

VILLAGE OF RIVERSIDE, ILLINOIS
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Thursday, March 12, 2020

7:00 pm

Riverside Township Hall – Room 4
27 Riverside Road, Riverside, IL 60546

MEETING MINUTES

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Herbst at 7:02 PM

2. Roll Call

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

Absent: COMMISSIONER BRIAN PLAIN
COMMISSIONER JACK BUOSCIO

Also Present: CD Director Abt
Management Analyst Bouman

3. Public Comment:

None.

4. Approval of Minutes:

COMMISSIONER JACKSIC motioned, seconded by COMMISSIONER FOURNIER, to approve the minutes of the January 9, 2020 Regular Meeting of the Economic Development Commission and the February 13, 2020 Special Meeting of the Economic Development Commission.

Voice Vote. All Ayes.

Motion Passed.

5. Chairperson Report:

None.

6. Liaison Reports:

A. Village Board Update

Trustee Peters was unable to attend the meeting due to a work conflict.

Director Abt informed the Commission that the Village Board has approved starting the business district process. There are two proposed district areas; one which will extend along Harlem from Shenstone to Lawton and West on Burlington toward Delaplaine and the other at the corner of Ogden and Harlem. The Board planned to hold a Business District Open House on March 25 with Village consultants Kane McKenna and a public hearing at the April 2 Village Board Meeting. Staff have sent public notice to surrounding property owners.

Director Abt provided background on the Business District proposal. It is envisioned as an economic incentive that will allow the Village to create grant programs along with providing funds for development agreements and façade programs. If approved by October 2020, collections for an additional sales tax will begin January 1, 2021. CHAIRPERSON HERBST felt that the proposal gives the Village useful flexibility. COMMISSIONER FOURNIER asked if the collected funds would be earmarked. Director Abt confirmed that funds collected within the district could only be spent on improvements within the district.

B. Staff Update

Director Abt provided updates on new business activity. Management Analyst Bouman provided an update on the Business Marketing Survey. COMMISSIONER DOHERTY suggested a plan for following-up with businesses

who had not yet responded. The Commissioners agreed.

C. Chamber of Commerce Update

The Commissioners greeted Jason Hinsley from the Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Hinsley introduced himself and provided updates on the chamber. They will be continuing the steak fry and cruise nights. They want to expand cruise nights to Harlem Avenue and increase involvement with Harlem businesses. The Chamber is also exploring an app. COMMISSIONER KAHLE highlighted the potential synergies between the Chamber and the EDC. There was discussion of vacant commercial storefronts. COMMISSIONER DOHERTY asked whether the available properties GIS map would be helpful. It was suggested that it would. CHAIRPERSON HERBST mentioned that the EDC has been working on Village branding for the past few years, including work with Visit Oak Park.

7. Central Business District:

None.

8. Old Business:

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

Director Abt provided an update on the Visit Oak Park partnership. Director Abt received and signed an updated engagement letter from Visit Oak Park. The letter included provisions for increased reporting of data from Visit Oak Park that the Commission requested at the February 13, 2020 meeting. Management Analyst Bouman has worked to compile feedback and comments from Commissioners to Visit Oak Park from the previous meeting. COMMISSIONER DOHERTY asked whether the updated engagement letter contained the requested reporting of performance metrics. Director Abt confirmed that it did. CHAIRPERSON HERBST encouraged the Commissioners to attend Eric Wagner of Visit Oak Park's presentation to the Village Board at their March 19th meeting.

9. New Business:

A. SWOT Analysis and discussion of 2020 economic development priorities and goals.

Director Abt provided an overview of SWOT (strengths, weakness, opportunities, threats) analysis. Director Abt went over prior vision and goal statements of the Village including those from the CMAP Central Business District Plan and those that were developed in conjunction with the Point B marketing work. Director Abt asked if the Commissioners still felt the previously stated visions and goals from 2013-2015 were still appropriate. This exercise was intended to update and check in on the visions and goals previously expressed and to generate actionable insights for future EDC and Village efforts.

CHAIRPERSON HERBST highlights that the previous vision and goals came out of processes that started at the ground floor and were primarily focused on positioning the Village. CHAIRPERSON HERBST stated that this SWOT analysis and subsequent activities are an intended outcome of the earlier efforts. COMMISSIONER FOURNIER stated that the statements listed were largely aspirational and, while largely focused on highlighting nature and quality of life, they could have focused more on business realities too. COMMISSIONER JACKSIC highlighted the utility of the exercise and tied it to the reasons why the Commissioners were likely interested in the EDC in the first place.

The Commissioners participated in the SWOT exercise guided by Staff. Commissioners identified numerous strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and weaknesses over the course of the meeting.

Strengths included:

- Green space
- Loyal customer base (for biz done right)
- Safe
- Recreational opportunities
- Aging in place
- Proximity to Chicago (major metropolitan area)
- Housing – still a discount compared to other nearby communities
- Residents with income & hobbies

- Diverse housing stock
- Historic landmark
- Charming downtown
- Lots of empty storefronts
- Good schools
- Biking
- Small population
- Motivated village board
- Village gov't willing to work with surrounding communities
- Train (Metra station)
- Flexible recruitment
- Good purchasing power
- Riverside foods
- Nicest safest desirable community this close to city

Weaknesses

- Small population
- Backs turned to the train
- Limited visibility/pathways/ signage to the river
- Empty storefronts
- Aging internet infrastructure/availability
- Reputation: not business friendly
- River (at least how we approach it)
- Limited facilities for larger gatherings
- Low walking traffic
- Lack of economic anchor
- Not a great history of thriving businesses
- Dated available space
- Bad landlord
- Lack of parking

Opportunities

- Brookfield zoo/zoo events
- Younger families moving in
- Changing nature of business/commerce
- Home rule referendum
- Business districts
- Des Plaines River Trail
- Young people are moving to 'burbs
- Makers – people already in town who could take advantage of a maker space
- PUD ordinance
- The river
- What's our economic anchor?
- Number of businesses without an online presence
- Restart guerilla gardening

Threats

- Climate change
- Too expensive (taxes high rents)
- Non-home rule community
- Small businesses – can they withstand a recession?
- ComEd reliability/blackouts
- Landlord's motivations or lack thereof
- Aging population

- Threat of recession
- Lack of landlord investment
- Berwyn (bdc flexibility & \$\$)

10. Informational Items:

The Commissioners discussed meeting again before two months. All agreed.

11. Adjournment:

CHAIRPERSON HERBST motioned to adjourn. The motion was seconded by COMMISSIONER KAHLE.
Voice Vote. All Ayes.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 PM