.

I Shop Crystal Lake Update

Ms. Maieritsch said the consultant created charts similar to the previous consultant. Posts have been found to be most successful at noon and 8 p.m. Recently the most activity was the posting for 815 Chophouse which recently opened.

Business Investment Awards and Business Tours

Mr. Fowler asked if Camfil is close to completing their renovations. Ms. Maieritsch said she will contact them again. Chicago Plastics recently completed their expansion and received their certificate of occupancy, a business tour of their new facility will be planned for early Fall.

Mr. Fowler said 75% of the former Eisenmann building on Virginia Road is occupied.

Mr. Fowler asked if there were any tours for September or October. Ms. Maieritsch said she doesn't have any firm dates yet.

Organization reports:

Downtown Crystal Lake

Mr. Rainwater said the annual flower sale was recently held and despite the weather it was the second largest sale they have had. The farmers' market started two weeks ago and people are coming downtown. They partnered with The Home Depot who hosted a Kids Club event during the farmers' market. It was very successful. He added that the new speaker system for the gazebo will be installed soon.

Mr. Rainwater said they have discussed having a Christmas tree event where groups decorate trees in the gazebo park.

Chamber of Commerce

Ms. Magit said the annual dinner was successful with District 155 Superintendent, Steve Olson, giving one of the speeches. The annual golf outing is June 24th and there are a few openings remaining. The Independence Day Parade will be on July 7th and any interested business should register soon.

Ms. Magit said the newsletter has a new layout and the website will receive an upgrade. They will also be implementing a new text program to notify members of an event. She said the Chamber will be closing at 1 p.m. on Fridays for the summer.

Mr. Fowler said it's nice to see District 155 understood the needs of the community.

MCEDC

Ms. Maieritsch said the MCEDC Board will be meeting today. MCEDC is currently working on a new branding campaign for McHenry County and will have a new website live next week.

City of Crystal Lake

Ms. Maieritsch said she recently attended the ICSC in Las Vegas. She met with a number of potential restaurants and retailers and returned with a number of positive leads.

Ms. Maieritsch said there will be some changes by the end of the summer for several existing retailers. The former Pauly Toyota site on Route 14 has been sold and they are in the process of subdividing the property into four lots. Two of the users are known – Discount Tire and Raising Canes. Five Below will be moving into the former Dress Barn location and the owners of the center have tenants for the vacated building. Mr. Reece asked if Barnes and Noble will be moving into that space. Ms. Maieritsch said no but they said they still want to remain in Crystal Lake.

Mr. Reece asked how Steinhaffels is doing. Ms. Maieritsch said they are doing very well.

Mr. Leech asked if the City receives any feedback from restaurants that have opened here. Ms. Maieritsch said she has reached out to some and found they have strong sales here in Crystal Lake. She added that there is another contract pending for the former Sports Authority.

Comments and suggestions from the Committee

Mr. Leech asked if there is a lack of people in McHenry County, is there is push to bring people here through incentives like affordable housing? Mr. Poynter said approximately 45% of the workforce leaves McHenry County daily for their jobs. There is not a lot of high tech companies here and they commute to Chicago or Oak Brook. They have found that McHenry County has low entry level pay and people drive to Lake County for even slightly higher pay. He added that there has been a rise in wages recently. Mr. Poynter said they also have people leaving their jobs due to retirement.

Mr. Fowler asked about a tour of Aptar. Ms. Maieritsch said they are not interested in hosting a tour.

Mr. Affrunti asked about the former Boston Market. Ms. Maieritsch said it will be Halzberg Diamonds. Then there will be a small space available next to the jewelry store. Mr. Affrunti asked about the Plaza. Ms. Maieritsch said there is an ice cream shop and On Angel's Wings who will be moving into spaces in the Plaza. She added that there will be a popcorn and ice cream business opening soon in the former Papa John's location that has been vacant for some time.

There were no other comments from the members.

Adjourn

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