

**City of Crystal Lake Economic Development Committee**  
**August 27, 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, DeHaan, Haleblian, Saidler, and Fowler were present. Members Hymes, Reece, and Riley were absent.

Michelle Rentzsch, Director of Planning and Economic Development, and James Richter II, Assistant Director of Economic Development, were present from staff. Paul Leech, owner of The Cottage was also present.

**Approve Minutes of the July 23, 2013 Meeting**

Mr. Affrunti moved to approve the minutes from the July 23, 2013 EDC meeting as presented. Mr. Dalzell seconded the motion. On voice vote, members Affrunti, Dalzell, Saidler, and Fowler present voted aye. Mr. Haleblian abstained. Motion passed.

**Public Participation and Comment**

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

**Long-term business anniversaries**

Mr. Richter said Mayor Shepley requested that the business anniversary awards be given out twice a year. Mr. Richter worked with Mr. Reece and the suggestions in the reports are based on those records.

Mr. Affrunti asked if they are given in 5 year increments. Mr. Fowler said 5 to 10 years would be good. The last time they did 7 businesses and that seemed to be too many at one time.

Mr. Haleblian moved to give the long-term business anniversary awards to: Heisler Bootery – 105 years; Mayfair Carpets – 30 years; LaBemi's – 30 years; Pablo's Mexican Restaurant – 25 years; and Camfil USA – 45 years. Mr. Affrunti seconded the motion. On voice vote, all members voted aye. Motion passed.

**Business retention tours (updates from Committee calls)**

Mr. Richter asked how contacting the businesses for tours were going. Mr. Haleblian said he was not able to contact G & M Manufacturing but he will try again. Mr. Fowler said he would call Rita and Sequoia.

Mr. Richter said he was able to set up a tour in September for Technipaq. He will be contacting the members at a later date with the tour information.

Mr. DeHaan said he had contacted the owners of Rita Corporation and he thought it was a good idea. He will contact him again to get a better time frame.

Mr. Fowler said it was nice that the Mayor and some of the Council members were able to attend the tour of Camfil. Mr. Richter said that the press release was picked up by both the Crystal Lake Patch website and the Northwest Herald.

**McEDC business champion awards nomination (Brian Fowler)**

Mr. Fowler said at the annual McEDC dinner, business awards are given out to important and significant companies contributing to the County's economy. Mr. Richter said Covidian was nominated but did not receive an award. Mr. Fowler asked for ideas. Mr. Dalzell said Curran is a good business. Ms. Rentzsch said the award is more for manufacturing. Mr. Richter said Eisenmann is not on the list of previous winners.

Mr. Fowler asked if we had copies of the paperwork from the Covidian nomination. Mr. Richter said that he would need to check the archives.

Mr. Dalzell suggested Knaack. They were down to one shift per day and now they are back up to three shirts. Mr. Fowler added that they have new ownership.

Mr. DeHaan moved to nominate Curran, Aptar, Covidian, and Knaack for the McEDC business champion awards. Mr. Haleblan seconded the motion. On voice vote, all members voted aye. Motion passed.

**Industrial attraction and marketing (Brian Fowler/McEDC)**

Mr. Fowler said there is a lot of vacant industrial space to be filled in Crystal Lake. Mr. Dalzell suggested that we compare similar spaces/zonings in other communities vs. the spaces we have available. Why would the businesses want to come here – taxes, other amenities, etc?

Mr. Richter said he had invited Pam Cumpata with the McEDC but she has a board meeting each month at this time. He suggested that they hold one of the regular EDC meetings on a different date so that Ms. Cumpata would be able to attend to let the Committee know what the McEDC is currently doing.

Mr. Leech said that the City is up against businesses moving to areas/countries where the labor is cheaper. Mr. Fowler said many manufacturing companies are coming back to the US because of technology which improves the efficiency.

Mr. Saidler asked how many hits have the new site the City is hosting has received. Mr. Richter said it has not gone public yet and we are not yet tracking those analytics. That will be in 30 to 60 days and then it needs to be optimized so they can receive that information.

**Workforce development trade publication advertisement research (Andrew Hymes)**

Mr. Hymes was not at this meeting to discuss his findings.

**I Shop Crystal Lake updates**

Website

Mr. Richter said they have been released from the GovQA agreement and that URL [www.ishopcl.com](http://www.ishopcl.com) has been redirected to the City's website temporarily. They will be rebuilding the I Shop website and staff will be able to update that site. This will be rolled out shortly and there will be a one-time fee for designing the site. Mr. Saidler added that there won't be a band width problem and it will be able to be brought up on phones, pads, computers, etc. Mr. Richter said it will automatically adjust to the device that is being used.

Holiday gift certificate contest

Mr. Richter said they are anticipating the Holiday Certificate program to run between November 1, 2013 and January 31, 2014. He will have the program guidelines and advertising ready for review at the next meeting.

Mr. Dalzell suggested that there be some incentive for businesses to promote the contest. He suggested that the business put their name on the application and if the applicant is a winner, the business wins too. He believes that would increase the number of small businesses that would promote the program. Mr. Dalzell said it is important to get the stores involved. Mr. Leech said that would help with the marketing cost.

Mr. Leech asked about the program and if people could submit the application on-line. Mr. Richter explained the program and said we need to have the receipts attached to the application to be drawn. He added that the amount of receipts needed could also be changed.

