

MINUTES
CITY OF WOODSTOCK
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
April 8, 2014

The regular meeting of the Economic Development Commission of the City of Woodstock was called to order at 8:05AM on Tuesday, April 8, 2014, by Chairperson Rick Francois in the Council Chambers at Woodstock City Hall, 121 West Calhoun, Woodstock, Illinois. A roll call was taken by Chief Deputy Clerk Cindy Smiley.

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT: Craig Hallenstein, Ryan O'Connor, and Rick Francois.

COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT: Arlene Lynes & Henry Patel.

STAFF PRESENT: Cort Carlson, Director of Community and Economic Development and Chief Deputy Clerk Cindy Smiley.

GENERAL BUSINESS/DISCUSSION

C. Carlson reported that he has received survey feedback from three Commission members. He passed out a summary of the feedback responses.

C. Carlson noted that the common issues seemed to be Route 47 improvements and taxes. He did note that the Rt. 47 project seems to be moving forward and is ready to move into Phase II and that IDOT is again opening up the public sessions for comment this summer.

He then stated that at a recent meeting between the City and IDOT, IDOT presented preliminary plans for the improvements with various scenarios, none of which included a bypass. IDOT representatives commented that they did not feel that a bypass would alleviate traffic on Rt. 47. He noted that the improvements include the widening of Rt. 47 and that one suggestion is to place roundabouts at a variety of locations. It is IDOT's feeling that this is the best way to keep traffic flowing. He stated that the City is encouraged to see that this project seems to be moving forward and that this is very timely in view of the survey responses.

A discussion followed of traditional intersections vs. roundabouts, with C. Carlson stated that the use of roundabouts would make the reconstruction of the railroad overpass unnecessary and would result in a \$30M savings on the project. Discussion followed of the effect both options would have on neighboring businesses.

C. Hallenstein noted that the use of roundabouts would provide an opportunity to beautify Rt. 47 and would bring a European flair to the city. Discussion continued on wayfinding signage and maintenance.

C. Carlson stated that the project also takes into the account the Complete Streets Program which encourages bike lanes and sidewalks and also encourages businesses to create common pass-throughs so that traffic does not have to go back out onto Rt. 47.

In response to a question from R. Francois concerning whether the City will notify the businesses of the opportunity to attend the public comment sessions, C. Carlson noted that

IDOT has already been in contact with some of the businesses. He further noted that the City will work with the business to create signage and access to try to mitigate the disturbance to the businesses during construction. Mr. Carlson also noted that the Economic Development Commission and the Transportation Commission could also assist in getting the word out.

C. Carlson then noted that another concern that was identified is high property taxes. He noted that a Council member had requested a comparison between Woodstock and neighboring communities and it appeared that Woodstock was somewhat higher. When you compare the services that the communities provide for those tax dollars, however, Woodstock is comparable. For example, Woodstock does not have a Park District, with those services provided by the City. If you were to compare a community that does have a Park District with Woodstock, you would have to add the municipal taxes for that community together with the Park District taxes in order to get a more accurate comparison. R. Francois noted that most home rule communities also impose a sales tax which can lower property taxes and that this is not available to Woodstock.

Discussion followed of whether the Commission comments in their entirety should be transmitted to the City Council along with the survey results or if an Executive Summary would be sufficient. C. Hallenstein expressed the opinion that this is a flawed survey as it was ignored by the Latino and low-income community. It was the consensus of the Commission that the comments would be enclosed in their entirety, with R. O'Connor expressing the opinion that it could be presented as the Commission's observations. He also expressed the opinion that the survey is not flawed as it is very clear who responded. He sees the survey, an executive summary, and the Commission's observations going to the Council as a discussion item.

C. Carlson again requested that all Commission members submit their comments to him as he would like to include comments from everyone. He will then work to develop a report that can be submitted to the City Council.

Discussion followed of the Square and how it is being used. C. Hallenstein noted that there should be more stores on Rt. 14 and Rt. 47 to provide more shopping synergy. He stated that his vision of the Square would be a place for high-end shops, catering to internet sales and out-of-towners. Discussion followed of marketing and businesses and of the collaboration among Square businesses that is continuing. Discussion followed of the number of jobs that have been lost in Woodstock.

UPDATES:

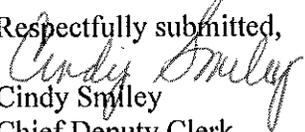
C. Carlson provided the Commission with updates on the World Trade Illinois office in McHenry County, a business development seminar he will attend in Madison Wisconsin in May, and the International Council of Shopping Centers Convention which he will be attending in Las Vegas also in May. He also updated the Commission on the City's search for an Economic Development Coordinator and notified the Commission that Mayor Sager has appointed Arlene Lynes as a member of the Old Courthouse Rehabilitation RFP Committee. He then informed the Commission of various potential new business opportunities in the City.

ADJOURN

Motion by C. Hallenstein, second by R. O'Connor, to adjourn to the next regular meeting of the Economic Development Commission on Tuesday, May 13 at 8:00AM in the Council

Chambers at City Hall. Ayes: Hallenstein, O'Connor, and Francois. Nays: None.
Absentees: Lyne and Patel. Abstentions: none. Motion Carried. Meeting adjourned
9:45AM

Respectfully submitted,


Cindy Smiley
Chief Deputy Clerk