

**Village of Gurnee  
Economic Development Committee Minutes  
June 15, 2017**

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. Chairperson Thorstenson led the Committee in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Members Present: Chairperson Thorstenson, Terry Waddell-Moenter, Jim Sula

Members Absent: Roneida Martin, Michael Deney

Other Officials Present: Ellen Dean, Economic Development Director

**1. Approval of Minutes**

**April 20, 2017 Meeting Minutes** – Mr. Sula made a motion, seconded by Ms. Waddell-Moenter, to approve the April 20, 2017 regular meeting minutes.

All voted 'aye'. Motion carried.

**2. Old Business**

a. East Grand Avenue Beautification Initiative

Director Dean invited the committee to attend a Village Board Committee of the Whole meeting scheduled for June 26. Village Engineer Scott Drabicki and Director Dean will brief the Village Board on capital expenditures, including a proposed demonstration landscaping project on East Grand Avenue. Eight (8) property owners - proximate to the Belle Plaine intersection - have agreed to participate in the project in which the Village would install landscaping and maintain it for two years, after which owners would assume the responsibility for ongoing maintenance. The anticipated 2017/18 investment by the Village is over \$85,000; a key policy decision will be whether to procure plant materials locally, from Gurnee Garden Center, at a price premium to alternative suppliers. The Committee discussed the matter; support was expressed for supporting local businesses but with an acknowledgement that the Village also has a responsibility to be fiscally responsible in its purchasing decisions.

The Committee expressed its support for the landscaping investment, indicating that the partnership with the private property owners bodes well for accomplishing future revitalization projects on East Grand Avenue.

Director Dean further elaborated that several East Grand private property owners appear to be on the verge of making significant improvements on their properties. She highlighted the reopening of Uhaul and planned façade renovation of the Salvation Army-anchored center as two key examples of private investment.

b. East Grand Public Events / Promotions

Concurrent with the capital investment is the launch of an informal East Grand Corridor Committee, comprised of merchants and residents. The Committee met for the first time at PPG Paints on June 8; Chairperson Thorstenson chaired the meeting, and Village Engineer Scott Drabicki provided an update on the East Grand area construction projects – local and State. Attendance was low but the businesses represent a good cross-section, and Director Dean and Trustee Thorstenson are encouraged that they will be actively engaged. An early goal is to recruit more resident participation as well as business. The Committee will be meeting again on June 28. Topics for discussion will include marketing to the broader

community at Gurnee Days and planning for events or promotions that the business owners find helpful to drive traffic into their stores.

### 3. New Business

### 4. Informational Items

#### Director's Report

- Highlights were shared from the Mayor's Picnic held at Bittersweet on May 17, 2017.
- Interest has been expressed by multiple steak restaurants in the former Lone Star Steakhouse site.
- Media Day for the new Joker coaster was well-attended on May 25, 2017. New rides generally bode well for a season of strong attendance.
- UHaul is opening on a temporary basis. This location will be renting trucks and selling a limited selection of moving boxes, supplies, etc. If the site proves out, staff would expect to be reviewing plans later in the summer/fall for a climate-controlled self-storage facility.
- Staff met recently with Alpha Media regarding potential "Gurnee's Got It" advertising opportunities, including a shop local campaign modeled after the familiar "Pure Michigan" campaign. While we tend to think of "shop local" as referring only to small independents, it actually refers to spending our shopping dollars in Gurnee first, whenever possible. Retailers and restaurateurs typically seek to be as close as possible to Gurnee Mills, which anchors the retail area around I-94. Keeping this area vibrant is critical to Gurnee's fiscal health.
- One of the offerings by Alpha Media and others is the ability to tap "big data" to customize targeted campaigns – email, social media, etc. – to specific audiences that meet certain criteria. Radio ads would likely be only one component of a marketing campaign.
- Chick fil A celebrates its Grand Opening on June 22. The Committee is cordially invited to attend.
- Lake County Partners' Big Event is being held on June 23. Any EDC members who are interested in attending are encouraged to notify Director Dean, and their registration fee will be paid by the Village as this is an economic development event.
- Legions of Craft Beer Fest is scheduled for September 16. There are several new offerings including a VIP ticket, more wine, a specialty Bloody Mary by Timothy O'Toole's, new food trucks, and headliner band 7<sup>th</sup> Heaven.

### 5. Chairperson Comments

Chairperson Thorstenson shared the news that Tom Henderson, a founding member, has resigned from the Economic Development Committee. She thanked him for his service and commitment.

### 6. Adjournment

Ms. Waddell Moenter left the meeting at 6:30 PM; Trustee Thorstenson declared the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted:

Ellen Dean  
Economic Development Director