

City of Crystal Lake Economic Development Committee
June 3, 2014 – 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, Leech, Reece, Saidler, and Fowler were present. Mr. Haleblian was absent.

James Richter II, Planning and Economic Development Manager, was present from staff. Also in attendance was Charlie Johnson.

Approve Minutes of the April 22, 2014 Meeting

Mr. Reece moved to approve the minutes from the April 22, 2014 EDC meeting as presented. Mr. DeHaan seconded the motion. On voice vote, members Affrunti, DeHaan, Saidler, and Reece voted aye. Members Dalzell, Leech, and Fowler abstained. Motion passed.

Public participation

Mr. Johnson said he did not have any presentation. He was attending the meeting to get more involved in the community and learn about what the EDC reviews. There was no one else present who wished to speak.

Business anniversaries (Gary Reece)

Mr. Reece sent information regarding the anniversaries for Wickham Interiors and Dobbe Marketing. He stated that Wickham Interiors is celebrating 32 years and Dobbe Marketing is celebrating 25 years. Dobbe can be added to the list. Mr. Reece said it is only appropriate since they also worked on the I Shop program when it started.

Mr. Richter said there are a few businesses that need to be confirmed. Mr. Reece said he would verify them. Mr. Richter said they will divide the recipients of the awards into two or more Council meetings. Mr. Fowler said they won't have the reception after – only the presentations.

The members present agreed with the awards to be given to: Dobbe Marketing – 25 years; Charles River Development and Kinder Care (on Berkshire Drive) – 35 years; Village Squire Restaurant – 40 years; Fox Valley Animal Hospital, Gulgrens Appliance, and Rita Corporation – 60 years; and Ralph Helm Inc – 90 years. The two businesses with anniversaries to be confirmed are R/K Autobody and Spartan Adhesives & Coatings.

Manufacturer tour update

Mr. Richter said the tour of G & M Manufacturing on Main Street tentatively scheduled for the end of June. He is also trying to get a tour of National Gift Card now that they are settled into their new location. He asked if any of the members had any suggestions for future tours to please let him know. Mr. Johnson asked if the businesses are then promoted in any City publication. Mr. Richter said they had been in the past and they possibly will start that up again. Mr. Reece said most owners are extremely gun shy about having the City tour their businesses. He said it is very interesting to see what companies in Crystal Lake do that is shipped worldwide. Mr. Fowler suggested setting up a tour of NIMCO.

Business attraction update

Mr. Richter reviewed the ICSC (International Council of Shopping Centers) conference held last month. The event was very busy and most retailers they spoke to are considering both the Crystal Lake and Algonquin markets. Also most businesses want to locate near or next to similar businesses. Mr. Richter added the CVS Pharmacy has found an alternate location in Crystal Lake and has contracts on those parcels. He will be following up with contacts they made during the ICSC who asked for additional information.

Mr. Fowler said Council needs to be made aware of retailers' demographic requirements which are nothing the City can remedy. Also Huntley will be in the mix for industrial uses with their new park just off I-90.

Mr. Dalzell asked if there was anything about the City that can be changed, such as lowering the sales tax rate, to make Crystal Lake more desirable.

Mr. Richter said during the discussions at the ICSC there was never any mention of taxes or the City's reputation being a problem.

Mr. Affrunti asked about the Randall Road expansion at Route 62 with the continuous flow receiving opposition. Mr. Reece said there are a lot of curb cuts on Randall Road through Lake in the Hills and Algonquin. Mr. Richter said the plan has hurt Lake in the Hills but he isn't sure that it helping Crystal Lake.

Mr. Leech said he cringes every time he drives on Routes 31 & 176. Mr. Richter said the intersection will be nice when the construction is completed.

Mr. Dalzell said most of the City's buildings are older and would need to be upgraded. Mr. Fowler agreed stating that we have a lot of outdated buildings. Businesses need to see the value of being in Crystal Lake. Mr. Reece said independent businesses do well.

Mr. Saidler asked if the City receives sales tax businesses are charged for renting computer software. Mr. Richter said he was not sure and would check into it.

Certified/shovel-ready sites program research (Haig Haleblian / Jeff DeHaan)

Mr. DeHaan handed out information from the Indiana Shovel Ready program. The property owner applies to the state and there are several criteria levels. Currently Indiana has 91 sites on their website. Other states such as Iowa, Wisconsin, New York, Tennessee, and Georgia have similar programs. Also certain cities within those states are promoting their Shovel Ready lots. Mr. Dalzell said that type of program would be beneficial to the City. Mr. Richter said there are several sites that would work for this type of program. Mr. Dalzell said they could include pre-existing buildings. Mr. DeHaan said we also have the business incentive program as well as TIF districts. Mr. Richter said McEDC (McHenry County Economic Development Corp) is putting together a task force for this type of program. Mr. Fowler suggested that Mr. DeHaan join that group, if possible. Mr. Reece said this is a great starting point.

I Shop Crystal Lake (Keith Saidler)

Mr. Saidler asked that this be tabled until the next meeting since the sub-committee members were unable to meet. The members agreed.

Economic Development Committee goals for FY 2104-15

Mr. Richter said the Fiscal Year 2014-15 started May 1st and with the budget and I Shop changes it was time to review the Committee's goals.

Mr. Leech suggested inviting someone from MCC (McHenry County College) to the Committee to discuss manufacturing education. Mr. DeHaan suggested that there be a cooperative effort between the manufacturing community and MCC – continuing education, possible discount in fees, etc. Mr. Fowler said they have tried to work with MCC in the past. Possibly one of their goals this year is to build a better relationship with MCC. They have been included in the invitations for the tours and have not attended. Mr. Saidler said they need to keep in mind that manufacturing is a career path and there are large hurdles to get over. Mr. Reece said many manufacturing businesses work with colleges for their own programs. Mr. Fowler suggested starting a vocational scholarship. Mr. Saidler said several groups had them but there are very few applicants for them. He said most high school counselors promote college vs. manufacturing. Mr. Fowler said high schools always talk about how many of their students go on to college but they don't talk about how many eventually drop out and don't graduate.

Mr. Reece said this needs to be a County-wide effort. He added that the McEDC has changed its' focus to manufacturing. The best thing is MCC is in town. Mr. Leech will do more research on the town in Texas that has a cooperative program between the schools and their businesses.

The members agreed to the following goals for FY 2014-15: I Shop Crystal Lake Committee (on-going); Business Anniversaries (twice annually); Manufacturers retention tours (monthly); Business attraction tours (as needed); City of Crystal Lake Welcoming Committee (as needed); Incentive programs overview (annual); Reports to City Council (bi-monthly/quarterly); Special Projects, such as certified/shovel ready sites program (as needed); Build a better relationship with McHenry County College.

EDC meeting schedule discussion

Mr. Fowler suggested the meetings continue monthly but with shorter agendas. Mr. Leech said sub-committees could give summaries of their activities at that time.

Due to the length of the meeting, the remainder of the agenda was tabled to the next meeting.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 a.m.