City of McHenry
Economic Development Commission Minutes
March 28, 2018

Co-Chairman Jessup called the regularly scheduled March 28, 2018 meeting of the City of McHenry Economic Development Commission to order at 4:04 p.m. In attendance were the following: Arnold, Bionda, Jessup, Joern, Mrachek, and Sterwerf. Absent: Baehne and Alderman Glab. Also in attendance were Mayor Wayne Jett, Director of Economic Development Martin, and Economic Development Assistant Conaway.

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

1. Review of City of McHenry Economic Development and Planning and Zoning Commissions Annual Report 2017:

Director Martin stated that the City Council adopted an ordinance creating the Economic Development Commission in 2017 that directed the Economic Development Commission to provide an annual report. Director Martin stated that the first annual report outlines the purpose and functions of the Economic Development Commission specifically what the Economic Development Commission is working on and what the Economic Development Commission does in regards to communication, downtown revitalization, business attraction, retention and expansion. Director Martin asked the commission for input on the report. Wayne Seeley from audience asked if the report was online. Director Martin stated that he is asking the commission for approval of the report and then it will become available to the public.

Co-Chairman Jessup asked the commissioners if they had any comments. Commissioner Mrachek opined that the report was impressive. Co-Chairman Jessup opined that it is usable, easy to read and stated that it summarizes the Economic Development Commission activities. Commissioner Arnold agreed. Director Martin stated that the three committees - Tours, Video and Business Recognition would become a bigger part of the report. Co-Chairman Jessup agreed and opined that the report should center on workforce development and education linked with local business, as well. Commissioner Bionda asked for clarification on the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning. Director Martin stated that CMAP is the merger of NIPC - Northern Illinois Planning Commission and CATS - Chicago Area Transportation Study regional planning for Kane, Cook, Kendall, DuPage, McHenry, Lake, Oakwood Hill and Will counties. Director Martin stated that the McHenry County Department of Planning and Development has a resolution to do a study for recommendations to implement and enhance the environmental and recreational benefits of the Fox River. He further stated because the City of McHenry is in direct relation to the Fox River, the support of this resolution is important and because of that importance, the City Council overwhelmingly approved a contribution of $5,000 towards the completion of the study under the Technical Planning Assistance Grant. Commissioner Bionda inquired about the study's completion date. Director Martin stated that approval of the grant was not received and opined that it would be in the future. He stated that the grant market is very competitive.
Co-Chairman Jessup inquired about the Revolving Loan and asked how the City could better inform the community about this program. Director Martin stated lack of capital holds businesses back and further opined that incentives are imperative to attracting and retaining business. Director Martin stated the criteria and application are available online at the City website. He further stated that the Revolving Loan goals are to foster education, start a business and preserve employment. He stated there is $100,000 available in the fund. Commissioner Mrachek stated he used the program at the end of 2011 to open his bike shop and it helped him with his startup business. Commissioners Arnold and Sterwerf opined that Commissioner Mrachek was a great example of the program working. Director Martin stated that the program is successful because all parties want it to work. Director Martin also stated there is a smaller Façade Grant available for businesses who are looking to preserve the historical value of their buildings.

Motion by Mrachek and seconded by Sterwerf to approve the Economic Development Commission 2017 Annual Report as presented:

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

Motion carried 7-0.

2. Review and Discussion of Committees: Tours; Video and Business Recognition

**Tours** - Co-Chair Jessup stated that he and Chairwoman Baehne are working on the Tours and that they have connected with Glenn Starkey from Wauconda who has a program that has been in place for two years called IPT – Industrial Plant Tours. He stated the program has the host business speak on the history of the business and then offer a question and answer session that helps facilitate peer and cross-functional communication. He opined that the energy of the program was tremendous. Co-Chairman Jessup stated that he would like to model this for the City of McHenry. Co-Chairman Jessup stated that he would be meeting with Mr. Starkey to discuss and develop framework for the City to utilize.

**Video** – Director Martin stated that he and Commissioner Bionda have spoken about video marketing. He opined that the Elementary Community School District 15 has a great video regarding the Innovation Lab STEM program for students. Director Martin stated that he has spoken with the McHenry Township fire chief in regards to the video that they are making and the fire chief has agreed to allow the City to use its video. Director Martin opined that a three to five minute video that encompasses the entire community, the fire department, the City of McHenry, the police department and schools would be of benefit. Commissioner Bionda stated...
the main purpose for the video is to draw business and keep business in McHenry. He stated the goal is to prepare one three to four minute marketing video with one-minute supporting videos to increase the media footprint for the City. He opined that video is a great way to increase internet awareness. Co-Chairman Jessup opined that the City of Chicago’s ninety-second YouTube video to attract Amazon with the skyline and phenomenal narrative was a good model. Co-Chairman Jessup suggested using the Fox River that is unique to McHenry.

**Business Recognition** – Commissioner Arnold stated that he and Chairwoman Baehne had not met to discuss business recognition.

