

**MINUTES
CITY OF WOODSTOCK
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
September 7, 2016
Council Chambers**

CALL TO ORDER: A Special Meeting of the City of Woodstock Economic Development Commission was called to order by Acting Chairman R. Francois at 8:00 AM on Tuesday, September 7, 2016 in the Council Chambers, Woodstock City Hall, 121 W. Calhoun Street, Woodstock. A roll call was taken.

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT: John Buckley, Chris McGowan, Wayne Read, Henry Patel and Chairman Rick Francois.

COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT: None.

STAFF PRESENT: Economic Development Director Garrett Anderson, Economic Development Coordinator Krista Coltrin and Chief Deputy City Clerk Jane Howie.

OTHERS PRESENT: Andrew Celentano.

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES:

Motion was made by J. Buckley, second by C. McGowan, to accept the Minutes from the August 9, 2016 meeting. Ayes: J. Buckley, C. McGowan, W. Read, H. Patel, and R. Francois. Nays: None. Absentees: None. Abstentions: None. Minutes were accepted.

PUBLIC COMMENT: New Commission member W. Read runs Inbound Marketing for Other World Computing; introduced himself to the Commission and staff. Each Commission member and staff introduced themselves to Commissioner W. Read.

GENERAL BUSINESS/DISCUSSION:

1. Project Activity Report – September 2016

G. Anderson directed members to the Summary Sheet. The department is currently tracking approximately 50 projects. One is a \$50M project that is progressing. 17 projects are new businesses that are already open. G. Anderson will compile a year-to-date report and delete items as they drop off.

Project Libra is getting started; there are doing a bit of interior demo.

Bull Valley Ford is well underway.

Red Mill is going very slow; they had to re-let some of their bids.

4-star projects are the strong projects: Project Beta, downtown businesses that the City is assisting in opening.

Project Tulip – this business is buying a second building to expand their space. They'd like to add a showroom to display some wood creations.

Project Rose – City Council approved the lifting of liquor license moratorium last night for Mia Passione, 228 Main Street. It is believed that the owner will purchase the building.

Project Orchid – the VFW is looking at the Woodstock Wedding Network location as well as where Brickstone was located.

Project Volcano – this was the possible relocation or remodeling of Taco Bell, which has been going on since spring of 2015. They are looking at stripping down the existing store and re-building and remaining at their current location.

Project Studebaker is working with the state of IL for an incentive program. The Edge Program is a payroll incentive, in addition to the incentive from the Enterprise Zone. G. Anderson provided them with a lot of information about the local workforce in McHenry County. Quad Graphics is still being decommissioned. A lot of the space is empty but some of the large machinery is still on site.

Project Lily – Pizza Hut on the south side has closed. They were looking for a 1000 square foot building; however, there aren't a lot of choices here in Woodstock. They'd like to do carry-out and delivery only; no inside seating. The building has been sold (Project Venus = La Trinidad Restaurant, will be relocating to the old Pizza Hut building). Another option for Pizza Hut is to re-tenant the train station, which is approximately 1000 square feet. The realtor said this is a possibility. Although it's not a historic building, it is in the historic district, so there are specific guidelines that would need to be followed. Union Pacific must approve the business, as well. K. Coltrin said another option is a Kettle Corn owner who is looking for a small space to share with another business. The owner also does fund-raising for not-for-profits. There could be a possibility of a shared-space partnership.

Project Neptune – is looking at the old Elks Lodge on the corner of Cass Street & Throop Street. They are aware that this is a huge project and the building will need a lot of work. The business owner is looking into opening a café / diner at this location.

Project Red – the redevelopment of the old Farm & Fleet site on the corner of Route 47 and Route 14; there are continued discussions. This project, gas station with convenience store, received a mixed reception from the City Council. Davis Road needs to be re-aligned first. Owner would like the City to assist with changing the roadway; however, this is not a priority to the City at this time. The Enterprise Zone will be very helpful if this project moves forward.

Project Jupiter – Woodstock Square Inn – K. Coltrin shared information about the bed & breakfasts in town. This gentleman is interested in leasing this space on the Square. This is still in the preliminary stage; taking advantage of the City's revolving loan fund. Owner has a background in the hospitality business and lives locally. The other two bed & breakfasts in town are still trying to sell. Current owners wish to retire and move on.

Project Wolf – Staff was informed that the City of Woodstock is out of the running for this project. This was a State of IL lead. The reason for elimination is not close enough to the interstate and there are too many transportation issues. The company is now looking at Wisconsin and Indiana. Staff still does not know what the company does or who they are; a manufacturer of possibly plastics and metals. W. Read said it's interesting that the company didn't look at the transportation issue and proximity to the interstate prior to beginning their location search. The City had a nondisclosure; the business provided 17 pages of what exactly they are looking for. The new site will become their headquarters and include R&D.

Project Alpha – was looking at the same building on McConnell Road that Project Wolf had looked at. The business is not interested in this site.

Project Tucker – was a design professional who purchases buildings and renovates them. He didn't have a concept yet but he was interested in being located on the Square. This seems to be a good contact that staff will stay in contact with going forward.

