

**MINUTES
CITY OF DEKALB
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
JANUARY 4, 2019**

The Economic Development Commission (EDC) of the City of DeKalb, Illinois held a regular meeting on Friday, January 4, 2019 in the Executive Conference Room of the DeKalb Municipal Building, 200 South Fourth Street, DeKalb, Illinois.

The meeting was called to order at 8:33 a.m.

ROLL CALL

Roll was recorded by Economic Development Planner, Jason Michnick, and the following members of the Economic Development Commission were present: Trixy O'Flaherty, Sam Walt, Jeff Richardson, Vernese Edghill-Walden, and Mark Sawyer. Not present was Mohammed Labadi

Also present were Alderman, Pat Fagan; Executive Director of the DeKalb County Economic Development Corporation, Paul Borek; Executive Director of the DeKalb Chamber of Commerce, Matt Duffy; Community Development Director, Jo Ellen Charlton; and Mayor, Jerry Smith.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION

Mr. Sawyer made a motion to approve the agenda as posted. The motion was seconded by Mr. Richardson. The motion was approved by voice vote.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION

Mr. Walt made a motion to approve the minutes from the December 7, 2018 meeting. Mr. Sawyer seconded the motion. The motion carried on a voice vote.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Review of Chapter 59 and EDC Goal Setting for 2019

The commission engaged in a conversation about their role and duties, as it relates to the ordinance creating the Economic Development Commission. A specific topic that stood out was industry representation and the commission discussed possible industries to

recruit new commissioners from when appointments had expired, such as banking and larger employers (e.g. Nestle, Target, 3M, etc.). Multiple appointments expire at the end of June 2019 and there is currently one vacancy that has not been filled.

The commission also discussed the types of topics that they should be discussing on a monthly basis. The first year that the commission was reconstituted, a majority of meetings were spent on strategic planning. The past year the commission felt that they got “into the weeds” on several topics and it would be beneficial to step back and look at everything from a “30,000-foot level”. When needed, the commission could engage in specific topics when the City Council requests a recommendation on a specific topic or policy. Mayor Smith stated that the Council values the input and recommendation from the EDC and if the group is hearing things in the community, they should discuss it and make recommendations on policy to Council.

The commission determined that there was not a desire to provide recommendation to Council on the approval of a specific project, rather they would like to look at several related projects that have occurred in the past year and develop policy recommendations from their analysis. The commission felt that this would prevent making policy recommendations arbitrarily or understanding the application of a specific policy. If Council will be considering a policy change that impacts business, the commission would like to review the consideration prior to final approval by Council. An example of an upcoming policy discussion by Council is changes to the sign code.

The Community Development Department makes revisions to the Unified Development Ordinance twice a year. The commission would like to review those proposed changes that impact economic development or business along with the Planning and Zoning Commission.

2. Discussion on City Business Retention Strategies

Mr. Borek provided an overview of the retention survey tool that the DCEDC uses, which is made available by ComEd. It is a form that is used to meet with executives and owners of businesses to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the business climate. One of the forms that is available for use is called the Main Street Survey Tool and is designed for surveying retail and service businesses (compared to manufacturing and industrial).

The DCEDC has a retention committee that participates in the actual retention visits. Staff coordinates the visits and interviews, and committee members participate in the actual interviews. Mr. Walt participates in the DCEDC committee and stated that the visits and process is time consuming but valuable.

The commission discussed how to rollout a similar program with retail businesses in the City of DeKalb. It was determined that the commission would like to do a random sample of businesses every couple of years, not have an ongoing program. Planner Michnick will develop a list of possible businesses to choose from for the sample and the commission will review the Main Street Survey Tool and the topic will be discussed at the next meeting in February.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION

Mr. Richardson made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Walt. The motion carried on a voice vote and the meeting was adjourned at 9:54 a.m.

Minutes Taken by Economic Development Planner Jason Michnick.
Minutes Transcribed by Executive Assistant Ruth Scott.

Approved by the Economic Development Commission: March 1, 2019.