

**MINUTES  
CITY OF DEKALB  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MEETING  
JULY 10, 2020**

The Economic Development Commission (EDC) of the City of DeKalb, Illinois held a Regular meeting on July 10, 2020 at the DeKalb Police Department, 700 W. Lincoln Highway, DeKalb, Illinois.

The meeting was called to order at 8:34 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, and Mark Sawyer, and Ex-Officio members Paul Borek (DCEDC) and Matt Duffy (DeKalb Chamber of Commerce). Members Brian Scholle and Sam Walt were absent.

Others present included: City Manager Bill Nicklas, Transit Manager Marcus Cox, and Executive Assistant Ruth Scott.

**B. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

MOTION

Mr. Sawyer moved to approve the agenda; seconded by Ms. Edghill-Walden.

VOTE

Motion carried by a voice vote of the majority of members present.

**C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

1. March 6, 2020.

MOTION

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

VOTE

Motion carried by a voice vote of the majority of members present.

**D. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was none.

**E. REPORTS**

1. City Manager Report.

City Manager Nicklas provided information regarding Facebook, noting that work was beginning on the first phase of the project.

Discussion ensued regarding local utility services that have been and will be utilized. EDC members expressed they were hopeful that the project will increase business on S. Fourth Street. It was also noted that people are purchasing property on S. Fourth Street in anticipation of increased business.

There was brief discussion regarding the Ferrara project and another large business that is interested in DeKalb.

City Manager Nicklas noted that collaboration with DCEDC was the piece that got Facebook to come here because they noticed how well the City and DCEDC work together. Mr. Nicklas noted that Facebook's presence will make a big difference in the area.

There was discussion regarding commercial retail and businesses coming to the area. City Manager Nicklas noted that because of COVID, some construction, such as Raising Cane's Chicken, had to pull back some but they are proceeding. He noted that the Old Navy construction has been delayed for about a year.

City Manager Nicklas continued, stating that the S. Fourth Street area should see some increase in traffic. He is also hopeful that home values will increase.

City Manager Nicklas briefly spoke about the Request for Proposals (RFP) regarding the former City Hall property. Replies are due on July 20, 2020.

## 2. DeKalb Chamber of Commerce Report.

Mr. Duffy provided an update on chamber events, noting that DeKalb County Unites is focusing on small business and what they can do to weather the storm. In the Loop videos are continuing but more like an interview via Zoom. The Farmer's Market has started, and a drive through version of the Family Fun Fest will be held on July 21, 2020.

Mr. Duffy also stated that a small member business assistance fund has been created to assist struggling small businesses who have had to cut things such as marketing out of their budget.

Discussion ensued regarding the loss of business in DeKalb. Mr. Duffy noted that DeKalb has seen only a couple of lost businesses so far. He also noted that the Chamber has had 27 new businesses join since COVID started.

Ms. Edghill-Walden noted that NIU's enrollment has declined and those students that are coming back will live in off-campus living. She stated that the reality is that many students that are coming back to DeKalb to study realize that online is a better option. She also noted that have the proper technology at home for online study is crucial.

Brief discussion ensued.

3. DeKalb County Economic Development Corporation Report.

Mr. Borek reported that during December and the first half of 2020 employment in DeKalb County increased. Mr. Borek also commended City Manager Nicklas for expediting new construction like Ferrara and Facebook and creating a welcoming environment so quickly. He also stated that DCEDC and other communities played an important role by creating the Enterprise Zone.

Mr. Borek continued, stating that a potential new business is interested in land on Harvestore Drive. He also provided information regarding the branding project DCEDC has been working on to create business attraction, as well as students, families, and entrepreneurs.

Mr. Borek mentioned that DCEDC has been working with the NIU College of Business on promoting intern collaboration, in addition to working to establish a connection between college, business and mentorship programs.

There was brief discussion regarding land annexation for site-ready projects.

**F. OLD BUSINESS**

1. Business Retention Program Business Update.

There was brief discussion regarding the business retention project the EDC had started before COVID and how to move forward, perhaps by making phone calls instead of in-person visits.

Executive Assistant Scott will redistribute the list of businesses to visit.

2. AGN Resource Guide.

Transit Manager Cox provided an update on the AGN resource guide and provided an updated paper version. He noted that he would provide Executive Assistant Scott with a digital version to send out to the commission members.

Transit Manager Cox also noted that transit has taken a big hit with COVID.

**G. NEW BUSINESS**

1. Economic Development Commission Mission Statement.

This item has been tabled.

**H. NEXT MEETING: AUGUST 7, 2020.**

There was no discussion regarding this item.

**I. ADJOURNMENT**

MOTION

Mr. Grant moved to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Mr. Sawyer.

VOTE

Motioned carried by a voice vote of the majority of members present. The meeting was adjourned at 9:40 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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**RUTH A. SCOTT**, Executive Assistant

Approved by the Economic Development Commission on November 6, 2020.