

**City of Crystal Lake Economic Development Committee**  
**April 26, 2011 – 7:30 a.m.**  
**Municipal Complex – Training Room**

**Call to Order**

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

**Roll Call/Attendance**

Members Affrunti, Dalzell, DeHaan, Feddersen, Haleblian, Riley, Saidler, and Fowler were present. Mr. Hymes arrived later in the meeting.

James Richter II, Assistant Director of Economic Development, and Michelle Rentzsch, Director of Planning and Economic Development, were present from staff. Also attending were Mayor Aaron Shepley and Gary Reece, President of the Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Fowler thanked Mayor Shepley for taking time out of his busy schedule to attend this meeting. The members introduced themselves to Mayor Shepley and Mr. Reece.

**Public Participation and Comment**

There was no one present who wished to speak.

**Approve Minutes of the March 22, 2011 EDC Meetings**

Mr. Haleblian moved to approve the March 22, 2011 EDC minutes as presented. Mr. Affrunti seconded the motion. On roll call, members Affrunti, Dalzell, DeHaan, Feddersen, Fowler, Haleblian, Riley, Saidler and Fowler voted aye. Mr. Hymes abstained. Motion passed.

**Workshop summary and Committee goal setting**

**RETENTION**

**2. Monthly retention visits – Scheduling; Provide schedule to the Mayor/City Council**

Mr. Fowler said the business tours are well received by the business community. Mayor Shepley said that he is like the other members of the EDC and has a job during the day that recently has become very busy. If he is given enough lead-time he is able to schedule the visits. Mr. Fowler said they usually are able to schedule the business tours about three days in advance and he doesn't want to set up false hopes for the businesses that the Mayor and/or City Council members will attend.

Mr. Reece stated that Chad from Knaack will be leaving and moving up in the company. He will let everyone know when a new president is announced so we can contact him. Currently a replacement has not been announced.

Mr. Fowler asked how to get in touch with the Mayor to set up tours. Mayor Shepley said he can be reached either through his assistant at Centegra or through Anne O'Kelley in the City Manager's Office. He asked that when a tour is being planned that several dates be given so that there's a better chance of attendance. His schedule does fill up fast so as much notice of dates as possible would be helpful. Mr. Haleblian asked if there is a better time of the day for the Mayor's schedule. Mayor Shepley said early morning is better. Mr. Haleblian said the morning is typically better for most of the members because of their jobs.

**1. Review/approve a "Business Retention Response Plan"**

Mr. Richter stated it is their intention to continue the business visits. They reviewed the draft flow chart

included within the business retention response plan. Mr. Fowler said that the State of Illinois has some resources available for expansion but nothing for retention of businesses. Mayor Shepley said this is a great plan and applies to most situations. Mr. Fowler said they need to build better contacts with the businesses. Mayor Shepley said retention is the key and Council agrees. The purpose of the EDC is to help retain businesses as well as attract new ones. Mr. Dalzell said this flow chart is geared more towards the larger companies and suggested they have something in place to retain smaller retailers. Mayor Shepley said that is the basis for the incentive programs. The program is fair to both existing and new businesses of all sizes.

Mr. Dalzell stated that a business in the Commons Shopping Center is possibly going to move to Algonquin Commons. They feel they are not getting new customers in their current location. He added that Algonquin Commons is aggressively looking for relocating Crystal Lake retailers. Mayor Shepley said they are not getting new customers because the storefronts near this retailer are empty. He would like them to move to where there are other tenants so they get more foot traffic. Mr. Richter said the Commons Shopping Center has a proposed new occupant and they will be moving several tenants around in the west wing of the center.

Mr. Haleblian said this flow chart looks good and it can always be tweaked. Mr. Affrunti suggested we add a time frame.

Mr. Richter said he will bring the information back to the Committee at the next meeting with tweaks and additional information for small businesses. Mayor Shepley suggested that this plan also go before the City Council since their name is listed in the plan and so they know what is happening with the EDC.

#### Retention reports to the Mayor/City Council

Mr. Fowler suggested that instead of the Council members having to read all of the EDC minutes that possibly there be a summary sheet with bullet points on what was discussed and action taken that could be sent to the City Council each month. Mr. Richter asked who would decide what would go on the summary. Mr. Fowler said he would create one and get it to Sharon.

