

## **Elmhurst Economic Development Commission**

### **Meeting Minutes May 29, 2009 – 7:30 a.m. City Hall – Conference Room 2**

Present: Betsy Hanisch, Dan Hiffman, Scott LaMorte, 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 Leahy

Staff: Thomas Borchert, Martha Corner, John Said

Guest; Alderman York

Chair Betsy Hanisch called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m. A motion was made by Commissioner Reichert and seconded by Commissioner McGinnis to approve the minutes of the April 2009 EDC meeting. All Commissioners voted in favor.

#### **Update – Retail Recruitment Task Force**

Martha Corner provided an update on recent initiatives by the Retail Recruitment Task Force. She stated that the following activities are underway based on Task Force discussion:

- Roundtable meetings of similar businesses to determine desirable new co-tenants (e.g. boutiques including Aisle Style, enzee boutique, redE, E-Lounge, Camden and Bianca Rose);
- Survey of tenants in other center/municipalities (i.e. City representatives visiting other communities);
- Development of in-house lead and broker tracking system;
- Continued emphasis of the Retail Grant Program;
- Electronic applications (e.g. e-newsletter and email blasts, etc.).

There were questions relative to the discontinuation of services by the Retail Recruitment Consultant. Tom Borchert and EDC members agreed that recruitment activities are pro-active and desirable. Tom Paravola indicated that the former Retail Recruitment Consultant had indicated a desire to move away from recruitment activities. John Quigley volunteered to assist Martha Corner with reaching out to retailers in other communities. He feels such activity lends a “personal touch” to the recruitment function.

## **Elmhurst Economic Edge Articles**

EDC members expressed satisfaction with most recent Elmhurst Economic Edge article which concerned funding sources for upcoming Downtown beautification projects including streetscape improvements, redevelopment of the Police Station Plaza and redevelopment of the City Centre Plaza.

EDC members agreed that the Economic Edge articles are an important vehicle for educating the general public on the importance of economic development activities. Tom Borchert said that as an example, the Downtown beautification projects had an economic development value. By spending money to beautify the Downtown, Elmhurst has a long term payoff by “breaking the tie” with other cities relative to downtown appearances and thereby attracting more patrons.

Suggested upcoming Economic Edge activities/articles to include:

- Quality of public services relative to lower property tax rates compared to other communities;
- Value of businesses to Elmhurst in general (e.g. property tax contributions from commercial real estate are significant);
- Testimonials from retail grant recipients;
- Local investments based on a City of Elmhurst market study;
- City TIF III Update;
- Inclusion of Economic Edge articles in the Front Porch Newsletter.

## **EDC Member Updates**

Commissioner McGinnis stated that hospital construction is on schedule. Approximately 600 workers will be on site during the summer of 2009.

John Quigley provided updates on the upcoming summer concerns series, the Chamber of Commerce Annual Community Directory, and retention visits with Martha Corner.

Commissioner Reichert said although some small businesses were struggling, Community Bank deposits were up 26% over last year.

Mark Sabatino said that all areas of commercial real estate were struggling. Many landlords area being approached for rent concessions by their tenants. He also suggested that the City provide information to hospital construction workers on places to shop and dine in Elmhurst. He then suggested that EDC members be provided business cards for possible contacts with businesses in other communities.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 a.m. The next meeting of the EDC is scheduled for June 26, 2009 at 7:30 a.m. Submitted by Martha Corner, AICP, Economic Development Manager