

**City of Crystal Lake Economic Development Committee**  
**July 23, 2013 – 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 Affrunti, Dalzell, Hymes, Reece, Riley, Saidler, and Fowler were present. Members Haleblian and DeHaan were absent.

Michelle Rentzsch, Director of Planning and Economic Development, James Richter II, Assistant Director of Economic Development, and Eric Helm, Deputy City Manager and Director for the Three Oaks Recreation Area, were present from staff. Kim Wicker and Nancy Schwartz both with the Holiday Inn, and Paul Leech, owner of The Cottage and The London Club were also present.

**Approve Minutes of the June 4, 2013 Meeting**

Mr. Reece moved to approve the minutes from the June 4, 2013 EDC meeting as presented. Mr. Riley seconded the motion. On voice vote, all members present voted aye. Motion passed.

**Three Oaks Recreation Area Discussion**

Mr. Fowler said that on the recent business tours, companies have been asking about access to the Three Oaks area. One company, Eisenmann, is currently recruiting young engineers to the area. He said they know Crystal Lake can't compete with Chicago but there are amenities that we can offer out here. They specifically asked if there are temporary passes to Three Oaks Recreation Area that can be offered to prospective employees.

Mr. Helm said there have been discussions at the Council level. Currently the mindset is the area has free access to the residents whose primary residence is within Crystal Lake. He stated that the Council members are always interested in different ideas. They wanted the area to be operated in that manner for a few years to get a better idea of what changes could be looked at. There is a potential for changes in the future and guest passes could be a possibility. Mr. Fowler said the business tours are done to get better communications between the City and the businesses. Many of the businesses have brought up passes. Mr. Helm said a tour of Three Oaks can be given at any time by Mr. Richter, Ms. Rentzsch or himself.

Mr. Saidler suggested that possibly passes could be used at only certain times of the year such as in the fall when the area is not as crowded as during the hot summer months. There could also be passes to go to Culver's restaurant for lunch. Mr. Helm said there is free entry for walk-ins or people on bikes. There is only a \$5 fee for cars that do not have a City vehicle sticker. Mr. Fowler said they can't eat on the deck area. Mr. Helm said they can eat in the picnic area.

Mr. Fowler said there are many visitors to that area and thought there might be a possibility of advertising I Shop or businesses by the admission area. There could be a kiosk used. Mr. Helm said there is plenty of space there. Ms. Rentzsch suggested a sign similar in design to what is used downtown.

Ms. Schwartz said her son is going to summer camp through the Park District. They went to Three Oaks recently and didn't bring anything home such as a brochure. She said her son brings home something almost every week from places they have gone to. Ms. Schwartz said her son said the place is "epic" and wants to

go back. Mr. Helm said that would be a good idea to have a brochure for Three Oaks. Ms. Schwartz said they could also have businesses in the area put ads in it to off-set the cost.

Mr. Helm said it is always helpful to hear feedback from others so modifications might be looked at in the future.

Mr. Fowler asked about possible future improvements to the facility. Mr. Helm showed a Power Point presentation regarding a wake-board park. He explained how the park works and the concept is very big in Germany and Europe and is done generally on an oval-shaped "lake". It is mostly done using boats to "tow" the participant. With the facility here, it would not need any boats but would use cables to "tow" people. It is very quiet and uses very little power. Ms. Rentzsch said people of all ages can do this. She added that there are summer camps for this type of recreation and people who get very good at it can do spins and jumps. Mr. Helm said they want to be sure that it would fit the area. He said they would contemplate using the north lake. Mr. Helm stated that most people come to Three Oaks Recreation Area because it is a quiet passive use. They don't want anything to damage that no matter what expansion is done in that area. He added that they are also looking into expanding scuba diving. Mr. Helm said he has visited several functioning sites with the cable-wake parks and have talked with emergency personnel.

Mr. Fowler said there is very limited parking in this area. Mr. Helm said whether the cable-wake park is added in the future or not, additional parking is a must. He explained the next steps in the process before going before City Council.

Mr. Leech asked how this was going to be marketed. Mr. Helm said the developer/operator will do the majority of the ads. Mr. Leech asked if there are any in Illinois. Mr. Helm said there is a small one in McHenry that not many people know about and one in Springfield that is being developed. Ms. Wicker said parking is a must if this is put in. Mr. Helm said parking would be constructed in conjunction with the project. Mr. Richter asked about overflow parking arrangements. Mr. Helm said there is nothing official but the surrounding properties have been very cooperative.

Mr. Leech said when he was marketing the Beatles' Fest, he handed out fliers at the train depots up and down the tracks. If they brought the flier, he would reimburse their train fare. He received many comments from people stating that they didn't know how easy it was to come to Crystal Lake. Also recently the bike race was not promoted as much as he thought they should have but this was the first time it was here in Crystal Lake.

Ms. Wicker asked if there were brochures available because the baseball tournament will be coming soon. Mr. Helm said he will leave a box of brochures for her.

The members thanked Mr. Helm for coming to speak to them about Three Oaks Recreation Area. Mr. Helm thanked the members for their ideas about promoting the area.

### **Public Participation and Comment**

There was no one present at that time who wished to speak.

### **Workforce Development Discussion**

Mr. Fowler said he had asked Mr. Hymes to check into any publication for unique industries for possible advertising in. Mr. Hymes said there are a few that he has dealt with – Electronics Industry and plastics

manufacturing for injection molding. That advertising would get people aware that Crystal Lake is here. Mr. Hymes said he will look into others as well. He said some industries are more preferred than others.

Mr. Saidler suggested that they determine what type of industry they are looking for. He has a data base with every publication for specific businesses.