Project Cider - Cal-Atlantic is open for business; Apple Creek Estates. Model homes are open and for sale.

R. Francois asked if any developers are still building and selling in Woodstock. G. Anderson will get contact the City's Building and Zoning Department and share this information with the Commission.

Woodstock Commons, which is multi-family residential, has begun construction of several more buildings.

G. Anderson is working with the land owners of the old Dominick's site (Eastwood Center near Aldi and the DMV) with regard to redevelopment of the site. There's a new owner who would like to add approximately 45,000 square feet on to the south of the building. He would be looking for medium box stores; hoping for two new tenants and wants to fill the Office Depot site first.

Project Pontiac – in the end unit past the DMV, a fitness center will be moving into this site. A Halloween store is temporarily moving into the old Office Depot store for a couple of months. (This is the same landlord as for Taco Bell.)

R. Francois asked if the City ever hears directly from national companies. K. Coltrin said no, not directly. Staff will continue to go to the ISCS conference to make connections and find out where Woodstock fits in the specific criteria.

The ISCS Conference has approximately 125 national chains that attend each meeting. Each retailer briefly states their desires of what they're vision is, the demographic needed, etc. Staff highlighted 10 or less that would fit. The next meeting is in October where Staff can make connections and sell our available spaces. R. Francois wants to know if Woodstock is on anybody's radar. G. Anderson said a lot of the issue is demographics and Woodstock had a reputation of anti-chain store. Staff is working on changing Woodstock's reputation.

W. Read asked if there's a list of priorities to know where we target our conversations. What type of businesses would be beneficial to Woodstock? G. Anderson said this is a leakage report. Staff is just starting the outreach strategy. K. Coltrin said staff has had to make a list of what businesses are currently in Woodstock and who the contacts are. This information, as a whole, was never compiled or kept track of before. This will provide an opportunity of how best to move forward. Retail? Restaurants? Chain stores? G. Anderson said the City of Woodstock doesn't require establishments to obtain a business license; therefore, staff is starting at square 1. The list could contain information, such as, how many employees the business has, line of work, location, data that will help to find out their needs. W. Read said Woodstock has to change the stigma of not wanting chain stores. Also, landlords have unrealistic expectations for rent, leasing, or sales prices. Staff can provide detailed analysis of what rent is going for in the surrounding area. Establish a line of communication, compile a list of property owners, brokers for the strip centers, tour the properties, needs of the community, getting to know the property owners and realtors in the area, ongoing process; a working list.

There is a good property listing currently on the website – ChooseWoodstock.com which is on the City's website. It is sometimes difficult to find a property owner; staff is actively working on this.

J. Buckley asked about the manufacturing site. Does the City have a growing relationship with site selectors? G. Anderson said yes, they're making a broader effort, having tours with local site selectors. There are mixed reviews on if this is helpful or not as this can be costly.

K. Coltrin said when they started working on Project Wolf, this is the first time McHenry County, and Woodstock specifically, was chosen as a site by the selectors. A lot of positives have come out of this situation, including strong communications with both the State of Illinois as well as with McHenry County.

R. Francois asked if Flow-Con is moving into the old DB Hess building. G. Anderson said they haven't occupied the building yet but they are moving

forward. K. Coltrin said many times business owners have high expectations of moving in quickly; however, a lot of the renovation or build-out work takes more time than what was planned for.

2. Industrial Roundtable – meeting is on Tuesday, September 20. Both Aurora University and McHenry County Workforce will present information.

G. Anderson said the Old Courthouse and Sheriff's House is currently looking for tenants; however, the buildings still need a lot of work before some spaces can be occupied.

G. Anderson informed the Commission that the ArtSpace Report was transmitted to City Council at their meeting last night, September 6.

G. Anderson & J. Buckley are involved in the INCUBator project working with students at Woodstock High School in this Entrepreneurship course. Students will be coached and mentioned through various topics. Coaches / mentors will meet with the kids weekly to assist in their progression through the program. Advisers are acting like a shark-tank panel. Kids have to create an outline of what they're doing and at the end of the year they have to present their business plan to the panel. Talks are discussing next step available; perhaps a proposed second year project. It was decided that mentors will be attending on Tuesdays. Because of that, this Commission will need to select another day of the week to have their meetings. G. Anderson proposed changing the Economic Development Commission meetings to the first Thursday of each month beginning October 6, 2016. All Commissioners agreed and approved this change.

J. Buckley asked about jobs in the community; net retained and how & what is being done to replace what's been lost and building on that. R. Francois said many years ago Woodstock had lost some large employers. G. Anderson said there have been several new companies come in, and it is the City's hope that this will continue.

COMMISSION COMMENTS / UPDATES: None.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion by J. Buckley, second by C. McGowan, to adjourn to the next Regular Meeting of the Economic Development Commission on the **new day, Thursday, October 6, 2016** at 8:00 AM in the Council Chambers at City Hall. Ayes: J. Buckley, C. McGowan, W. Read, H. Patel, and R. Francois. Nays: None. Absentees: None. Abstentions: None. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 9:20 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Howie
Chief Deputy City Clerk