Mr. Richter asked about monthly meetings to various businesses. Mr. Saidler suggested that City Staff make the initial contact because they could possibly get past the “gate keeper” easier than any member of the EDC could. Mr. Fowler agreed. Mr. Saidler said it would also initiate a relationship that is unless an EDC member has an established relationship with that business. Mr. Richter said he could make the selection of the businesses to tour a regular agenda item to be proposed by the EDC.

Mayor Shepley said there are a lot of businesses within the City limits and he would not limit the visits to manufacturing.

#### Retention events - Schedule manufacturer summit; Lunch with the Mayor/City Council/EDC

Mr. Richter said they held a summit for the businesses in and around the Terra Cotta Tech area and it was poorly attended. He is not sure a summit is the best way. Mr. Fowler said there does need to be a topic for the summit such as the wireless fire alarms being installed in the City. Ms. Rentzsch suggested the topic of Route 176 and Route 31 improvements. IDOT is in the process of land acquisition and it would be helpful for the businesses in that area to know what to expect. Mr. Hymes agreed.

Mayor Shepley said the City previously held a summit for shopping center owners, which was very well attended. He agreed that there needs to be a topic for a summit – something beneficial to those who attend. Mayor Shepley suggested Representative Manzullo, State Representative Althoff, or possibly even Senator Kirk. Mr. Hymes said taxes are always a hot topic. Mr. Reece suggested having the summit in conjunction

with lunch. Mr. Richter said they have done that in the past and it could be done again.

Communication with State/Federal Legislators - Invite Pam/Mike to an EDC meeting; Formalize a process for seeking assistance

Mr. Richter asked if it would be possible to invite them to an EDC meeting. Mr. Fowler suggested that the legislators be invited to the summit. Mayor Shepley said he believes they would appreciate the opportunity to speak.

Communication with DCEO representatives - Invite DCEO reps to an EDC meeting; Formalize a process for seeking assistance

Mr. Richter said he has met with the DCEO representative in the past and he is not sure who our current representative is. Mayor Shepley said it may not be the best use of time and resources to contact DCEO reps at this time, due to the State's budget crises. He suggested that if we want to work on a relationship, they should work on the elected reps. They have more influence than reps from the DCEO.

**PROMOTING A POSITIVE IMAGE FOR CL**

Development Forum (spring/summer)

Mr. Richter asked if a development forum should be held again. It was held for the past few years – bringing the development and commercial property owners together with the department heads. He said that the department heads are requesting that we host this again, as in years past. Everyone agreed this would be a good idea.

**I SHOP CRYSTAL LAKE**

Program value (businesses/shoppers) - Create a value-promotion plan; Create 1-page marketing piece; Organize ad-hoc I Shop CL committee of businesses

REWARDS Program - Business recruitment blitz week; Determine/hold business recruitment event; Determine when to send the REWARDS cards

Mr. Richter said they have talked a lot about the value for businesses and we need to determine how to promote the value to business owners. Mr. Dalzell said he checked into Groupon after the last meeting and when a business advertises a coupon, Groupon takes ½. Mr. Fowler said they have tried to get businesses to sign up and he is not sure what they are missing to get them involved. Ms. Rentzsch said there is value in demand. The retailers don't know about the requests for cards, so maybe we should just send them out.

Mr. Reece said to send out the cards. Mr. Fowler said Mr. Richter is concerned with the number of businesses involved. Mr. Richter said yes, but lately we have received many inquiries asking where the cards are.

Mr. Richter said he has a list of 18 businesses that want to be involved and need help setting them set-up. He will be sending out e-mail blasts to the card holders as well as businesses. Mr. Richter said he had spoken with MCC marketing students and they were going to help sign up businesses. They were going to be paid and also receive a recommendation letter from the City. Unfortunately there were only two students who participated and didn't go to many businesses. Mr. Richter said the teacher still wants to have her students participate in this again in the fall so he will make the presentation again in the fall.

The EDC members divided up the 18 businesses that were on the list that wanted additional help with the website.

