

Elmhurst Economic Development Commission

Meeting Minutes January 23, 2009 – 7:30 a.m. City Hall – Conference Room 2

Present: Betsy Hanisch, Scott LaMorte, Dan Leahy, Diane McGinnis, Don Meyers, Richard Reichert, Mark Sabatino, Kurt Warnke, John Quigley (Ex-Officio Member) - President, Elmhurst Chamber of Commerce, Tom Paravola (Ex-Officio Member) - Executive Director, Elmhurst City Centre

Absent: Dan Hiffman

Staff: Martha Corner, John Said

Chair Betsy Hanisch called the meeting to order at 7:35 a.m. A motion was made by Commissioner Reichert and seconded by Commissioner Meyers to approve the minutes of the EDC November 14, 2008 meeting. All Commissioners voted in favor.

Retail Grant Program Review

Martha Corner provided summary of the City of Elmhurst Retail Grant Program. Other Retail Grant Committee members in attendance at the January EDC meeting also made comment. John Quigley expressed the importance of weighing the financial strengths and weaknesses of Retail Grant applications. John Said mentioned the more frequent “in between” applications that involved a combination of retail and service activities. Tom Paravola said that the quality of the business plan overall was an important consideration.

EDC Chair Betsy Hanisch suggested an evaluation of performance of retail grant recipients. This could involve a yearly tracking of sales tax revenues by Retail Grant recipient. John Quigley noted that sales tax data by individual business is highly confidential.

Kurt Warnke suggested that perhaps some stipulations could be included with Retail Grant approvals, i.e. provision of sales performance on a confidential basis. Rich Reichert suggested the possibility of obtaining sales tax data on an aggregate basis.

Tom Paravola questioned the goal of the Retail Grant Program. Was the goal to fill storefronts or maximize sales tax revenue? John Said noted the importance of investing in retail business locations thereby increasing property taxes in the Downtown Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district.

John Said concluded that the EDC seemed to want City monitoring of the progress of Retail Grant recipients. Perhaps the Retail Grant application could include language to that effect. City staff will consult with City attorneys and the City Manager on this subject, and then follow up with the City Council Development Planning and Zoning Committee for their review.

City Publicity and Marketing Activities

Martha Corner provided a copy of an ad the City ran in the first Chamber of Commerce "Lifestyles" publication. The ad includes a highlight of the recently updated City of Elmhurst website, as well as numerous other cultural and entertainment attractions in the City. John Quigley said the Chamber will review the lifestyle piece in once year and determine if the program will continue and who will manage content if so.

Miscellaneous Topics

EDC members discussed the EDC meeting schedule. After some discussion, the EDC agreed to invite City Manager Thomas Borchert to an upcoming EDC meeting to discuss EDC primary goals and objectives.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 a.m.

The next meeting of the EDC is scheduled for February 27, 2009 at 7:30 a.m.

Submitted by Martha Corner, AICP, Economic Development Manager