

**City of Crystal Lake Economic Development Committee**  
**June 28, 2011 – 7:30 a.m.**  
**Municipal Complex – City Council Chambers Conference Room**

**Call to Order**

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

**Roll Call/Attendance**

Members DeHaan, Haleblan, Hymes, Riley, Saidler, and Fowler were present. Members Affrunti, Dalzell, and Feddersen were absent.

James Richter II, Assistant Director of Economic Development, and Erik Morimoto, Director of Engineering and Building, were present from staff. Also present were Sue Dobbe with Dobbe Marketing and Cheryl Kranz with the Northwest Herald.

**Public Participation and Comment**

There was no one present who wished to speak.

Since several members still had not arrived Mr. Richter suggested that they move to the presentation from the City Engineer.

**Roadway project updates – Engineering Division**

Mr. Morimoto updated the Committee members on several roadway projects that the City is involved in during this construction season. He said the Virginia Street Corridor project is nearing the half way point. The street lighting will be installed after the sidewalks. He added that the project includes the resurfacing of Virginia Street from Crystal Lake Avenue to Teckler Boulevard. Since it is an IDOT road, the resurfacing will be reimbursed by IDOT. The contractor expects to make up lost time due to rain in the second half of the project due to less complex sidewalk staging and their experience with paving.

Mr. Morimoto stated that this year's street resurfacing project is the largest ever and part of the City's efforts to prolong the life of the roads. According to the Northwest Herald, the City of Crystal Lake has one road on their list of roads desperately in need of repair and that is Pingree Road south of Route 14. He is happy to report that the reconstruction project is slated to start today and should be completed in one construction season. The road will be reduced to one-way traffic – northbound – during the reconstruction, which should allow the contractor to move more quickly.

Mr. Morimoto said Rakow Road is a County project and due to the weather is significantly behind in their schedule. Therefore they will be closing down Rakow Road over night to complete some of the grading and sewer installation. He said if there is a negative impact on the businesses that are within the City limits that are along that road, he will be in contact with the County to see what can be done to change the closure time.

Mr. Morimoto discussed the Crystal Lake Avenue improvements from Main Street to East Street. That will be starting in the next month pending utility relocation. They hope the project will be completed within this construction season but it is depending on the utility relocation.

Mr. Morimoto said the last major project they are working on is the replacement sidewalks in the downtown area. He explained what was remaining to be completed for the project and the work is about 90% complete. The communication between the businesses and the City has been very good.

Mr. Haleblian asked about the time frame for the Virginia Street Corridor. Mr. Morimoto said the scheduled completion date is October 14 but they are currently two weeks behind due to weather. He added that the contractor suggested doing the portion of the project between Dole and McHenry Avenues first since it would be more difficult and time could be made up in the other stages of the project. Mr. Richter asked if that target date includes the resurfacing. Mr. Morimoto said yes and added that the City has a Twitter account regarding road closures and the road construction that is ongoing in the City limits with more updates.

Mr. Haleblian asked what the completion date for Pingree Road is. Mr. Morimoto said they hope to be complete before Thanksgiving. He said that Crystal Lake Avenue may need to be completed next spring. Mr. Richter asked about the intersection improvements to Walkup and Route 176. Mr. Morimoto said McDOT will send this project out to bid in August then the minor utility work will be done. The rest of the project will be started in spring, 2012.

Mr. Fowler thanked Mr. Morimoto for coming to the EDC meeting.

#### **Approve Minutes of the June 1, 2011 EDC Meetings**

Mr. Haleblian moved to approve the June 1, 2011 EDC minutes as presented. Mr. Riley seconded the motion. On roll call, all members present voted aye. Motion passed.

#### **STAFF UPDATES**

##### **I Shop Crystal Lake Update**

Mr. Richter said that there are 50 reward offers and they continue to promote I Shop Rewards with businesses. He is currently working on an article for the City newsletter and asked the Committee which businesses should be featured in the article. Mr. Richter said there have been over 46,000 views of the website since May and we receive requests daily for the card. Mr. Haleblian asked if there has been any information from the retailers regarding how many cards are being shown. Mr. Richter said he has only heard from Countryside Nursery regarding the number of rain barrels they have sold. Mr. Haleblian said he has only had one person use the card but that is also the type of business he has.

