

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

Call to Order

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

Roll Call/Attendance

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

James Richter II, Assistant Director of Economic Development, and Scott Albertsen, Planning Department Intern, were present from staff. Sue Dobbe with Dobbe Marketing and PR, and Gary Reece, Chamber President, were also present.

Approve minutes of the June 23, 2009 meeting

Mr. Riley stated that since there is no quorum the minutes will be discussed at the next meeting.

Public participation and comments

There was no one present who wished to speak.

Economic Incentive Programs Review

Mr. Richter said Staffs' new focus is to sell and promote the Economic Development incentive programs approved by Council. He said that staff will be revisiting companies that were previously looking at Crystal Lake and show them the incentive programs that are available to them. Mr. Richter stated that staff has met with all of the car dealerships within the City limits about the auto incentive program and they were very receptive. They are very appreciative of what the City is doing to help them.

Mr. Richter said that we have clarified the eligibility threshold for the Enhanced Sales Tax Incentive Program and that in order to apply businesses must generate, or project to generate at least \$1,000,000.00 in annual sales.

Ms. Feddersen asked if the proposals for the car dealerships are ready yet. Mr. Richter said that staff is finishing creating the application form that outlines the process.

Mr. Affrunti asked about the commercial tenant program and if it was for only new tenants. Mr. Richter said existing businesses qualify only if they are expanding into a vacant space. Mr. Affrunti asked about the re-application after 5 years. Mr. Richter said if that business expands into a vacant space they can qualify for additional money after 5 years. Mr. Reece said this is a good idea. That will help with the storefront vacancies.

EDC Projects

I Shop Crystal Lake program

Website progress

Mr. Richter said that Verity Three and staff are nearly finished with the new ishopcl.com website. He said they have done some beta testing and the design of the site has been finalized. The site should be up and running in August and he will send the beta site information to the members so that they can view the progress.

Advertising and Promotions program

Ms. Dobbe said they have been working fast on the back to school and vehicle programs. They have produced a new 30-second video using the previous video which is on the Northwest Herald website. The radio ads on Star 105 will run from July 17 to August 8 and will also be on Star 105's website. The ads are very targeted and give the website address for them to go to for further information. Ms. Dobbe said they have also designed a check that will be used for the \$30 reimbursement. She added that there was a small ad created for car dealerships to add to their advertisements for the auto incentives.

Ms. Dobbe explained the craft wrap that will be created to surround the Sunday ads in the Northwest Herald. They will be selling the cooperative ads at reduced rates to Crystal Lake businesses. It will be used every Sunday for hopefully September, October, November, and December.

Ms. Feddersen asked how the amount of the car purchase is determined because of all of the trade-in and federal incentives. Mr. Richter said it is based on the final price of the vehicle which is taxed.

Ms. Dobbe said the window clings and shopping bags have changed. They have added the website address to them. Mr. Richter said the logo is also trademarked and larger road signs will be installed soon.

Business retention

Mr. Richter said the letters have been created as well as the surveys. The letters will be sent out later this week.

Ms. Feddersen said she checked into the recovery program that was discussed at the last meeting. She said no banks in Crystal Lake are participating and said the program. She said she is very disappointed in the banks. Mr. Reece said the problem is with the regulators not the banks. He said at the National Housing Builders meeting recently the Secretary of HUD said things were getting better with housing including loans. The members of the association gave information to the Secretary that loans are not being made on commercial property. Ms. Feddersen said she can't even get companies with good financial standing refinancing. Mr. Richter asked what the City can do to help. Mr. Reece said there is nothing the City can do. He said the banks are hesitating because these are high risk loans. There is also a lot of paper work involved.

Workforce development & Business Resource Guide

Mr. Richter said the McHenry County Workforce Development is spearheading workforce development but they believe there is something the City can do that might help. The members received in their packets information from Moline, Illinois. They have a Business Resource Guide. Ms. Feddersen said this is a great idea. Mr. Reece said the City needs to be careful what they are providing such as training which would be competition to the McHenry Co group. Mr. Riley said he sees this as more information materials such as who to contact for various things. Mr. Richter said it might be a good idea for him to attend a few meetings of the County Group to see what is available through them.

Mr. Albertsen said there are several cities that have a business resource guide available. Most of them are around 16 pages long but some can be rather lengthy. It is more of a contact list for new/current businesses. It can also include tax information, zoning restrictions, etc. The simpler the guide the better it is to use. It also can be placed on the website.

Mr. Reece suggested a PDF format so it can be sent easily via e-mail. Mr. Albertsen said it could also include Federal and State programs that are available. Mr. Richter asked if the Chamber has anything similar to this.

Mr. Reece said no but they have some information on their website. It would be great to have the information all in one place.

Organization Reports:

Downtown Crystal Lake

Ms. Feddersen asked how the sidewalk sales went. Mr. Affrunti said he wasn't sure. Ms. Feddersen asked how the lunch at the gazebo went. Ms. Viger said she was there and it was well attended. The next one is on Friday and the Chamber will be giving the PICA award to the City and Downtown.

Mr. Reece said the Curran building will have a grand opening and chamber mixer on August 11. Mr. Richter said the EDC has not presented their award yet for that building and it might be a good idea to give it then. He asked if the Chamber had any problem with that. Mr. Reece said no but he would suggest checking with the Curran group.

Committee for Business Support

Ms. Feddersen said there are no meetings during the summer months. She did find out other information regarding the Olympics in Chicago. The Chicago bid has a better chance because Madrid has a high crime rate and the other sites don't have much ability to improve their infrastructure.

Mr. Richter suggested forgoing the remaining reports. Mr. Riley agreed.

Comments from the Committee

There were no comments from the Committee.

Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:25 a.m.