

**Village of Gurnee  
Economic Development Committee Minutes  
October 15, 2015**

The meeting was held in Conference Room A, Gurnee Village Hall, 325 N. O'Plaine Road and called to order at 5:30 P.M.

Members Present: Chairman Rob Elbrecht, James Sula, Tom Henderson, Roneida Martin, Tim Garrity, Terry Waddell-Moenter

Members Absent: Michael Denev

Other Officials Present: Ellen Dean, Economic Development Director

Chairman Elbrecht welcomed a member of the public, a student from College of Lake County.

### **1. Approval of Minutes**

**July 16, 2015 Meeting Minutes** – Ms. Martin made a motion, seconded by Mr. Garrity, to approve the July 16, 2015 regular meeting minutes with the amendment that member Dick Welton should be listed under "Members Absent" pending staff's confirmation of the attendance roll.

All voted 'aye'. Motion carried.

### **2. Old Business**

It was noted that the EDC currently has two vacant positions. Chairman Elbrecht indicated that it would be beneficial to have manufacturers represented on the Committee and to that end he would continue speaking with colleagues and acquaintances about serving. Staff noted that Mayor Kovarik has been actively interviewing to fill vacancies on the Planning and Zoning Board as well as the EDC.

### **3. New Business**

#### Business Licensing Amendments

Ms. Dean noted that the business licensing process affords the Village an opportunity to collect data which will enable it to serve the business community more effectively.

Chairman Elbrecht suggested that it would be helpful to include information on the licensing forms designating a business as 'Office', 'Industrial', or 'Retail; whether the space occupied is leased or owned; and noting the name of the relevant Shopping Center or Business Park.

The group appreciated Chairman Elbrecht's professional expertise in this regard and agreed with these proposed changes.

Staff indicated that 2016 license renewals would be amended to incorporate the proposed changes and would be mailed out to current businesses the first week of November. "New" business forms will be amended similarly.

#### Strategic Plan

Staff provided a brief update on the Strategic Planning focus groups that were held in late August. The feedback from those groups was shared and discussed.

The group credited Mayor Welton's leadership for excellent planning which resulted in the development of major retail and entertainment venues near I-94, enabling Gurnee to benefit from these revenue sources while preserving its residential character.

Key economic development themes identified by the strategic planning focus groups included:

- Desire for a downtown and a Metra station
- Interest in redeveloping East Grand Avenue

The group discussed these key themes, noting the various definitions of east vs. west and old vs new Gurnee. Various definitions of "East" Grand Avenue among residents include (1) east of Route 21 (2) the dividing line between School Districts 50 and 56 or (3) east of Route 41. Redevelopment scenarios for East Grand (east of Route 41) were explored including the possibility of multi-family housing. It was noted that East Grand retail will probably continue to be of a 'neighborhood' or 'convenience' nature, serving primarily the surrounding households.

The Committee acknowledged the oft-cited concern among residents regarding lack of a downtown or Metra station but noted that the challenge of creating these where none exists is daunting. A few examples do exist of communities that have "created" downtowns - Maple Grove, Minnesota and the Village of Wheeling, Illinois were offered as examples - and the group indicated an interest in researching these further. The possibility of redeveloping a small portion of East Grand or Rt. 21 & Grand to serve as a proxy "downtown" was discussed in the context of strategic planning for the future.

#### **4. Informational Items**

Ms. Dean provided an update on various development projects in the planning, permitting, or construction stages.

She reported that the Legions of Craft Beer Festival, held on October 3<sup>rd</sup> at Gurnee Mills, was a success despite the weather. Attendance of 1200-1300 was estimated, and the event was "revenue-positive" fulfilling the goal of serving as a fundraiser for the American Legion and Lake County Honor Flight.

The Village has begun narrowing down the list of potential website design firms. The website redesign process will kick off this calendar year and likely be a 6+ month process, resulting in a mobile-responsive, updated website which will look and function better for all of our audiences.

Ms. Dean noted that she had attended the annual International Council of Shopping Centers Midwest/Chicago dealmaking trade show last week at Navy Pier. Gurnee was represented with a booth. She indicated that this trade show is consistently a good opportunity to reconnect with brokers, retailers, developers, and property owners – all involved in retail real estate – and to keep Gurnee front of mind.

Mr. Garrity made a motion, Mr. Sula seconded to adjourn.

All voted 'aye'. Motion carried.

The Meeting was adjourned at 7:00 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted:

Ellen Dean  
Economic Development Director