Mr. Richter asked if the McEDC is targeting any specific industry. Mr. Fowler said no. Mr. Dalzell asked what drives a manufacturing business to a specific area. Ms. Rentzsch said it is the location and available workforce primarily. Mr. Hymes said the businesses he was involved with when it came time to relocate, they chose sites that were close to Route 176 and Route 31, easy to access the toll road, and easy to get to O'Hare. There also is a well trained workforce. We need to educate the businesses as to what we have to offer.

Mr. Richter suggested working with the McEDC. Mr. Fowler said that is a double edged sword. Their focus is on the County while this EDC's focus is on Crystal Lake only. Ms. Rentzsch feels it is important to have Pam Cumpata in to talk to the group to provide the EDC with updates on changes with the McEDC. Mr. Richter said she would know what type of workforce is available in this areas and what businesses are hot.

Mr. Fowler asked Mr. Richter to put together a list of primary vacant properties.

Mr. Hymes said that he will be meeting with a Wisconsin-based company later this week who wants to expand into the Chicago area. He asked for a letter from the City with the grant program information.

Mr. Leech asked if there are any breaks the City gives to businesses. Mr. Richter briefly explained the incentive programs and fee reduction program. Mr. Reece suggested that Staff provide the incentives information to Mr. Leech. Mr. Reece added that this State is very dysfunctional and there was no mention in the recent past about a company that came to Crystal Lake and expanded, bringing over 100 jobs. We were not allowed to say anything about that expansion since the State put a gag order on it.

### Updates:

#### A. Unified Development Ordinance proposed Amendments

Mr. Richter stated that the proposed amendments are currently under legal review.

#### B. Incentives programs

Mr. Richter said three grants have been approved this fiscal year and ABC Supply is the most significant. We worked with the adjacent property owner to annex his property into the City and ABC Supply was able to use a portion of that property for the outside storage that they need. This was a huge win-win-win. The programs that are in place are very helpful. He added that they are also talking with 3 or 4 other prospective businesses who are interested in taking advantage of the grant program.

#### C. Business retention tours

##### Employee Marketing Packages

Mr. Richter said he has the plaque for Camfil Farr's Community Investment Award. He will be contacting them since the weather is warmer now and they have completed their renovations. Mr. Richter asked if any calls were made to the companies that we had sent letters to requesting tour of their facilities. The members said they will make the necessary calls. Mr. Richter said he will resend the e-mail regarding who was going to contact specific businesses.

Mr. Richter stated that at the Eisenmann tour, they asked if there was a packet of information from the City that they could use for potential new employees. Mr. Saidler said there is no one place to find information about what is going on within a 15-mile radius of this area. Even the County Visitor Bureau information is limited. There are many things to do there but they need to be in one central place.

Ms. Wicker suggested that there should be apps for our area that can be used on cell phones. Mr. Leech said there are many sources on the internet but they are not updated consistently. There was a website that still lists John Evan's Inn in Crystal Lake. He said that possibly the easiest way is through a website but that needs to be constantly updated. Mr. Reece said it should be done through the Convention and Visitors Bureau. Mr. Leech said he has a site that when he punches in the information it automatically goes on a calendar in the correct date order.

Ms. Wicker said when she moved to the area many years ago, she received a basket with coupons and samples from local businesses. That is how she got to know the area. Mr. Reece said that was the Welcome Wagon.

Mr. Fowler suggested that Mr. Richter and Mr. Saidler meet with Eisenmann to put something together. They probably have something in mind and we can modify it for other uses.

Mr. Dalzell asked if the demographics on the City's website are current. Ms. Rentzsch said the City's website is frequently updated.

#### D. Franchise Development

Mr. Richter said there is nothing to update at this time.

#### E. I Shop Crystal Lake

Mr. Fowler said they are concentrating on the Holiday contest. He suggested that they contact some of the local businesses who were previously involved with the I Shop website to get their feedback. Mr. Richter suggested a sub-committee. Mr. Saidler said he would be glad to get involved. Mr. Leech asked about the previous programs. Mr. Richter gave a brief history of the various I Shop programs. He said they are getting back to shoppers' awareness.

Mr. Dalzell suggested that an article be put in the City's news letter showing exactly what is done with tax dollars and why it is important to shop here. Mr. Reece said possibly use "for every \$100 you spend locally then ... happens." Mr. Leech said that will give people a reason to shop here. Mr. Reece said there are suddenly a lot of programs geared towards shopping locally. Ms. Rentzsch said we need to show the consumer the power of their dollar. Mr. Dalzell said it would be better if the article was more entertaining. More people would read that.

#### **Organization reports:**

##### Downtown Crystal Lake (Brian Fowler)

Mr. Leech said the bike race was amazing and he was very impressed. He said it can only get bigger over the years. Mr. Reece said he wished that more businesses would have been opened. Mr. Dalzell said a survey was just sent to the downtown businesses and the results will be interesting. Mr. Leech said there was not much money spent on marketing. Ms. Schwartz said it would have been nice if there was media covering the event. There was print media but not TV.

McHenry County Economic Development Corporation (Brian Fowler/James Richter II)

Mr. Fowler said there is nothing to report.

Chamber of Commerce (Gary Reece)

Mr. Reece said there will be a lunch at Turnberry with Bruce Ravner the Republican Gubernatorial candidate. This is the Chamber's effort to increase awareness.

City of Crystal Lake (Staff)

Mr. Richter said there will be ads bi-monthly welcoming new businesses to Crystal Lake. He showed a proof of the ad. Mr. Dalzell suggested that something also be done on the radio too.

**Report to the City Council**

Mr. Richter said he would create the report highlighting the major points discussed during this meeting.

**Comments from the Committee**

There were no comments from the members.

**Adjourn**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:50 a.m.