Mr. Haleblian said that the website and the program are confusing for some of the businesses. Mr. Fowler said some businesses feel that since they signed up for the original I Shop website that they are automatically on this website. Mr. Hymes said some service businesses feel this is very retail oriented.

Mr. Richter said the businesses are asked to maintain their area/rewards to keep them up to date. He believes there still needs to be clarification.

Ms. Dobbe said businesses could offer "something extra" and not necessarily a discount. Mr. Hymes suggested an intern keep in touch with the businesses about new offers. He also suggested there be "canned" Reward options for the business to choose from. Mr. Richter said the Planning Department is lucky to have an intern this summer who works for free and is here three days a week for just a few hours. The intern is also working on other projects for the department. Ms. Dobbe said the businesses won't want to speak to an intern. Mr. Richter said it is not in the budget for a paid position. Ms. Dobbe asked if the \$25,000 in the budget go towards that. Mr. Richter said some of the budget is already spoken for such as the mailing out of the cards, printing of the flyers, maintenance of the website, etc. There is about \$15,000 remaining. Mr. Saidler said they need a success story to help promote the project. Ms. Dobbe said it is too soon. Mr. Fowler said the stores need to communicate to their employees about the program.

Ms. Dobbe suggested re-editing the existing videos for the website to educate the consumer as well as the businesses. She said the website can be educational. Mr. Richter said he has put through a change order for the website and has worked with businesses to see what's best or helpful to them. The company will be updating the website in the future. Ms. Dobbe again stated that they can repackage the videos they already have. She said people aren't reading the copy. Mr. Saidler said there is no copy there now and chopping up the videos is expensive. Ms. Dobbe said that 2-30 second segments would be helpful since most people are visual learners. Mr. Richter said he will send to the members what he has so far and get their suggestions for changes. Mr. Haleblian asked Ms. Dobbe to put together a proposal. Ms. Dobbe said she would put that together and get it to Mr. Richter. Mr. Saidler said he could do it for free. Ms. Dobbe said she could too.

Mr. DeHaan suggested we e-mail the businesses regarding the status of their rewards since there are some on the website that have expired. Mr. Hymes said the e-mail blast is a good tool. Mr. Saidler said in the future we could add to the website that a notification e-mail is sent to the business when their rewards is about to expire.

Mr. Richter asked Ms. Kranz to explain her proposal to the Committee.

Ms. Kranz said at the Expo they asked businesses to give gift cards to be used in a raffle which they called a shopping spree. She reviewed the circulation of the Northwest Herald in print as well as the number of hits received from their website. Between the two, most of McHenry County is covered. Ms. Kranz added that the mobile and tablet versions of the paper are starting to grow. She explained the differences between the two packages proposed. One is a craft wrap which is the cover of the ads/flyers/coupons and the other presents the new spadea wrap around the local section of the paper. Ms. Kranz said they could also have ads in the McHenry County Magazine at the end of October and into November. Mr. Haleblian feels the magazine is geared towards a higher end user. Mr. Richter said many businesses feel they need to give a new discount and not necessarily something they already do.

Mr. Saidler said the website needs to be updated and working correctly before we spend advertising dollars. Mr. Fowler asked if is too late for the back to school ads. Ms. Kranz said no and the program is flexible.

Mr. Richter said another advertising media is the local radio station – STAR 105 – with 30 second ads. Mr. Saidler said he is concerned with promoting a specific business, i.e. which offer is the best. Someone will ask why their offer wasn't chosen. If they are going to go with the radio ads and chose a business offer to promote, there needs to be criteria established. Either way, people will get upset. Mr. Haleblian agreed that it will create a lot of trouble. Ms. Kranz suggested that an e-mail be sent to the businesses with rewards and whoever responds in a certain time frame their name will be placed in a hat and pulled. Mr. Richter said the long term goal of this program was to promote the program and have the businesses update their individual information. Mr. DeHaan said it is difficult to promote the program without promoting a business. Mr. Fowler said he would like to eventually spin off a sub-committee for the I Shop program so the businesses can take care of it themselves.

