

VILLAGE OF RIVERSIDE
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
Thursday, January 9, 2020
Riverside Township Hall, Room 4
MEETING MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by CHAIRPERSON HERBST at 7:00 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Present: CHAIRPERSON KRISTINE HERBST
COMMISSIONER JENNIFER FOURNIER
COMMISSIONER SUZANNE KAHLE
COMMISSIONER BRIDGET DOHERTY

Absent: COMMISSIONER BRIAN PLAIN
COMMISSIONER JACK BUOSCIO

Also Present: CD Director Abt
Eric Wagner, Visit Oak Park

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

COMMISSIONER FOURNIER motioned, seconded by COMMISSIONER KAHLE, to approve the minutes of the September 12, 2019 Regular Meeting of the Economic Development Commission.

Voice Vote. All Ayes.

Motion passed.

5. CHAIRPERSON REPORT

CHAIRPERSON HERBST provided a recap of the 150 Anniversary events noting that it went very well.

6. LIAISON REPORT

A. Village Board Update

Trustee Peters was unable to attend the meeting due to a work conflict. Staff had no update.

B. Staff Update

Director Abt discussed new business openings and closings.

COMMISSIONER KAHLE asked about Bank of America parking lot and the possibility of leasing that space for “pop up” vendors or for commuter parking. Director Abt

stated she had spoken to their representative and they were not interested at this time.

COMMISSIONER FOURNIER asked about available space list. Director Abt stated that the GIS person will be working on it soon, he was pulled on to a higher priority project this winter.

The Commission also asked about Harlem Property Sign. Director Abt said that DPW is trying to track down the old banner to put up on the property.

C. Chamber of Commerce Update - There was no update from the Chamber. Commissioners asked when the next meeting was. CHAIRPERSON HERBST was unsure but would look out for a notice.

7. CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT REPORT:

The Commissioners asked about the Train Station. Director Abt stated that it did not work out with ALDa Foods. Director Abt stated that they are looking for a vendor that will have a minimal impact on the restoration work that was recently completed. Director Abt also noted that in order to avoid paying property taxes a tenant would need to enter into a license agreement which means they would need to be able to keep the train station available for public use. This means they would need to be able to move their setup into the back room when they are not open. Commissioner Fournier asked where a tenant could be located or what area they could use. Director Abt stated they could use the east half of the station and the storage area. Director Abt noted that further progress on this would probably need to wait until Parks and Recreation was moved into their new space, as they use most of the back room for storage. The Commissioners suggested that perhaps a few smaller vendors could open in the train station, perhaps on weekends.

8. OLD BUSINESS:

A. Update from Visit Oak Park on 2019 marketing campaign and micro-tourism site

Eric Wagner from Visit Oak Park (VOP) provided an update on the partnership with Riverside and Visit Oak Park. He gave a powerpoint presentation (attached as Exhibit A). He noted that Visit Oak Park went through a big transition and restructuring in 2019. They launched a new brand and moved to a digital program. He noted that one of the new ideas was marketing partnerships with member communities. Riverside was one of the first and they are looking forward to strengthening the partnership. This partnership included a new community page with its own URL (VisitRiversideIL.com) and a digital marketing campaign. Mr. Wagner stated that there was a lot to do to bring Visit Oak Park into the digital age including high quality images and videos. They were able to use some of their budget to come out to Riverside and film and photograph. With those images the

new community page went live on November 22nd. It has a features section to highlight local attractions and key businesses, an articles section to highlight specific topics, attractions and businesses, an events section to highlight key annual events and a user generated content section with photos that can be updated seasonally. Mr. Wagner stated that they are working on a community video that will be added to the page, more features and articles will be added to the page and they will be working with a consultant on adding SEO and other key technology components to improve their website and the community pages.

The 2019 partnership also included a digital marketing campaign. This launched November 22 – December 31st. He stated that they did not have the final campaign results yet, however preliminary numbers shows a strong beginning with a click-through rate of 2.93% for the first week. Mr. Wagner went over the components of the campaign including the Facebook and Instagram carousel ads which highlighted drinking, dining and shopping as well as a retargeting ad for the Holiday Stroll.

Mr. Wagner also went over next steps. He stated they are excited to continue partnering with Riverside. Next year they will be focusing on obtaining more new photography and video. They will launch a new community video for Riverside. They want to add more features, articles and events to the community page. He stated that they need ideas from the Commission for these. He noted that he has a new writer on staff to help create these, however they need the ideas to start with. He stated that whatever the Village's budget is for marketing in 2020, they will match it plus an additional \$5,000 due to the delay in launching the 2019 marketing campaign. He also said they would like to know that direction the Village would like to go with marketing for 2020 so they can work with the consultant on preparing a proposal for the Village. He also stated that he would come back in February to provide the final results of the 2019 campaign and get the Commission's feedback on a marketing campaign so they could put together a proposal. He noted that in April they would be having their 2020 launch event and wanted to have everything in order by then so they could showcase the VOP-Riverside partnership.