### 3. Review of Ordinance Creating Economic Development Commission:

Director Martin directed the commissioners to review Ordinance MC-17-1150, which outlines the powers and duties of the Economic Development Commission. Director Martin stated that the term end for the Economic Development Commission is April 30, 2018 and asked commissioners to contact Mayor Jett if they did not wish to be reappointed.

Director Martin stated that there is a budget for the Economic Development Commission to utilize for the City video and business recognition. Director Martin opined that the McHenry County Economic Development Commission’s 2017-2020 Strategic Plan is a good summary and model and he asked for input regarding goals. Co-Chairman Jessup opined that there is a need for the Economic Development Commission to do a survey of City businesses to see what is important for the Economic Development Commission to accomplish. Discussion ensued. Commissioner Mrachek opined that the hand written letter or a phone call are important in communicating with new business. Director Martin stated that he and his staff send hand written notes to local businesses. Commissioner Mrachek opined that a follow up should be part of the Economic Development Commission retention plan and further opined that it is important to see what the concerns of a business are after a year. Commissioner Joern stated a survey asking questions such as why did you choose McHenry, where else did you look and how did McHenry compare in the process would be a good business practice. Commissioner Sterwerf stated the Economic Development Commission should look into a “Welcome Wagon” type approach to new businesses to invite them to be part of the Economic Development Commission. Commissioner Bionda stated he learned that there are three simple steps, acquisition, retention and reactivation. He opined that a monthly email would be beneficial. Mayor Jett stated he uses Constant Contact to connect with people. Discussion ensued. Co-Chairman Jessup inquired if the City had done any similar surveys previously. Director Martin stated they had not but offered to contact other local cities to see if they had done a similar study. Mayor Jett opined that the City of McHenry demonstrated what it could be with the St. Patrick’s Day event. He stated more events would be coming to the city in the future. Mayor Jett stated in order for businesses to be able to contribute to upcoming events, they need to be informed. Commission Mrachek stated he would contact Kay Bates at the McHenry Chamber of Commerce to coordinate activities to increase new business interest in McHenry.
4. **Old Business - Liaison Reporting:**

   a. **Riverwalk Foundation**
      Mayor Jett stated that he spoke with John Smith to discuss future opportunities of the Riverwalk Foundation and he learned that the Riverwalk Foundation has some money and they need additional funds from the City for future expansion. Mayor Jett stated that the City Council would like to see the north expansion from Bimbos to Weber Park at a cost of approximately $1.5 million dollars. Mayor Jett stated the Riverside Drive businesses would need to participate. Commissioner Bionda suggested that the Riverwalk Foundation set up a Go Fund Me page.

   b. **Chamber of Commerce**
      Commissioner Mrachek stated the McHenry Chamber of Commerce is hosting a scramble on April 27, 2018. A golf outing on May 23, 2018 and Fiesta Days in July. Wayne Seeley, chamber member, stated the McHenry Chamber is bringing back a tradition from the past, the corn roast for Fiesta Days weekend.

   c. **Downtown Business Association**
      Commissioner Bionda stated the DBA would like to move the Christmas Parade to earlier in the day but is getting resistance from a local business. He stated the DBA is struggling to get businesses to come to the meetings and suggested they split into two groups, retail and restaurant/bars. Commissioner Joern opined the time of day of the meetings might be inconvenient for restaurant/bar owners to attend.

   d. **Downtown SuperGroup**
      No report.

   e. **Landmark Commission**
      Mayor Jett stated that the Parks & Recreation Department has been working on upgrades to Petersen Farm. He stated that Landmark Commission is happy with the improvements. Mayor Jett stated a new commissioner would be appointed to the Landmark Commission at the next City Council Meeting.

   f. **Planning & Zoning Commission**
      Director Martin stated that the PZ Commission is meeting on April 4, 2018 to discuss the Future Land Use Map. Cases for the April 11, 2018 meeting are Speedway at Ringwood Road and IL Route 120, Speedway at Dayton and IL Route 31 and a restaurant at the corner of Green St. and IL Route 120.

      Wayne Seeley inquired if the City of McHenry has any information on the King Farm property putting up a solar farm. Director Martin stated that the King property is not within the city limits. Director Martin stated that he and Director of Parks Hobson met with people regarding the use of 14-15 acres at Petersen Farm for a solar farm similar to what is at McHenry County College Shah Center. Mr. Seeley asked if the City had requirements for solar farms. Director Martin stated that there are limitations on how much land they can use.
5. New Business and Items for General Discussion

Discussion ensued regarding the McHenry County College Tour. Director Martin stated Chairwoman Baehne should pick dates and the Economic Development Commission would reschedule the tour if four members were available.

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

STAFF REPORT
Director Martin asked for input regarding the 2018 Economic Development Commission meeting dates. The commissioners agreed to schedule one-hour meetings at 4:00 p.m. on the last Wednesday of each month. The next Economic Development Commission meeting is scheduled for Wednesday April 25, 2018 at 4:00 p.m. Director Martin thanked Co-Chairman Jessup for chairing the meeting.

ADJOURNMENT
Motion by Arnold and seconded by Bionda to adjourn the meeting at 5:40 p.m.

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

Motion carried 7-0. The meeting was adjourned at 5:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Jessup, Co-Chairman