Chairwoman Baehne called the regularly scheduled January 10, 2018 meeting of the City of McHenry Economic Development Commission to order at 4:00 p.m. In attendance were the following: Arnold, Baehne, Bionda, Jessup, Joern, Mracheck, and Sterwerf. Absent: Alderman Glab. Also in attendance were: Mayor Wayne Jett, Director of Economic Development Martin, and Economic Development Coordinator Wolf.

Public Comment: There was nobody in attendance who wished to address the Commission.

1. Education and Economic Development
   A video from the Manufacturing and Trade Industry Expo (MTI) was shown. Director Martin gave an explanation of the event and the need for skilled manufacturing workers in order for current businesses to continue operating so the City can retain their business.

2. Presentation and Discussion with McHenry School Districts 156 and 15 Regarding Education and Economic Development
   Dr. Hoffman, Superintendent of Elementary District 15 gave a presentation on the STEM and STEAM programs/innovation centers being incorporated into the school curriculum which is the catalyst for beginning to address future needs of manufacturing and other employers. Discussion ensued in regard to the programs. Chairwoman Baehne inquired how the schools are educating the community on these additions to school curriculum. Dr. Hoffman indicated they are communicating it through the students, newsletters and website, not so much through the news media, etc. He added McHenry is a very welcoming and friendly community and the collaboration within the community is amazing. Tours are available for anyone just contact the schools or district offices.

   Dr. McTague, Superintendent of High School District 156 led a discussion on what is happening in the high schools and distributed their annual report which covers much of what is occurring as they build up a highly competitive school district which starts with the 156 innovation plan that was implemented last year. Digital environments are necessary to continue to be competitive, and communication of how they are going to be used to help everyone be comprehensive and competitive is a key to providing a good workforce. Incubator EDU is also in the works and coincides perfectly with economic development to better prepare students for the future. Dr. McTague opined partnering with feeder schools as well as businesses is critical and the collaboration is amazing in the McHenry community. Partnership with the City is particularly needed to make the schools strong and keep things moving toward the future in the City of McHenry.

Director Martin stated the alignment and collaboration of the City with the High Schools, Elementary Schools and MCC is very strong and is not the norm in the state; it is absolutely necessary and a key to economic development in the City. People will look to other towns if
we are not prepared. Discussion ensued. It was determined tours of the facilities would definitely be beneficial for the committee in order to sell/develop our economic advantage.

3. **Presentation by The Bike Haven**
   Economic Development Coordinator Wolf stated Mr. Arnow’s concept coincides with Active Communities and Planning and Zoning initiatives presently being worked on by city staff. Mr. Arnow gave a presentation on a new concept plan for his bike shop on Pearl Street stating small businesses need to change in order to retain and expand their customer base. He would like to be the #1 destination bike shop in McHenry County and believes this concept will help him achieve that goal. The business plan was distributed to everyone and discussion ensued. Commissioner Mrachek recused himself for the discussion.

   Chairwoman Baehne stated creating experiences is a needed change in the economic community especially for small business. She opined the commission needs to move forward to help businesses embrace this mentality. Commissioner Blonda stated he thought the absence of a request for video gaming was an added value for this request. The Commission as a whole Commission was highly supportive of the concept adding comments such as Mr. Arnow’s concept would add value to other businesses in the area through collaborative events, etc. and this concept is a great example for other businesses to see what can be done to remain successful and competitive. The liquor license process would have to be gone through and the final plan to City Council for approval.
   Commissioner Mrachek returned to the meeting.

4. **General Discussion on Video Marketing the City**
   A video done for North Central Illinois Economic Development was shown. Director Martin stated he wanted to show the video as an idea for the commission to use, explaining making McHenry a destination city is cur goal and including showing our schools as destination schools is helpful in bringing people and businesses to McHenry. He asked the commission if they thought a similar video of McHenry would be a helpful promotional tool, adding they could incorporate transportation, more community features, manufacturing, downtown district, parks, recreation, schools, etc. Discussion ensued on how to share the video but full support was given on having a video done to promote the City. Dr. McTague expressed District 156 would love to partner with the City on a promotional video and/or video series. Suzanne Kotomski, area realtor, added if the video was made available to realtors they could use it as well to promote the community for home-buyers. Sam Tenuto, Pioneer Center, suggested presenting a well-rounded community in the videos for families that highlights social services, medical offerings, parks, businesses, etc. as a whole package so all available resources are included.