The Commission thanked Mr. Wagener for his presentation. They had some follow-up questions regarding what type of information he needed from them. Mr. Wagner explained that they would like to highlight more businesses. He also said they are looking for "itinerary" ideas. What is there to do in Riverside, how could you spend an evening or an afternoon? He said the focus is on storytelling so itinerary ideas or even interesting stories or histories of Riverside or Riverside businesses to share. He noted that travelers are looking for those types of experiences. He noted that his writer can actually write up the itineraries and articles, but he needs the ideas and the information.

9. NEW BUSINESS:

A. Discussion and recommendation to staff and Visit Oak Park on proposed 2020 marketing partnership with Visit Oak Park

CHAIRPERSON HERBST asked about the budget. Director Abt stated that the Board approved the 2020 budget in December and it included \$1,500 for the community page and \$7,000 for marketing. She noted that the maintenance fee was only going to be \$1,000 so that additional \$500 could be added to the marketing budget for a total of \$7,500. The Commissioners expressed some disappointment at the budget number. Director Abt stated that it was a tight budget year and that many department and commission budgets were trimmed in order to keep a balanced budget. Mr. Wagner noted that with Visit Oak Park's match plus the additional \$5,000 that would leave a marketing budget of \$20,000. He stated he knows resources are limited and that is why they are offering the matching funds to help its member communities maximize their budgets.

The Commission asked what type of marketing options were available. Director Abt said that Staff had looked into commercials, printed ads, etc. however they were pretty expensive one-time expenses. COMMISSIONER FOURNIER noted that digital was still the most economical choice. Director Abt added that it is easier to demonstrate your impact or reach with a digital campaign than with a traditional print ad. The Commissioners agreed that a digital campaign was probably the best approach.

The Commissioners discussed the next steps. COMMISSIONER DOHERTY suggested sending out a survey to all the businesses to collect information. She offered to create the survey. Director Abt stated that Staff could send the survey out to all the registered businesses COMMISSIONER FOURNIER suggested that Riverside capitalize on the zoo more, especially since part of it is located in Riverside.

Director Abt suggested the Commission come up with "itineraries". She reminded the Commissioners about the exercise they did with Point B when they started their branding where they did a trip advisor review. She suggested they think about what a perfect day in Riverside would include. If each commissioner could provide one or two of those to share with Visit Oak Park, that would provide a pretty strong start for the community page. She noted that Visit Oak Park has a writer so it is fine if their ideas are more bullet points, but perhaps a brief explanation of why, would help the writer flesh out the "story" CHAIRPERSON HERBST stated that FLOS and the Historical Commission probably have a lot of articles or stories that could be shared with VOP.

Economic Development Commission Minutes

January 9, 2020

Page 5 of 5

The Commission discussed a date for a special meeting to discuss the 2020 campaign further with VOP and get the final results of the 2019 campaign. The Commission decided on February 13th for the Special Meeting. Director Abt stated that she would try to find a room since Room 4 would be taken by the Preservation Commission as that is their Regular Meeting day. Director Abt stated she would follow up with the Commissioners to summarize the next steps so they were ready for the February meeting discussion with VOP.

The Commission also brainstormed on ways they could capitalize on Visit Oak Park's campaign. There was some discussion about retargeting. They discussed how the Commission could better utilize its Facebook platform to reach more people and attract new businesses. They discussed what the goal of the page was and what type of posts would be the most engaging or informative. COMMISSIONER FOURNIER offered to create a strategy with different topic categories. COMMISSIONER DOHERTY asked how they could help. Director Abt stated that it would be helpful if some of the Commissioners helped create the content. She suggested that once the categories were created she could share with the Commission and they could let her know which categories they were most interested in to write posts for. She stated they could create a schedule for the next few months and then reevaluate from there. The Commission was in agreement.

The Commission asked when they would work on setting their priorities and focus for 2020. COMMISSIONER FOURNIER asked if they would be doing the SWOT analysis Staff had mentioned last year. Director Abt said they certainly can. She suggested doing this at the Regular meeting in March so they can focus on getting VOP what they need in February.

The Commission also discussed how to better broadcast what the Village is doing with Visit Oak Park. CHAIRPERSON HERBST stated that with Point B they had given presentations to the Village Board. She suggested that Mr. Wagner provide the Board with an update. The Commission agreed his was a good idea. Director Abt suggested a March presentation so that would give VOP time to prepare a brief outline of what the 2020 campaign would look like.

10. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

None.

11. ADJOURNMENT

COMMISSIONER DOHERTY motioned to adjourn the meeting. COMMISSIONER KAHLE seconded the motion. Voice vote. All ayes. Meeting adjourned at 8:45 PM.