

## Elmhurst Economic Development Commission

Meeting Minutes for January 22, 2010 – 7:30 a.m.- City Hall, Conference Room 2

Present: Betsy Hanisch, Don Meyers, Rich Reichert, Diane McGinnis, Mark Sabatino, Tom Paravola (Ex-Officio/City Centre)

Absent: Dan Hiffman, Kurt Warnke, Dan Leahy, John Quigley (Ex-officio/Elmhurst Chamber)

Also: Alderman Kevin York, City Manager Tom Borchert, Acting Assistant City Manager Mike Kopp and Consultants Charlie Van Slyke and Ken Bartels

Chair Betsy Hanisch called the Commission to order at 7:35 a.m. The Minutes of the EDC meeting of December 18, 2009 were approved.

Mike Kopp started the meeting referring to the elimination of John Said's City staff position and John's leaving the City due to continued budget reductions. New ways of continuing strong economic development are the primary directions of today's EDC meeting, featuring the roles of consultants Charlie Van Slyke and Ken Bartels as well as new efforts for the Commissioners themselves. All economic development inquiries, calls and contacts continue to be answered and addressed and this will remain the case.

Ken Bartels then shared with the EDC the steps taken to date. A "three-legged stool" presentation illustrating that internal staff and Charlie Van Slyke will cover inquiries and real estate related items; the EDC and Ken Bartels will cover external retention calls and leads; and the Business Alliance will assist with retail businesses and possible, new marketing efforts around a "Shop/Buy Elmhurst" general theme. This creates the "three-legged stool", a stool that depends on all legs for its stability.

Ken then shared with the EDC some of the findings from six retention visits he had recently completed. These visits were examples of future such visits that will be asked of all Commissioners going forward. He distributed ten discussion questions that can be used to facilitate these types of calls and contacts. The new, drafted, Strategic Plan for Economic Development 2010 includes the desire for Commissioners to make at least one such call per month. More than that would be welcome. Ken will be the liaison to the EDC and their efforts.

Charlie Van Slyke reported that he has been a consultant for the City since 1988 primarily in the real estate and special projects areas. His role will be largely internal and with the same duties just with a stronger economic development focus. He will also take most of the direct inquiries coming in to City Hall. He will also handle the façade and retail grants programs.

Charlie and Ken then highlighted items from the draft plan. Included in this plan are EDC responsibilities and the consideration of expanding the EDC. Currently there is one vacancy on the nine-member Commission. The EDC might go to 12 or 15 members. The plan also indicates five, specific, recommendations for economic development in

Elmhurst in the short-range: retention, recruitment, EDC role and expansion, site database creation and partnering with other City entities to a fuller extent.

Mark Sabatino suggested that beyond the interview questions that there be the development of a template to make certain that the gathered information can be properly utilized by everyone involved. A suggestion of business cards for EDC members was also noted as helpful to the process.

When Commissioners make their calls they should share their findings in a report email with Ken and Mike. This will establish the files and necessary follow-ups needed and begin that process. Everyone has limited time and we have fewer City staff so we all must prioritize and act on the important items first. Don Meyers indicated his belief that the EDC and other business owners within Elmhurst are all untapped resources for these expanded endeavors. Some day full time City staff may return to these roles but for the next several years it is likely that these new plans will need to function, get the work done, and move Elmhurst forward.

Ken reminded the EDC to be alert and to share names of possible new Commissioners. He also repeated the request for all EDC members to make at least one retention call and report on it before the next meeting date of February 26.

Tom Borchert shared his belief that this plan can be successful because we have excellent “firepower” available to direct at economic development initiatives through the EDC and the Business Alliance. Mayor DiCianni is strongly supportive of these efforts.

Mike Kopp indicated that the draft plan will be going to the Development, Planning and Zoning Committee of the City Council for their first review on February 8. Any additional input from the EDC members should be to him by February 1

Betsy shared a listing of all currently scheduled EDC meeting dates for 2010 and then adjourned the meeting at 8:59 a.m.

Submitted as a draft by Ken Bartels.