City of McHenry
Economic Development Commission Minutes
May 29, 2018

Chairwoman Baehne called the regularly scheduled May 29, 2018 meeting of the City of McHenry Economic Development Commission to order at 4:03 p.m. In attendance were the following: Baehne, Bionda, and Mrachek. Absent: Arnold, Grubich, Jessup, and Sterwerf. Also in attendance were: Alderman Jeff Schaefer, Mayor Wayne Jett, Director of Economic Development Martin, Economic Development Coordinator Wolf and Economic Development Assistant Conaway.

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

Approval of Minutes
Motion by Mrachek seconded by Bionda to approve the April 25, 2018 Regular Meeting minutes of the Economic Development Commission as presented:

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

Motion carried 4-0.

1. Review Updates to the City of McHenry Comprehensive Plan and Proposed “McHenry Loop” (Director of Economic Development Douglas Martin and Economic Development Coordinator Dorothy Wolf)
Director Martin stated that the McHenry Loop was the brainchild of Shawn Strach, Chairman of the Planning & Zoning Commission. He stated that the McHenry Loop maps show several different “loops” following the roads around town which could be utilized by bike traffic as well as pedestrians. He opined that the need for infrastructure was minimal and further opined that the McHenry Loop could promote pedestrian access around the City of McHenry. Director Martin stated the train station on Main Street would be a focal point and further stated that there would be access points to all of the parks and areas of the downtown. Director Martin stated the thought is to plan land uses around the loops to design the city for more than vehicular use. He stated that the Planning and Zoning Commission is proposing new land use categories including mixed use, dog park and agricultural. He stated that there is a proposed plan to adopt Zagster stations throughout the City. Commissioner Mrachek stated he is concerned about the use of the busier streets by families and asked for clarification on the layout. Director Martin stated that the plan is in the designing phase and that in the future he hoped to work with people with more expertise in the matter to best utilize the layout. He further stated this project is not strictly a bike path but a way to get around the City of McHenry. Discussion ensued.

Chairwoman Baehne stated that the communication from the conference had great content and stated she appreciated the information. Director Martin stated that the event is a great opportunity to meet with consultants, retailers, and businesses that are interested in development and redevelopment. He stated that the purpose of the conference is to introduce the city to the vendors and show them what we have to offer in McHenry, meet with developers, and then schedule follow ups. He stated that restaurants want to know what other restaurants are doing in our town. Director Martin prepared a spreadsheet to present to potential businesses that was well received. He stated he met with developers about distressed properties. David Lammers asked about feedback from the vendors. Director Martin stated that McHenry is not a huge market but stated that the feedback was positive. Alderman Schaefer inquired about criteria for the meetings. Director Martin stated that meeting were held with vendors who have shown interest in the City of McHenry. Director Martin stated there was interest in McHenry and follow up contact would be made. Discussion ensured.

Alderman Schaefer inquired if the City acts as an intermediary for businesses like Ricky Rockets. Director Martin stated that the city suggests tenants and/or connects businesses. Director Martin stated that Economic Development Coordinator Wolf constructed a reverse property list to help businesses find space within the city. Alderman Schaefer inquired if there were any businesses that focus on vacated properties, like Sears. Economic Development Coordinator Wolf stated there was interest in the Sears property. She further stated there are entertainment type businesses who are interested in larger areas but opined that a trade area study needs to be updated to assist in marketing these properties. Commissioner Mrachek opined a survey might be beneficial. Chairwoman Baehne inquired what the criteria was for businesses to be interested in McHenry. Director Martin stated that the businesses will look at the data but they want communities that are easy to work with. Mayor Jett stated he spoke about the positive energy of McHenry and the community owned theater and stated that staff and city council are behind local businesses. Director Martin stated getting the businesses to our growing downtown area to see what we have to offer is key. Economic Development Coordinator Wolf stated foot traffic was important to businesses looking at McHenry. Mayor Jett complemented Director of Parks & Recreation Hubson for his “heart for the city” and positive presence as the conference.

3. **Review “mchenrymatters” Hashtag (Chairwoman Bobbi Baehne and Director of Economic Development Douglas Martin)**

Chairman Baehne presented a #mchenrymatters sign to Director Martin. She stated that Director Martin has been utilizing the hashtag for a long time. Chairman Baehne opined that signage throughout downtown businesses would be advantageous to the City. She
stated that the City could use the photos attached to the hashtag for promotion. Director Martin stated the whole impetus for the hashtag was the Comprehensive Plan.

4. **Committee Updates: Tours; Video and Business Recognition**

   **Tours**  
   No report

   **Video**  
   Commissioner Bionda stated that he had spoken with Director Martin and Economic Development Coordinator Wolf regarding different agencies to utilize and the budget for the video. He stated that the budget is the priority for selecting someone to complete the video. Chairwoman Baehne opined the importance of showing the heart of the City, its people, businesses, parks and recreation and nightlife on Green Street. Commissioner Bionda stated he is working on the outline to present to potential videographers. Discussion ensued regarding contacts, criteria and budget. Director Martin stated that he will get clarification on the budget. Mayor Jett inquired if sponsorship from local business might be an option. Discussion ensued. Chairwoman Baehne stated a budget needs to be established.

   **Business Recognition**  
   No Report

5. **New Business and Items for General Discussion by Staff and Members of the Commission**

   **Tour of McHenry County College (Chairwoman Bobbi Baehne)**  
   Chairwoman Baehne stated MCC would like to be contacted after construction is complete in the fall to reschedule the tour.

   **Discussion about Meeting Schedule**  
   Director Martin inquired about the monthly meeting schedule. Discussion ensued.

6. **Old Business/Committee Reports:**

   **Riverwalk Foundation**  
   Mayor Jett stated there may be donations available for the expansion to the Riverwalk near DC Cobbs. Discussion ensued regarding easements as well.

   **Chamber of Commerce**  
   Commissioner Mrachek stated there is a ribbon cutting for Cruise Nights on June 4. He further stated the Chamber Fiesta Days is coming up and that there will be a Corn on the Cob roast at music/food truck fest on the Thursday night.

   **Downtown Business Association**  
   Commissioner Bionda stated the Summer Taste is Saturday June 2 and the Fiesta Days Sidewalk Saturday would be on July 21. He stated there were communication issues
regarding Dream Street and Chalk Fest. He stated the DBA is trying to get businesses to open during the Cruise Nights.

**Downtown SuperGroup**
Mayor Jett stated the Downtown SuperGroup is continuing to work on a special events committee.

**Landmark Commission**
Director Martin stated there are two Façade Grants approved for Riverside House and Corkscrew Point that are going before City Council.

**Planning & Zoning Commission**
Director Martin stated there is an independent living facility application and a renovation application for the BP station at Crystal Lake and Bull Valley Roads for the agenda on June 13, 2018.

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**Staff Report**
The next Economic Development Commission meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, June 26, 2018.

**Adjournment**
Motion by Mrachek, seconded by Schaefer, to adjourn the meeting at 5:45 p.m.

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

Motion carried 5-0. The meeting was adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Bobbi Baehne, Chairwoman