

City of Crystal Lake Economic Development Committee
Regular Meeting
April 28, 2009 – 7:30 a.m.
Municipal Complex – Council Chambers

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 a.m.

Roll Call/Attendance

Members Affrunti, Feddersen, Fowler, Viger, and Haleblan were present. Members Johnson, Riley, and Bawolek were absent.

James Richter II, Assistant Director of Economic Development, and Sharon Doruff were present from staff.

Jonathan Smith, Tim Koscielski, and Kimberly Rowe, all with Verity Three, were also present.

Approve minutes of the March 24, 2009 EDC meeting

Mr. Affrunti moved to approve the minutes from the March 24, 2009 EDC meeting as presented. Mr. Fowler seconded the motion. On voice vote, members Feddersen, Fowler, Viger, and Haleblan voted aye. Mr. Affrunti abstained. Motion passed.

Public participation and comments

There were none.

EDC Projects

City Council – Economic Development Committee Workshop Meeting

Mr. Richter said that the Mayor and City Council members like to meet with the appointed members of their boards and committees from time to time. Accordingly, a City Council-EDC workshop has been tentatively scheduled for the evening of June 9, 2009. Mr. Richter said that topics of discussion will include various business recruitment and retention activities. He said that the EDC is encouraged to bring ideas on how to enhance our recruitment and retention initiatives for discussion during the meeting. Mr. Fowler said it is his birthday but he can make it. Mr. Haleblan said that this is a good idea and that he would be attending. The other members agreed. Mr. Richter offered to inform the EDC members not currently in attendance regarding the workshop. He will keep the members updated and they will receive their packets prior to the meeting.

I Shop Crystal Lake www.ishopcl.com website redesign and content management system

Website design visioning (Verity Three Inc.)

Jonathan Smith, Tim Koscielski, and Kimberly Rowe all with Verity Three were present. Mr. Smith thanked the Committee for placing them on the agenda. He said this meeting is to clarify how they should move forward with the website design and they also are looking for ideas from the Committee. Mr. Koscielski said they are proposing to be able to update the information on the website quickly. Mr. Smith said the design of the website is an ongoing process that gives them feed back as they move along instead of waiting until the end for input.

Mr. Affrunti asked if the current identity will continue. Mr. Smith said the new site will be more business looking and less boutiquey. The logo will remain the same. Mr. Richter said some of the comments received from businesses were to have a more business-like approach to the website that illustrates a broad representation of the Crystal Lake business community.

Ms. Feddersen said she had gone to several websites and felt that Deer Park has a classier look to it. Mr. Smith said this is a similar direction to how they were going to proceed. He asked if there are any specific colors that are used with this program. Ms. Viger said the logo is black and white – so it is kept simple. Mr. Richter said the City’s logo color is blue, and the City seal is black.

Ms. Rowe showed an original website and then the website they are working on for the Lake Forest open lands Conservation District. Mr. Koscielski said photos can be changed and the digital photos that are used will be automatically made web friendly. Ms. Viger said if the City owns the photos that were used in the calendar, those could be used initially. Ms. Viger asked Mr. Richter to provide the photos, as well as others, to Verity Three.

Ms. Feddersen said some websites took a long time to load and that can be a problem. She said some people don’t have high speed internet.

Mr. Koscielski said they don’t want to focus on one region of Crystal Lake such as the downtown area or Route 14. They need to find a way to open gateways to businesses. Ms. Feddersen said Oak Brook Shopping Center has a map with the locations of their stores. Mr. Koscielski said they could divide the City into areas. Mr. Haleblian said that could be cumbersome. Mr. Koscielski said they could use the City’s zoning map. Mr. Richter said we need to keep in mind what is in the scope of the RFP and that we are limited to what is in the RFP subsequent scope and contract.

Mr. Koscielski said the City will have the ability to update the information as needed so the website won’t become a “brochure.” He showed how the site can be updated with the content management system. Mr. Richter said Staff is very familiar with the updating process like this through our new City’s website. Mr. Smith said Staff will receive the information and approve any updates before they

Mr. Haleblian asked if there is going to be a business listing/directory. Mr. Koscielski said yes and it can be browsed by name and/or category. Ms. Feddersen said several websites have a “Shopping” and separate “Entertainment/Dining” areas. That would be especially helpful when CABA comes in and they are looking for a restaurant or something for boys and dads to do other than shopping.

