

**MINUTES  
CITY OF DEKALB  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MEETING  
MARCH 5, 2021**

The Economic Development Commission (EDC) of the City of DeKalb, Illinois held a Regular meeting on March 5, 2021 at the DeKalb County Economic Development Corporation Office, 2179 Sycamore Road, Unit 102, DeKalb, Illinois 60115.

The meeting was called to order at 8:31 a.m.

**A. ROLL CALL**

Executive Assistant Ruth Scott called the roll and the following EDC members were present: Chair Jeff Richardson, Members Vernese Edghill-Walden, Grant Goltz, Mark Sawyer, and Brian Scholle, as well as Ex-Officio Member Matt Duffy. Member Sam Walt was absent, as was Ex-Officio Member Paul Borek.

Others present included Mayor Jerry Smith and City Manager Bill Nicklas.

**B. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

MOTION

Mr. Scholle moved to approve the agenda; seconded by Mr. Sawyer.

VOTE

Motion carried by a 5-0-1 roll call vote. Aye: Richardson, Edghill-Walden, Goltz, Sawyer, Scholle. Nay: None. Absent: Walt.

**C. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

1. January 8, 2021.

MOTION

Mr. Sawyer moved to approve the agenda; seconded by Mr. Scholle.

VOTE

Motion carried by a 5-0-1 roll call vote. Aye: Richardson, Edghill-Walden, Goltz, Sawyer, Scholle. Nay: None. Absent: Walt.

**D. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was none.

**E. REPORTS**

1. City Manager Report

City Manager Nicklas provided an update on the Facebook project. He noted that Mortenson Storage is looking at DeKalb for a possible storage building. Mr. Sawyer noted that inventory of storage buildings in DeKalb is low.

Mr. Goltz asked about the vacant General Electric (GE) property. Mr. Nicklas stated he had been talking to a GE broker about the property and the possibility of leasing it to another organization.

Mr. Nicklas also provided information regarding the status of the police chief search and the process so far.

Mr. Nicklas also noted that he and Ms. Edghill-Walden have been working on the Belonging Council. Ms. Edghill-Walden noted that the group has received some grants, which will be helpful to develop structure and understanding for what is needed to help citizens feel they are a part of the community of DeKalb.

## 2. DeKalb Chamber of Commerce Report.

Mr. Duffy provided information on the activities of the DeKalb Chamber of Commerce (DCC) since the EDC last met, including their annual meeting, the State of the City address from Mayor Smith and Northern Illinois University President Lisa Freeman.

Mr. Duffy noted that DCC's membership renewal process is underway. He also reported on some of the DCC's upcoming events, including a Candidate's Night for the mayoral, second and fourth ward candidates. All other candidates were invited to submit a three-minute video explaining why they are running for office. Those videos will be made available on the DCC's website and social media page. Other upcoming events include an afterhours event at Lincoln Inn/Faranda's, the DCC Business Directory and Area Guide, which will focus on long standing businesses of 30 years or longer, and a drive-through community event at the DeKalb Taylor Municipal Airport on May 14.

Brief discussion ensued regarding the joint expo with Sycamore. Mr. Duffy noted that Sycamore will be doing something different this year. The future of the joint event is uncertain at this time.

Mr. Duffy also reported that with the small business member grant fund, DCC has been able to help a lot of DeKalb's small businesses with small grants. He also noted that Facebook provided funding for this project.

Brief discussion ensued regarding business growth in some areas of DeKalb and the loss of businesses in others.

Mr. Duffy noted that the DCC has seen an increase in membership, while the trend statewide has seen a 20% reduction.

Brief discussion regarding transit system changes.

## 3. DeKalb County Economic Development Corporation Report.

Mr. Borek was absent.

## F. OLD BUSINESS

### 1. Business Retention Program Update.

Mr. Nicklas stated it would be up to the EDC if they wanted to continue the project of contacting established businesses in DeKalb that was created prior to COVID.

There was brief discussion about maintaining the lists already created and perhaps adding a few more.

Mr. Nicklas reported the Council's discussions regarding Nehring Electric. Nehring is expanding, which is causing issues with parking for local residents due to semi-trucks staging on a residential street waiting to unload their cargo. Nehring purchased a home in the area and demoed it. The space will be paved and used for semi parking. Currently the City is allowing Nehring to use a piece of property facing 7<sup>th</sup> Street for staging.

Mr. Nicklas further reported that Lincoln Highway from 1<sup>st</sup> Street to 4<sup>th</sup> Street will be widened in order to widen the sidewalks. Lincoln Highway will be decreased from four lanes to two. The sidewalks will gain five to six feet on either side with the same parking logistics. Lighting will be added, and planting areas will be added for businesses to use.

Brief Discussion ensued regarding the city's infrastructure and improvements.

#### **G. NEW BUSINESS**

Mr. Goltz reported that he's had some calls about potential business in DeKalb, something he's never seen before.

Mr. Sawyer added that he's been busy all year.

Brief discussion ensued.

Mayor Smith stated this meeting would be his last for the EDC and thanked the members for their input during his tenure. The EDC members thanked Mayor Smith for his accomplishments while in office.

#### **H. NEXT MEETING: MAY 7, 2021.**

The May 7, 2021 EDC meeting was confirmed.

#### **I. ADJOURNMENT**

MOTION

Mr. Sawyer moved to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Ms. Edghill-Walden.

VOTE

Motion carried by a 5-0-1 roll call vote. Aye: Richardson, Edghill-Walden, Goltz, Sawyer, Scholle. Nay: None. Absent: Walt. The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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**RUTH A. SCOTT**, Executive Assistant

Minutes approved by the Economic Development Commission on May 7, 2021.