

**PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 19, 2013**

CALL TO ORDER

Trustee Mike Schiestel called the meeting of the Planning and Economic Development Commission to order at 7:04 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present were Chairperson Melissa Schladt (came at 7:16 p.m.), Members Mike Fath, Ron Hameetman, Kevin Lentz, John O'Meara and Patrick Wall. Also in attendance were Village Administrator Karl Warwick and Trustee Mike Schiestel as staff to the PEDC, and Secretary Alison Dal Compo. Member Chris Mattran was absent.

RESIDENT'S COMMENTS--none

Trustee Mike Schiestel welcomed Village President Nunamaker and Trustee Mike Ireland.

APPROVAL OF THE JANUARY 15, 2013 MINUTES

Member Lentz made a motion to approve the January 15, 2013 minutes as presented. Member Wall seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Trustee Schiestel reported that the Village Board is going to become very aggressive with regard to planning. Before every Village Board meeting on the third Thursday of the month, there will be a meeting at 6:00 p.m. The PEDC is involved with micro economics, but the Village Board handles the larger issues. Any member of the PEDC who is able should attend the planning meeting before the Board meeting.

BUSINESS RETENTION ACTIVITIES

FRG Cards—Next meeting, the viability of the FRG card should be discussed. Member O'Meara polled a few of his business liaisons, but they did not provide much feedback. Pep Boys had not had reported any uses. Trustee Schiestel said that many people were using it at Dunkin Donuts, and Subway reported at least eight people using it regularly. Armanetti's had not had much success with it. Member O'Meara said that none of his businesses had complaints and would likely participate again.

Member Lentz said that the FRG cards are helpful in breaking the ice with business liaisons. It provides something tangible to talk to the business owners about. Member Hameetman said that Shell has been happy with the interest shown through the card. New China also got a lot business from the card, prior to the fire.

Village President Nunamaker reported that New China may not get as enough money from the insurance to repair all that was damaged. A fire mediator is involved.

NEWS AND UPDATES

Chamber of Commerce—Village President Nunamaker explained that the Chamber’s Business forum will be this coming Saturday. Member O’Meara and Trustee Schiestel will also be attending. Volunteers are needed for two shifts in the afternoon. This Thursday is the business roundtable. About 50 people are expected to attend.

OTHER BUSINESS

SWOT discussion--The members identified the following SWOT items. The discussion is presented after the comprehensive list.

STRENGTHS

- Traffic thru Rt 22/14
- Small Town
- Available Space
- Metra
- Strong school district
- Active citizenry
- River and parks
- Demographics (income level)
- T.I.F.
- Sustainability
- Destinations (Ace Hardware, Brunch Café)

WEAKNESSES

- Day time traffic
- “Footprint” of the Village
- No park district
- Not diverse as far as race
- High taxes
- Limited housing options (multiple family)
- Parking (downtown)
- Location of Metra station
- “Squatters”
- Secondary market
- Bad impression of Village due to condition of downtown buildings
- Lack of government monies for economic development

OPPORTUNITIES

- Transit oriented development (multi family)
- River
- T.I.F.
- Additional funding opportunities for economic development
- New website
- Niche businesses (identify what is desirable)
- Façade improvements

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- Picnic Grove Park
- Marketing
- Improve impression
- Success stories

THREATS

- Apathy
- Limited role (in deciding what businesses come in) for government to get deals done
- Property taxes
- Space
- Stagnation
- Can't create much additional revenue
- Nobody stops in because of bad impression of downtown
- State of Illinois funding crisis

General Discussion:

O'Meara—traffic volume

Lentz—close knit small town, “Mayberry”, feeling of safety and connectivity

O'Meara—“bedroom” community, safe, but a weakness is that most businesses have under 50 employees.

Hameetman—River Pointe Plaza

Schladt—available space

Nunamaker—study group said that Metra/bridge/river/major roads were the strengths

Trustee Ireland pointed out that student enrollment is down in district #3. Member Wall added that it was down 10% at ARS and 8% at the Middle School. Village President Nunamaker said that the younger resident to older resident ratio is pretty much the same as it has been. Developers have said that mid rise apartments are the need in general.

Administrator Warwick said that “build up” housing is always suggested, such as having both townhomes and single family homes available in the town. In this way, children can stay in the same school district even as the family's space needs increase.

Trustee Schiestel said that Arlington Heights and Mt. Prospect have more arterial streets off of 14 than the Grove does, which gives those towns more expansion opportunities. He further stated that Riverside Auto is an example of a long-standing business in the Grove which may be put forth as a success story. Member Wall also mentioned Dominick's, Walgreens and Chase Bank.

Member Fath brought up the fact that the ¼% sales tax increase got voted down about a year ago. Trustee Ireland noted that at the moment anything to do with raising taxes is considered a bad thing. 25% of the community is the movers and shakers. Administrator Warwick asked if the members felt that the location of the Grove, between Barrington and Cary/Crystal Lake is a detriment.

