

## **Elmhurst Economic Development Commission**

### **Meeting Minutes**

**December 18, 2009 – 7:30 a.m.**

**City Hall – Conference Room 2**

**Present:** Betsy Hanisch, Dan Hiffman, Don Meyers, Rich Reichert, Kurt Warnke, John Quigley (Ex-Officio - Elmhurst Chamber), Tom Paravola (Ex-Officio - Elmhurst City Centre)

**Absent:** Dan Leahy, Diane McGinnis, Mark Sabatino

**Staff:** John D. Said

**Also:** Ald. Kevin York, City Manager Tom Borchert, Assistant City Manager/Fire Chief Mike Kopp, Ken Bartels (Consultant)

Chair Betsy Hanisch called the meeting to order at 7:35 a.m.

The Commission immediately began review and discussion regarding the Strategic Plan. Mr. Said provided an update on the Plan, which consisted of review by the EDC's informal "Study Group" on December 7, followed by revisions to the document, which are reflected in the latest Plan provided in the EDC's packet.

The Study Group's recommendations were further reviewed. They include a task-based orientation in lieu of geographic subareas orientation (the subareas approach was based on the Comprehensive Plan), with primary focus on business retention and attraction activities. An expanded role for the EDC, and an additional category of additional items (including subareas review for possible TIF), round out the Plan recommendations.

Discussion ensued regarding increased exposure for the City's planning and economic development efforts, including publicity options and possible cable television coverage. It was suggested that a possible television show by called the "Economic Edge" based on the occasional newspaper columns. The EDC also discussed opportunities to review proposals before the City, including larger-scale commercial projects that might also be seeking zoning approval, as well as those private-side proposals involving possible City financial participation.

John Quigley identified that a key constituency that the Plan should address is the residential consumer in Elmhurst. Buying patterns do not seem to match local demographics, with people spending money outside of the community. The idea of a 'Buy Elmhurst' program should be acknowledged and supported. The Chamber is participating in such a program through the nationwide 3-50 campaign.

Business recruitment and retention tracking was further reviewed, as was best use of EDC volunteer time, which is limited. EDC members talked about their schedules and possible ways to make best use of their time. EDC business visits without Staff were offered as a possible opportunity, as was partnering with the Chamber on such activities. It was thought best that standard procedures and protocol be developed for consistency for EDC members.

Possible EDC review of upcoming development projects was discussed further to consider how that might best occur. The EDC was agreeable to the idea of a general "Projects Review" item on their agenda monthly, as the volume of such projects is not expected to be significant.

Retention priorities were discussed as well, with the idea of developing a list of most critical businesses for visits. These could include those that generate high sales tax revenues, those that have lots of employment, or perhaps other important and visible businesses. The concept of recruiting partner businesses was also reviewed. Staff promotes the idea of events or meetings where many businesses can attend, in order to make best use of time. To assist Staff, hiring of an intern was discussed.

The EDC then discussed their makeup, and opportunities to recommend increasing their size. If the EDC membership is increased, the idea of forming committees for specific duties is thought to be an effective approach to allow members to focus on particular areas (such as recruitment or retention). Chamber and City Centre participation, through their Board members, committee members and other members, would also be encouraged. The opportunity to add ex-officio membership for the York/Vallette Business Association president and the Spring Road Business Association president was discussed.

A motion was then made and seconded to approve the minutes of the November 20, 2009 EDC meeting. All Commissioners voted in favor; the motion was approved.

Further discussion ensued regarding the EDC membership and retention activities, as well as recruitment. Don Meyers is now member of a recently formed group called EBO (Elmhurst Business Owners), and will provide information to Staff about interacting with this group. The EDC supports expanding their membership from 9 to 12. EDC members were asked to e-mail to Staff any potential retention visit opportunities as well as possible future Commission member candidates.

The EDC then reached concurrence to direct Staff to complete the requested changes to the Strategic Plan document and forward it to the DPZ Committee of the City Council for their review and comment in January.

Under Other Business, Mr. Said described a recruitment visit this week by a company from Malaysia that is considering relocation to this area. The EDC had a number of suggestions regarding follow up interaction with this business.

There were no further updates or other business. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:00 a.m.

Submitted by: John D. Said