Mr. Saidler suggested that if they go with radio ads they could use those to direct people to the website to check out the rewards. Mr. Richter said that radio ads should promote the brand of the program and the website.

Mr. Hymes asked what is the purpose of the I Shop program. Mr. Fowler said originally it was to promote retail sales which is tax driven. Now it is for service businesses as well. Mr. Hymes said it seems that there

needs to be a second marketing plan for the service oriented businesses. Ms. Kranz said that is why Northwest Herald ads work because there can be a variety of business types placing ads. Mr. Hymes said it is hard to be all things to all businesses.

Mr. Richter asked if the members wished to discuss the other options presented in their packet – the billboards, etc. The members decided that the newspaper ads would be the way to go and they have more options with that. Mr. Richter asked if they wanted to hold a special meeting to review the options for the newspaper ads. The consensus was to hold a short special meeting.

#### Incentives summary

Mr. Richter said the first grant application for this fiscal year was for The Fresh Market. He stated that the owner of Chen's King Wok was planning to sell his property at Route 14 and Main Street to a bank but that has since fallen through and he will be doing a face lift so he will be able to take advantage of the existing business grant. Mr. Richter said that the owner of Tommy's on Route 14 in the Virginia Street Corridor will also be requesting money for a façade upgrade.

#### Retention

Mr. Richter said the Business Retention Response Plan was presented to the City Council at their last meeting. There was no comment and the Council approved it.

Mr. Richter said there is a tour scheduled for Thursday at Covidien located at 815 Tek Drive. The tour will begin at approximately 3:30 for those who want to attend.

Mr. Fowler said the Mayor and Councilman Dawson went on a private tour of Boltswitch recently and the owner was very happy they were able to come.

Mr. Richter suggested that the next tour is of Camfil Farr. He has heard from the owners that they will most likely be staying in Crystal Lake. He added that the owner attended the recent Business Forum.

#### Legislative

Mr. Richter said an amendment to the UDO to allow electronic message center (EMC) signs have been discussed and voted on at the Planning and Zoning Commission meeting. This issue will go before the City Council at their meeting next Tuesday.

Mr. Richter said Staff had proposed a revision to the Watershed requirements for property that is already developed in the area. The proposal was to give those properties relief from the current requirements but the City Council is happy with the current ordinance language.

#### Customer Service and Business Advocacy Feedback Forum Summary

Mr. Richter said staff wanted to do something a little different this year and have an open house-type forum so developers, etc. could talk to the departments they wished instead of listening to a long presentation. Mostly real estate people attended the forum. Mr. Haleblian said that there seems to be no interest from the business community and asked why we hold the forum. Mr. Fowler suggested that the next forum be more of a "dog and pony show" of a recap from the ICSC in Las Vegas. That would be something the business owners would be interested in.

#### **Organization Reports**

Downtown Crystal Lake (Brian Fowler)

Mr. Fowler said they have just held their first lunch/dinner in the park and it went well. He said that Downtown Crystal Lake is part of the National Main Street program as well as the State of Illinois program which has not been active for a few years. The state will be reinstating the program and there will be representatives visiting our downtown area on Wednesday.

Committee for Business Support (Terry Feddersen)

Mr. Fowler said he and Mr. Richter made a presentation of the I Shop program to the group.

McHenry County Economic Development Corporation (Brian Fowler)

No report.

**Comments from the Committee**

Mr. Richter asked if the committee wanted to meet again regarding the I Shop ad program. Mr. Saidler said the time is running short. Mr. Richter said the focus would be on back to school and holiday. The committee members agreed.

Mr. Haleblian said he did an informal count of the “Best of McHenry County” and 67% of them were based in Crystal Lake.

**Adjourn**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:15 a.m.