

**Economic Development Commission
Minutes of Meeting on
January 22, 2008**

Acting Chairman John Karstrand called the meeting of the Economic Development Commission (EDC) to order on January 22, 2008 at 7:50 p.m. (later start time was due to inclement weather). Due to an air travel-related delay, Chairman Zimmerman joined the meeting at 8:12 p.m.

Members Present: Alan Schneider, Marc Cella, Eileen Crane, Jan Grisemer, John Karstrand, and Tom Zimmerman

Members Absent: Rick Johnson, Kate McMillan, and Brad Summers

Staff Present: Timothy Scott, AICP, Community Development Strategist

Others Present: Jan Anderson, Executive Director of the Hinsdale Chamber of Commerce and Dan Grisko, President of Direct Advantage

Approval of Minutes

With respect to the regularly-scheduled meeting of the EDC held on December 18, 2007, Mr. Cella requested that the minutes be amended to reflect his stated opinion that the storefront window graphic program should be voluntary, that enough uncovered space should be made available for passersby to be able to look in, and that it is more suitable for a coming-soon scenario rather than when space is available. With that addition, Ms. Crane made a motion to approve the minutes. Ms. Grisemer seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously.

Review of Receipts from Sales Taxes and Food and Beverage Tax

Mr. Scott relayed to the Commission that total sales tax receipts for the fiscal year through the end of December (the October sales period) had increased approximately 3.6%. He commented that food and beverage tax receipts continue to average approximately \$20,000 to \$21,000 per month.

Review of Holiday Promotion

Mr. Grisko of Direct Advantage provided an overview of the “Distinctly Hinsdale for the Holidays” promotional activities. He stated that he had been on-site approximately three-fourths of the time, and during those times, he spoke to several hundred attendees. Mr. Grisko remarked that the feedback from those attendees

had been overwhelmingly positive and that all but a handful was from Hinsdale residents and occasionally their guests. Mr. Grisko commented that Saturday's events were much better-attended than Friday evenings. Given that the Village appears to be quiet on Friday evenings, he suggested that the Commission consider moving Friday's festivities to Thursday evening, when some stores have extended hours or to Sundays, when families may have the time to visit downtown. Mr. Grisko expressed that the biggest opportunity for next year is the potential to secure sponsorships to underwrite some of the cost of the festivities, adding that the Village is considering such an idea on a broader scale.

In terms of several specific items, Mr. Grisko reported that: the carolers were a big hit; the secret shopper gift card was received extremely well; the carriage rides were typically full; the gingerbread decorating was at capacity often; and that the ice sculpture demonstration received some attention (but only at Burlington Park with little at Grant Square or Gateway Square). Since most retail stores want to use shopping bags to feature their brands, members of the Commission agreed that the shopping bags would likely not be repeated unless consideration was given to a high-quality re-usable one and that perhaps it be made available for purchase rather than complimentary. If the Commission were interested, Mr. Grisko added that an option would be that any bags created in the future could be done with individual store logos on one side and Distinctly Hinsdale on the other. With respect to media, Mr. Grisko relayed that the number one response from attendees was direct mail followed by print, with *The Hinsdalean* referenced the most, followed by the *Tribune*. He also commented that the micro web site received many hits; specifically, 668 during the promotional period with 416 viewing the schedule of events.

Mr. Grisko and members briefly discussed the notion of a winter/ice festival centered at Burlington Park that would be even more grandly-scaled and that such a promotion would be more likely to happen with the aforementioned sponsors and contributions of staff and finances from formal partnerships with the Village's Park and Recreation Department, the Hinsdale Chamber of Commerce, and perhaps others. Mr. Grisko and members of the Commission concluded that the first year could be considered a very nice start to the brand development strategy.

Potential Activities for FY 2008-2009

Mr. Grisko relayed that the items the firm is currently working on include the shopping directory insert, logo options, window graphics, and the promotional media kit. Discussion returned briefly to finding potential ways to partner with other departments and organizations to better leverage available human and financial resources.

Chairman Zimmerman relayed to members that the EDC's budget for the next fiscal year would be \$130,000, including any contributions to the Hinsdale Chamber of Commerce, which during FY 2007-2008 totaled \$26,500. Among items listed on Direct Advantage's preliminary budget for next fiscal year (and crafted before the available resource amount was made aware), Commissioners expressed a desire to have an EDC web presence within the Village's site, recognizing that the level of detail desired would affect the amount dedicated to the project and consequently the year's budget. The group agreed to revisit the budget and goals for the year in upcoming meetings.

Logo Development

Mr. Grisko reminded members of the Commission that work on the logo was placed on hold in order to focus time and energy on developing and executing the holiday promotion. He brought several new versions for the consideration of the group and remarked that additional time would be spent until the Commission was comfortable with the logo. There was support for the existing design (i.e., the one that has been used since the holiday launch), with several members suggesting modifications to the style of the "H" in Hinsdale as well as incorporating "1873" into the design to tie into the Village's heritage (e.g., since or established 1873). The ideas behind a couple of the other presented designs were discussed as well.

Promotional Media Kit

Mr. Scott informed the Commission that he had met with Kit Fries of Direct Advantage to review the potential structure of and content for the promotional media kit. He reminded the group that this piece could prove instrumental in the recruitment of new businesses to the community and that it gives the Village a professional presence. Mr. Grisko reiterated that the project is the most critical current item and that resources to design and develop it were coming out of the current fiscal year's budget.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the EDC was announced as being scheduled for Tuesday, February 26, 2008 at 7:30 p.m. in Memorial Hall of the Memorial Building.

Adjournment

With no other business before the Commission, Chairman Zimmerman asked for a motion to adjourn. Ms. Crane made a motion to adjourn; Mr. Schneider seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. The January 22, 2008 meeting was declared adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Timothy J. Scott, AICP, Community Development Strategist