Mr. Haleblian asked how the word would get to the businesses. Mr. Dalzell suggested having information available at the Chamber mixers. Mr. Richter said they had gone to the businesses previously so they could do that again. Mr. DeHaan said it also could be put in the Chamber news letter. Mr. Leech suggested an e-mail blast.

Mr. Richter said he will have a draft budget available at the next meeting for the members to review.

#### I Shop Crystal Lake Sub-committee (Keith Saidler)

Mr. Saidler said there will be a report ready for the next meeting on possible improvements businesses would like to see for the I Shop program. Mr. Fowler suggested asking the businesses about the possibility of winning something as previously discussed with the I Shop Holiday promotion.

#### Franchise Opportunities (Staff/Gary Reece)

Mr. Reece was not at this meeting to discuss this topic.

Mr. Leech asked if Bennigan's was previously in Crystal Lake. Mr. Richter said yes and they are interested in reopening in Crystal Lake but that they need a franchisee. Mr. Fowler said small independent businesses do well in Crystal Lake.

Mr. Affrunti asked what happened to the IHOP. Mr. Richter said IHOP and the owner had a disagreement on the business model. He said that IHOP is looking for a new location in Crystal Lake.

Mr. Dalzell said many businesses are headed for Randall Road. Mr. Haleblian stated that there are many vacancies along Randall Road.

#### Incentive updates

Mr. Richter said \$60,000 of the \$80,000 budgeted has been approved for the grants. He recently received an e-mail from a grant applicant who stated that they will not be using the money since their financing had fallen through. He needs to go to Council to have that amount previously approved for that business added back to the available funds.

#### Three Oaks Recreation Area follow-up discussion

Mr. Richter stated that Eric Helm, Deputy City Manager and Director of Three Oaks Recreation Area is currently working on passes for businesses.

Mr. Fowler saw in the paper that the PZC is in support of the wake board park. Ms. Rentzsch said that will be going before City Council next week as a conceptual review and then to the PZC and again to Council for their Special Use Permit approval. She said the entire cable wake board park is privately funded. Mr. Haleblian said this is very exciting. Mr. Leech said this will bring a lot of people to the City.

Mr. Fowler noted that the Centennial kick-off celebration will be held at Three Oaks Recreation Area. Ms. Rentsch said yes and described some of the activities for that event.

Mr. Fowler noted that the Park District has purchased the vacant driving range on Ackman Road in Lakewood for a community center and pool.

**Comments and suggestions from the Committee**

Mr. Leech asked about the property on the south side of Route 14 adjacent to Three Oaks Recreation Area. Ms. Rentsch said the City has created a TIF area there and most of the lots are shallow, which limits what can go there. Mr. Leech asked about the shopping center there. Ms. Rentsch said that staff has been actively marketing the property for years but the major obstacle is there are four property owners there.

Mr. Dalzell suggested that they ask the assessor to come to a meeting to see what can be done to help promote the sale or lease of empty buildings. Ms. Rentsch said there are 4 assessors for Crystal Lake. Mr. Dalzell said they all should be invited.

Mr. Dalzell said the Sears property on Route 14 does not have many cars there no matter when you drive by. He added that K-Mart is also not that busy.

Mr. Affrunti said there are many vacant spaces that are being filled. Mr. DeHaan said it is mostly retail. Mr. Dalzell asked about the Honda move. Mr. Richter said they went from a 20,000 sq. ft. – 4 acre site to a 48,000 sq. ft. – 10 acre site.

Mr. DeHaan said they need to find a way to show businesses that the workforce in Crystal Lake is educated and that we have the tools to keep the workforce that way. That means MCC. It would be great if MCC would provide lower tuition for continuing education for employees. That would be a win-win for everyone. Ms. Rentsch said McEDC and MCC are currently doing that and we could find out more from Ms. Cumpata next month. Mr. Saidler said Aptar is having problems finding employees that can write letters and also pass drug tests. Mr. Fowler said they need to get rid of the stigma of manufacturing jobs. There are more opportunities there than people realize.

Mr. Leech explained how the UK's work and education system works. The Committee agreed to discuss this matter with Ms. Cumpata of McEDC at a future meeting.

**Organization reports:**

**Downtown Crystal Lake (Brian Fowler)**

Ms. Rentsch said Johnny Appleseed Festival will be coming up at the end of September.

Mr. DeHaan asked if the bike race happened. Ms. Rentsch said that was in July. Mr. DeHaan said he wanted to attend but there was no marketing of the event. Mr. Leech said it was successful even without marketing. He added that many of the businesses downtown were closed which was a mistake. Mr. Haleblian asked if there would be a race next year. Ms. Rentsch believes that is the intent of the organizers. Mr. Leech said it takes 3 to 4 years for people to get use to an event. He hopes they do more marketing of the race.

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

No report.

Chamber of Commerce (Gary Reece)

No report.

City of Crystal Lake (Staff)

Mr. Richter handed out a copy of the article for the City's newsletter about shopping locally. Also there will be another ad in the Northwest Herald about new businesses coming to Crystal Lake. Mr. Dalzell asked if Staff had checked into advertising on the radio. Mr. Richter said he will check into it. Mr. Dalzell said not necessarily an ad but to get things mentioned on the radio. Ms. Rentzsch said possibly a press release.

**Report to the City Council**

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

**Adjourn**

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