

City of Crystal Lake Economic Development Committee
February 25, 2020 – 8:30 a.m.
Municipal Complex – City Council Chambers Conference Room

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 a.m. by Mr. Fowler.

Roll Call/Attendance

Members Affrunti, Fritsche, Leech, Reece, Saidler, and Fowler were present. Members DeHaan and Rainwater were absent.

Heather Maieritsch, Economic Development Manager, Jodi Hartman, Director of Finance and Haig Haleblian, City Councilman were present.

Mr. Fowler welcomed Phillip Fritsche, Crystal Lake Chamber of Commerce Director and newly appointed EDC member, to the meeting.

Approve Minutes of the October 22, 2019 Meetings

Mr. Reece moved to approve the minutes from the October 22, 2019 EDC meeting as presented. Mr. Affrunti seconded the motion. On voice vote, members Affrunti, Reece, and Fowler voted aye. Members Fritsche and Leech abstained. Motion passed.

Approve Minutes of the December 3, 2019 Meetings

Mr. Reece moved to approve the minutes from the December 3, 2019 EDC meeting as presented. Mr. Affrunti seconded the motion. On voice vote, members Affrunti, Reece, and Fowler voted aye. Members Fritsche, Leech, and Saidler abstained. Motion passed.

Public Participation

There was no one present who wished to speak.

I Shop Crystal Lake Update

Ms. Maieritsch said I Shop Crystal Lake is going well. She provided the members with copies of the reports from December 2, 2019, January 6, 2020, and January 31, 2020. The I Shop campaign continues to perform well.

Mr. Fritsche asked for the background of the program such as how it is funded, etc. Ms. Maieritsch explained how I Shop began. Mr. Fowler added that it started out as a “rebate” program to encourage people to buy local. Mr. Reece said I Shop gift certificates were created in conjunction with Chamber but this program is not in operation anymore. Ms. Maieritsch said the current program is primarily a social media campaign as a way to communicate and support the local business community.

Business Anniversaries and Business Tours

Ms. Maieritsch said there will be two anniversary plaques presented at the next City Council meeting on March 3. They will be for Crystal Lake Travel – 60 years and Neis Insurance – 40 years.

Ms. Maieritsch said there are two new manufactures in Crystal Lake and we are coordinating tours to go visit and learn more about their business operations. AJ Antunes & Company filled a 15,000 square foot vacant space and hired 20 new employees. The other business is Inav Inc. who is a distributor of aircraft engine

parts and refurbishes small aircraft engines. They filled a 68,000 square foot vacant space. Mr. Reece asked why Inav would come to Crystal Lake. They brought most of their existing employees with them but will be adding a few new employees. Mr. Fowler said this is a great space to have filled.

Ms. Maieritsch said the ribbon cutting for Binney's was last Friday. Mr. Fowler said he has not seen a lot of advertisements for their new location. Ms. Maieritsch said there has been a lot of negative feedback due to the book store leaving. Mr. Reece asked if Garfield's contacted the City. Ms. Maieritsch said they did.

Organization reports:

Downtown Crystal Lake

Ms. Maieritsch said Olympic recently changed ownership and they will be featured on WGN TV's "Chicago's Best" show. Smoothology is also looking for a partner to share their space. Modern Age Comics recently closed their location on Northwest Highway. They do have another location in another neighboring community but are looking for a new space in Crystal Lake and are open to co-locating with another tenant.

Mr. Leech said he will be opening Judes on Williams Street across from the Raue Center possibly the end of April. They have run into a few snags. He said it will be a cocktail bar with small plate offerings. The small plates will change seasonally. In the future, he hopes they will be able to have doors across the front that can be opened during nice weather. There is a concern from the Health Department since they have an open kitchen. There is screening that is available but it is expensive and he will not be doing it at this time.

Mr. Haleblian said the downtown needs to sponsor a "Men's Night Out." Ms. Maieritsch said they tried to roll this out just before Valentine's Day. Mr. Haleblian said there were only two businesses that participated. Ms. Maieritsch said it was put together in a short period of time and hope it will grow in popularity in the future.

Ms. Maieritsch said the Downtown Association is working on growing their base. Mr. Reece said you do not need to have a business in the downtown area to be a member of that association. You just need to be a supporter of the Downtown.

Chamber of Commerce

Mr. Fritsche said he is still trying to get familiar with the community. One change will be a date change for the annual dinner which will be moved from September to July.

MCEDC

Ms. Maieritsch said the new branding – marketing program is still in process.

City of Crystal Lake

Ms. Maieritsch said the former Wendy's on Routes 176 and 31 will be Dunkin Donuts. They will be closing the current Dunkin Donuts just north of that site. There will be two new restaurants in the outbuilding of The Commons Shopping Center. They are NaNa's New York-style Deli and an Asian Fusion restaurant. Also in Crystal Lake Plaza there will be CoCo Rolls which will serve rolled Thai ice cream. Ms. Maieritsch said at 256 Oak Street there are two new businesses – Fork It Foods and Just 4 You Bakery. Their ribbon cutting will be next month. She added that the affordable senior housing is wrapping up construction and will begin signing leases.

Mr. Leech said he has been contacted by Fire Bar and Grill again to bring up the possibility of changing the City's limit on slot machines. Ms. Maieritsch said she will pass that request along. Mr. Fowler said it was difficult to allow slot machines in Crystal Lake to begin with. Mr. Haleblan asked if Mr. Leech's slot machines are doing well. Mr. Leech said his are doing ok, but some establishments are doing better than his. Ms. Hartman said the State of Illinois lists reports monthly on the slot machines for each establishment which is available to the public for viewing.

Mr. Fowler asked about the redevelopment of the property on Route 14. Ms. Maieritsch said Raising Cane's is moving forward. Mr. Affrunti asked if Discount Tire is still interested in coming to Crystal Lake. Ms. Maieritsch said they want to be on Route 14 between Route 31 and Main Street. We would like to have them here in the community and are working with them to find the proper location.

Ms. Maieritsch said there have been development conversations regarding Crystal Court and the former Walmart site, Mercy Health is also moving forward, and there has been interest in the vacant lot at Sands Road and Route 14.

Mr. Leech said the Kris Kringle Market went over very well this past holiday season at Hickory Hall. He said he would like to expand it and possibly get the City's support and participation. The event in Naperville is 2 to 3 weeks long. Ms. Maieritsch said she will pass along the information. Ms. Hartman mentioned that the company who hosts the market in Naperville is moving it to a new site. She suggested we check to be sure it will not impact this market.

Ms. Maieritsch said the former Pablos opened their new location on the west side of Route 31 just north of Route 176.

Comments and suggestions from the Committee

Mr. Reece said Mr. Affrunti will be awarded the GEM award by the Crystal Lake Chamber of Commerce Foundation.

There were no other comments from the members.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 a.m.