Mr. Richter said the cards will be mailed out in two weeks. He showed the flyer that goes to the new businesses to promote the I SHOP CL program. This flyer could be sent to residents. Mr. Haleblian suggested that they be put in the water bills. Ms. Rentzsch asked if they wanted the flyer in the water bill or just a line statement on the bill itself. Mayor Shepley said he would prefer the flyer be sent in the water bill.

www.iShopCL.com design - Formulate design team (sub-committee); Review design changes

Mr. Richter said they are working on making the website more customer-friendly. There were some design suggestions that were made and could possibly be implemented. He is looking for some EDC members to look at the proposed changes and make recommendations.

Ms. Feddersen moved to approve the 2011-12 Economic Development Committee Action Plan with changes as discussed. Mr. Affrunti seconded the motion. On voice vote, all members voted aye. Motion passed.

**LONG-TERM BUSINESS ANNIVERSARIES**

Mr. Fowler thanked the Mayor for acknowledging long-term business anniversaries and for holding a reception for them during a City Council meeting. He asked what mile stone should be recognized? He suggested starting with 25 years in business. Members suggested Heisler's Bootery (102 years), Players Bench, and Kalck's. Mr. Reece suggested starting with 25 years and then in 5 year increments. Mayor Shepley asked that they also include the businesses that were missed such as Heisler's. He said it is a shame they missed Millie Gieskie who owned the fabric store downtown. Her family had many businesses downtown for many, many years.

Mr. Richter suggested that staff create a file that includes the business, year they opened and if they received recognition, when and for what anniversary.

Mr. Fowler suggested that they limit the number of businesses they recognize at one time.

**STAFF UPDATES**

Incentives summary

Mr. Richter outlined a summary of the changes to the match grant incentive program for this fiscal year that was approved by the City Council. Mr. Fowler said this is a great program that continues to allow staff to get involved with business attraction.

Mr. Richter said the City Council has reserved the volume cap of \$4 million to be used for Industrial Revenue Bonds.

Attraction

Mr. Richter said he and Ms. Rentzsch will be attending the ICSC in May. Ms. Rentzsch said they will be talking with interested retailers to fill the vacant storefronts and groups who are interested in redevelopment of Crystal Court. Mayor Shepley asked if many City officials attend this conference. Ms. Rentzsch said yes. Mayor Shepley said he has a commitment this year but will be willing to pay his own way next year. Ms. Rentzsch said they do not have a booth but do go around and talk with retailers and developers. Both Ms. Rentzsch and Mr. Richter feel that would be great if Mayor Shepley attended next year.

Legislative

Mr. Richter said the Fire Prevention Bureau has 169 transmitters activated within the City for the new wireless fire alarm system. Currently the setup fee is being waived. This is a great system and much more

economical than other systems. There was a discussion about the costs of this system vs. other private systems as well as the benefits of quicker responses.

**Organization Reports**

**Downtown Crystal Lake (Brian Fowler)**

Mr. Fowler said they are also getting ready for their spring and summer events. He said there has been an increase in vacancies in the downtown area.

**Committee for Business Support (Terry Feddersen)**

No report.

**McHenry County Economic Development Corporation (Brian Fowler)**

Mr. Fowler said he had not attended the last MCEDC but heard that Senator Mark Kirk was very good.

**Comments from the Committee**

Mayor Shepley said he was thinking back to when the EDC first started and that they have struggled to find purpose and there was a high level of frustration. Then you fast forward to today. He is impressed with what the EDC has accomplished. Mayor Shepley thanked the members for serving on the Economic Development Committee. He feels Crystal Lake is ahead of the curve. In these tough times both in the state and nationally, to have a pessimistic attitude is a choice. We are surviving and this group has stepped up to the plate.

Mr. Affrunti thanked Mayor Shepley and the City Council for treating the EDC as a viable entity. The Council has embraced this Committee and having Mr. Richter and Ms. Rentzsch involved has been a big boost.

Mayor Shepley warned the members to be careful and to keep looking long term. The programs started by the EDC should not be the "flavor of the year." If there is no benefit to a program in the future, they need to move to another program. A good program has unfulfilled potential.

**Reschedule May EDC meeting**

Mr. Richter said that because of the ICSC, the meeting in May needs to be rescheduled. He suggested that the meeting be moved to the last Tuesday in May, May 31<sup>st</sup>. That would be the day after Memorial Day. The members agreed that the meeting should be tentatively scheduled for that date. They will check their schedules and get back with Mr. Richter as soon as possible.

**Committee photo**

The members' photo was taken in the City Council Chambers.

**Adjourn**

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