Mr. Richter asked the Committee if they would like to have a photo of the business of the week on the home page. Ms. Viger said they should be placed on the home page. Mr. Smith said if there is no photo available, we can use a logo either of Business of the Week or the business’s logo. Mr. Richter said if people click on the business of the week he would like to go directly to the information and not have to click in several different places to have their business information come up.

I Shop Crystal Lake program 2009 – advertising and promotions: 2009 program management

Mr. Richter said he was hoping the pricing for the clarification request for the marketing and advertising program would have been reduced with the clarification request. He reviewed some of the comments that were made by the vendors regarding the program. Mr. Richter said two of the 4 vendors recommended that the City “step back” and have a consultant complete a new strategy for the program, versus moving forward with the strategy outlined in the RFP.

Ms. Viger said they need to move forward with this. They can't over evaluate it now, but that we can re-evaluate our strategy at the end of the year when we tweak the RFP, just as we did this year. She said we don't need to reinvent the wheel. The website change is also a big for us this year.

Ms. Feddersen said the comments made by the vendors seemed to be overkill.

Ms. Viger asked if there is an approved budget. Mr. Richter said yes and the proposals would utilize the majority of the total budget if approved as is. He said he will review the clarifications and send a summary of the information to the members so that a decision can be made in the near future. They may be able to have a special meeting that would be about 5 minutes long so they can move this forward.

New business welcome letter

Mr. Haleblian said the letter looks good.

Retention survey

Mr. Richter said another staff member is working on both the short and long survey. He will forward them as soon as he has them.

Staff projects and reports

Crystal Court Shopping Center redevelopment plan

Mr. Haleblian said he saw an article in the Northwest Herald regarding the concept plan. Mr. Richter said Legat Architects did a good job of thinking outside the box. Both the PZC and Council were very supportive of the concept plan. He said this property currently is not in a TIF district but it could be. Meetings are being scheduled with possible developers for this property during the conference in Las Vegas.

Mr. Richter said Garden Fresh who owns the former Cub Foods space is in favor of this redevelopment and he has not heard back from J.C. Penney. The City will not be doing any taking of land to make this project happen. It will be up to the developer(s).

Mr. Fowler asked where the Vulcan project stands. Mr. Richter said bids have been sent out and construction should start sometime this summer.

Lead tracking and follow-up

Mr. Richter said they are working on this internally so they can bring the Council up to speed on what is going on.

Unified Development Ordinance update

Mr. Richter said the UDO was approved at the last Council meeting on April 21. There will be a three month transition period. If the new ordinances gives benefit to the developer/homeowner, that will be used. They will be reviewing the UDO after 6 months to tweak it. Mr. Richter said they have heard from architects that the architectural guidelines still allows for creativity and takes away the subjectiveness but certain areas such as the Virginia Street Corridor do have their own guidelines. There also is more straight zoning. He asked if the Committee wanted a brief overview of the UDO at a future meeting. Mr. Haleblian said yes and the Committee agreed.

Organization Reports:

Downtown Crystal Lake (Brian Fowler)

Mr. Fowler said the Bob Blazier Run is this weekend. The downtown has designed a new logo which will be used soon and the Farmers' Market will be starting shortly. Now they are trying to come up with ways to use the gazebo.

Committee for Business Support (Terry Feddersen)

Ms. Feddersen said the next meeting will be held in Marengo and will be receiving information from other EDCs. Also a member of the Chicago Olympic Committee will be speaking.

McHenry County Economic Development Corporation (Brian Fowler)

Mr. Richter said the communication has increased between the McEDC and the City. Ms. Feddersen asked if there is any stimulus grant money available for the City. Mr. Richter said there are several people working on that.

Comments from the Commission

Mr. Fowler asked if the City has been in contact with car dealerships. Mr. Richter said yes – all of them.

Mr. Haleblian said there are several members who don't show up for the meetings and has concerns. He asked what the parameters are for members of this Committee. Mr. Richter said he wasn't sure and would check into it. He said there is an attendance sheet that is updated after every meeting. This is also something that can be brought up at the workshop with the City Council. Mr. Haleblian said he will call the other members to find out what is going on with their attendance. He asked that the attendance sheets be sent to all members.

Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:10 a.m.