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Trustee Schiestel asked the members to think about what types of businesses would be best as to traffic flow, for example heavy traffic from west to east in the morning, and from east to west in the evening. Village President Nunamaker said that Villa Bleu and Brunch Café are draws/destination locations. Chairperson Schladt added that Panera is a draw as well.

Member Lentz noted that there is a problem with “squatters”, business/building owners whose buildings or stores have long needed updating or infrastructure improvements but the owners will not make them.

Village President Nunamaker noted that when Rt. 14 was widened to four lanes, it cut down on parking opportunities.

Trustee Ireland said that the Grove needs more niche businesses. He used Pasquesi’s as an example. It is a kind of business that would bring in more sales tax revenue. However, the types of available storefronts in the downtown area would likely not be suitable for retail. Trustee Schiestel added that they would probably be suitable for service oriented businesses that don’t need much parking, for example, a kitchen remodeling showroom. Member Schladt said any kind of home improvement or interior design business would be appropriate.

Member O’Meara said that efforts should be made to get all the business owners on that block to get together and ask them to work together on façade improvement. Village President Nunamaker noted that Trustee Ireland has been working on getting façade improvement grants. Trustee Ireland added that the lack of parking for the downtown businesses has been a complaint over the years. He explained that any business owner who might receive such a grant would be expected to put in some of their own money also. Trustee Schiestel brought out a picture that Representative Andrew Gasser had done. It is a picture of downtown that he re-touched and added sidewalks, lighting, and deleted the electrical lines.

Village President Nunamaker explained that Picnic Grove Park was donated by the Picnic Grove Association, and therefore there are restrictions as to what can happen as far as for-profit businesses. Trustee Schiestel said that in the past, there had been a destination type restaurant. Chairperson Schladt said that there is a need to think about opportunities related to the large amount of seasonal boat traffic on the river. Administrator Warwick mentioned businesses such as a river front hotel or bed and breakfast.

Member Lentz noted that there should be some way to force building owners with untenable spaces to make them look presentable. Administrator Warwick asked if the members felt that standards and codes should be enhanced for that purpose. He further explained that even villages that have such standards have a difficult time. Libertyville had an ordinance that applied to a business at the busy corner of 176 and 21 and it still took four years for the changes to happen. Member Lentz said even so, if the discussion started now that would mean that such untenable storefronts could be gone by 2017!

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Trustee Schiestel explained how the Arlington Heights Library has become a small business center. It has meeting rooms and tutoring for businesses.

Member Lentz observed that doing nothing as to influencing what types of businesses come into the Grove can result in unwanted businesses filling in spaces. He suggested “putting money where people can see it”, as in façade improvements. Member O’Meara said that infrastructure improvements should be a priority. Member Fath concurred with Member Lentz in that the bad impression that the small downtown area makes is of primary concern. Chairperson Schladt also felt that facades should be the priority, with infrastructure done next. She also observed that the Grove Plating/Viking Stair corner should be a priority. Member Hameetman agreed with Chairperson Schladt and added that apartments in that corner should be a priority.

Trustee Ireland noted that both the federal government and the state give inducements for seniors, HUD, low income and etc. Chairperson Schladt said that low income could be around \$45,000. Village President Nunamaker said that work-force rate housing in 60% of the apartments is a standard. That rate is \$49,623 annual income currently.

A question was posed to the members. If they had \$1,000,000 to use for improving Fox River Grove, how would they spend it?

Member Wall said that he would buy the entire block that includes what Moretti’s is to eventually move in to, and would use \$950,000 of the money to do it.

Trustee Schiestel and Chairperson Schladt both felt that if even \$50,000 were put towards façade improvements, it would serve to bolster the morale of the community.

Administrator Warwick asked what the members would consider a success story in the Grove. Trustee Ireland said that he felt El Sombrero was an example.

Village President Nunamaker said that the priorities were: 1) more/adequate parking 2) success story—focus on getting a good business into Café Salsa 3) Marketing along Doyle 4) Working with Grove Plating 5) Grayhill Manufacturing building. He further said that the Village of Cary has recently hired an Economic developer full time. They are also flattening certain areas with the goal of increasing grassy areas.

Trustee Schiestel stated that basically everyone agrees the biggest concern is the six buildings in the downtown area. Member Lentz noted that his father has a saying, “If you can’t fix it, paint it white.” Trustee Ireland said that the State of Illinois funding crisis is one the biggest threats.

Administrator Warwick said that three major steps to progress would be 1) façade grants 2) business retention programs and 3) shop local campaigns.

Village President Nunamaker said that the next step for the PEDC is to further prioritize

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the SWOTS. The members began that process. It will be continued at the next meeting.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 20, 2013 at 7:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Member Wall and seconded by Member O'Meara to adjourn the meeting at 9:09 p.m. All were in favor.

Melissa Schladt, Chairperson

Alison Dal Compo, Secretary

Date Approved