

## **Economic Development Commission Minutes of the Special Meeting on April 29, 2008**

Chairman Zimmerman called the special meeting of the Economic Development Commission (EDC) to order on April 29, 2008 at 7:36 p.m.

**Members Present:** Marc Cella, Eileen Crane, Jan Grisemer, Rick Johnson, John Karstrand, Brad Summers, and Tom Zimmerman

**Members Absent:** Kate McMillan and Alan Schneider

**Staff Present:** Timothy Scott, AICP, Community Development Strategist

**Others Present:** Jan Anderson, Executive Director of the Hinsdale Chamber of Commerce; Dan Grisko of Direct Advantage; and Mike Shenouda of GMX Real Estate Group

### **Approval of Minutes**

Chairman Zimmerman asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the EDC special meeting held on April 1, 2008. Mr. Karstrand made a motion to approve the minutes. Ms. Grisemer seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously.

### **Request for Support**

Ms. Anderson thanked the Commission for its support of the ongoing efforts of the Hinsdale Chamber of Commerce to partner with the Village to promote economic activity. She noted that given the success of the end-of-summer bash, "Uniquely Thursdays" would be moving to Chicago Avenue between Garfield and Washington. Mr. Johnson made a motion to formally approve the request of the Chamber of Commerce for Village support of Uniquely Thursdays. Mr. Cella seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously.

### **Sales Tax Receipts**

Mr. Scott reported that base sales tax receipts for the month of April (January sales) increased 5.5% over the previous year's receipts. He stated that for the fiscal year through the end of April (and the January sales period) total sales tax receipts had increased approximately 4.6% over the previous year's receipts. Commissioners were pleased with the continuation of increased receipts that began with the November and December holiday shopping months. Chairman Zimmerman commented that the increased receipts were evidence of the Village's holiday

promotion and its ongoing efforts to generate additional foot traffic to the shopping districts. With the conclusion of the fiscal year, Mr. Scott stated that the Village would be requesting data from the Illinois Department of Revenue to provide the Commission with the customary year-in-review report.

### **Business Registrations/Licenses**

Mr. Scott relayed to the members of the Commission that the Village had received 621 paid registrations for calendar year 2008, representing \$46,575 in revenue. He added that the compliance rate for the Village's retailers was approximately 83%. Mr. Scott stated that work to update the business directory on the website to reflect only compliant businesses would begin in the near future.

Mr. Johnson asked if the time commitment to administer the program was lessening, and Mr. Scott replied that gains in efficiency have generally resulted since the program is now in its third season. He added that renewal invoices generated and processed by the Finance Department, coupled with assistance by a departmental intern, have made the process less resource intensive from his personal perspective.

### **Available Downtown Property**

Mr. Scott relayed that available property in the downtown area had remained largely unchanged from the last meeting of the Commission except for a few recent changes. Specifically, he noted the departure of Excentrique and that its space was to be filled by an existing Hinsdale merchant, Expression Gallery of Fine Art. Mr. Scott added that Baird and Warner realty was also departing and that its space was to be filled with another existing Hinsdale realty, Prudential Properties. He commented that both of the businesses that were moving were doing so from the same building and that he would do some research to find out the particulars of the property. Mr. Cella suggested that if information could be acquired, a similar retail property summary from the other business districts would be helpful for the group.

### **Promotional Video and Print Brochure**

Mr. Scott informed the group that the finishing touches were being applied to the content of the promotional video, including an additional quote from one of the community organizations and a slide thanking the three main sponsors of the video. He added that a decorative label for the DVD and a graphical insert would be designed for the presentation case.

Mr. Scott stated that Direct Advantage had prepared the final layout of the print brochure and Mr. Grisko provided the group with informal estimates of pricing for the printing costs associated with the piece. Mr. Grisko noted that several factors

might affect the per-unit cost. Mr. Scott said he would attempt to submit the piece for consideration of an award by the International Economic Development Council if the Commission were interested and if the production of the piece coincided with the deadline set by the organization. Members expressed support for the pursuit of an award should timing permit.