5. **Discussion regarding Apprenticeship Week and Workshop and Visit to IN2 at the Illinois Math and Science Academy**
   Director Martin informed the commission on national apprenticeship week and the Workshop and how these programs can help our employers increase their workforce. The
apprenticeship workshop was the first in a series to help employers. The second one will be held on February 27 at 8:30 a.m. at the Shah Center highlighting on-the-job training and other work-based learning opportunities and ways for employers to fund them. Director Martin and Coordinator Wolf gave a brief review of their visit and tour of IN2 in Aurora at the Illinois Math and Science Academy and how all the items discussed today can help economic development in the City of McHenry.

6. **General Overview and Discussion and Tours of Manufacturing Facilities**
Discussion was held regarding brick and mortar stores vs. internet sales, education, marketing, public relations and action regarding economic development in the City. It was agreed that educating the community, parents and students is a key component to helping grow our community. Discussion also ensued regarding the importance of going out and talking to the businesses to let them know they are appreciated and the commission and City are invested in helping retain them in the community. Awards were discussed adding recognition gives businesses something to strive for, achieve and engage more business owners and will serve to again remind existing businesses of their value to the community and encourage them to stay here because they feel a part of something. The commission agreed a list should be made of businesses to visit and promotion of businesses needs to be done by all members. Suggestions included a monthly Business Spotlight, including a tour, video, interview, etc. Objectives would need to be determined.

7. **New Business and Items for General Discussion**
Discussion ensued regarding setting the 2018 meeting schedule and possibility of meeting more often and incorporating business tours in the meeting schedule. It was suggested subcommittees be formed to get more work done between public meetings. Director Martin stated he would verify whether subcommittees could be formed as long as they had less than two-thirds of a quorum. The subcommittees suggested would be Business Awards/Recognition, Tours, and Promotional Video. New tour dates for MCC were given. All members were asked to email Director Martin or Coordinator Wolf with availability so the new tour date can be scheduled.

8. **Old Business**

- **Liaisons to and Establishment of Reporting Procedures:**
  a. **Riverwalk Foundation**
  Pat Arnold cannot attend daytime meetings. Mayor Jett stated he attends the meeting and will report updates to the commission on this.
  b. **Chamber of Commerce**
  Chairwoman Baehne introduced David Lammers of the McHenry Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber dinner is coming up and will include business recognition. Help is always welcomed for Fiesta Days and committee meetings are starting. The McHenry-Opoly Business Expo is scheduled for March 10, 2018. A multi chamber mixer at Pioneer Center and celebrating their 60th anniversary is set for next Tuesday night, January 16, 2018.
c. **Downtown Business Association**
   No report.

d. **Downtown SuperGroup**
   McHenry ShamRocks the Fox overview was given.

e. **Landmark Commission**
   Commissioner Jessup will attend the February meeting.

f. **Planning & Zoning Commission**
   January meeting was cancelled. City’s Comprehensive Plan is in the process of being updated.

- **OMA Update**
  Commissioners were asked to complete their OMA training and forward certificates to city staff.

**ACTION ITEMS**
Form subcommittees to address Videos, Tours, and Business Awards and bring suggestions to the commission to discuss at the next meeting. Schedule tour at MCC and local businesses.

**Staff Report**

The next Economic Development Commission meeting is scheduled for Wednesday March 28, 2018. Director Martin will check on legality of forming small working subcommittees and report back to the chair and co-chair with direction.

**Adjournment**

Motioned and seconded to adjourn the meeting at 6:35 p.m.

Voting Aye: Arnold, Baehne, Bionda, Jessup, Joern, Mrachek, Sterwerf, and Jett.
Voting Nay: None.
Not Voting: None.
Abstaining: None.
Absent: Glab.

Motion carried 8-0. The meeting was adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Bobbi Baehne, Chairwoman