### **Sign Projects**

Mr. Scott informed the Commission that the three historic downtown signs would be installed by the end of the week or sometime the following week, weather permitting. He stated that the production of the four way-finding signs was nearing completion and that he would be working with the appropriate roadway authorities and utility location service for installation. Mr. Scott noted that the poles for the way-finding signs were on order. He added that the inserts for the shopping directory had been installed and that the Commission should consider a line item in the budget for the regular reproduction of the pieces in order to keep the store listing as current as possible.

### **Event Promotion**

Commissioner Karstrand reviewed the effort to promote the visitation of Hinsdale's dining options and retail stores by the large numbers participating in the youth soccer tournament in Hinsdale and Oak Brook. He commented that should the Commission wish to consider the opportunity in the future, additional efforts beyond the flyer and e-mail blast could be considered. One idea Mr. Karstrand noted was sponsorship of a trolley that would provide regular trips to Hinsdale's business districts during the tournament.

### **Business Owner Survey**

Commissioner Summers summarized the methodology of the survey he created seeking insight from local business owners, noted the high response rate, and provided some thoughts as to some of the more telling responses. He suggested that given the front-line input from the retailers, the Commission should consider the document a resource to help shape the group's agenda going forward. The group discussed potential ways that the observations could be compiled in order to be presented in an instructive package for use by the Board of Trustees. Chairman Zimmerman recommended that members of the group share their individual comments with Mr. Summers and Mr. Scott.

### **Initiatives for Fiscal Year 2008-2009**

Mr. Scott and Mr. Grisko reviewed with the Commissioners the current list of potential budget items for the new fiscal year. Mr. Grisko asked that the members

pay particular attention to the sponsorship dollars that would be needed to fund the holiday promotion given the existing wish list of items and their estimated costs.

Chairman Zimmerman underscored the importance of an EDC website as a top priority for the Commission and suggested that a thorough web presence could likely be achieved for less than the placeholder figure. Mr. Scott and Mr. Grisko commented that they would be working together in advance of the next meeting of the Commission to get a framework plan developed for the website, and in the process, would work to reduce costs.

In order to lower the total cost of the itemized list, the group elected to remove the DuPage Convention & Visitors Bureau as a line item. While some value in membership was recognized by Commissioners, Ms. Crane noted that it appeared to be of greater value to those municipalities that had a hotel. Members agreed there was enough potential benefit to consider membership at a later date.

Mr. Scott explained the line item for signage at either end of Village Place, reminding members that a verbal commitment had been given at a business summit as a way to support those somewhat hidden businesses. Mr. Grisko said that he would work out details for a media placement plan at the currently allocated amount. Given the changes proposed at the evening's meeting, Chairman asked that the revised budget be discussed at the next meeting of the EDC.

### **Grant Program**

Mr. Scott reviewed the memo he supplied regarding the potential of a grant program as a potential way to create an equitable approach in the evaluation of proposals from parties seeking support from the Village. He noted that criteria would need to be established regarding how the proposed activity would promote economic development. Mr. Scott added that the Commission, if interested, would have to determine what percentage of the budget would go toward the grant program and remarked that it could be a way to incentivize and support the parties most invested in the retail community of the Village.

### **Next Meeting**

It was announced that the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Economic Development Commission was set for May 27, 2008. A brief discussion occurred regarding potential schedule conflicts that would necessitate the meeting being changed to a different date. Chairman Zimmerman requested that Mr. Scott reach out to members of the Commission in order to set a new date for the meeting that would accommodate as many schedules as possible.

## **Adjournment**

With no other business before the Commission, Chairman Zimmerman asked for a motion to adjourn. Ms. Grisemer made a motion to adjourn; Ms. Crane seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. The April 29, 2008 special meeting of the EDC was declared adjourned at 9:35 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

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Timothy J. Scott, AICP, Community Development Strategist