

**MINUTES
CITY OF WOODSTOCK
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
May 13, 2014**

The regular meeting of the Economic Development Commission of the City of Woodstock was called to order at 8:00AM on Tuesday, April 8, 2014, by Acting Chairperson Arlene Lynes 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, Arlene Lynes, and Henry Patel.

COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT: Rick Francois

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by C. Hallenstein, second by H. Patel, to approve the minutes of the March 11, 2014 regular meeting of the Economic Development Commission. A roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Hallenstein, O'Connor, Lynes, and Patel. Nays: none. Abstentions: none. Absentees: Francois. Motion passed.

GENERAL BUSINESS/DISCUSSION

C. Carlson informed the Commission that an offer had been tendered and accepted for the position of Economic Development Coordinator. Joe Napolitano is expected to attend his orientation on May 22nd. Mr. Carlson stated that Mr. Napolitano has a very strong background in Economic Development and will be an asset to the department and to the community.

Mr. Carlson presented information to the Commission on new marketing material that will be used to market Woodstock to retailers at ICSC. He also provided a summary report showing the demographics of the City of Woodstock, containing the most current information that could be obtained from ESRI. Discussion followed of the City's nearness to the 25,000 Home Rule threshold. It was noted that the Hispanic population is undergoing growth and should be taken into account in marketing materials. Discussion also followed of the various aspects of the demographics, including median income and renter-occupied property versus owner-occupied property. Mr. Carlson noted that these demographics are those that are used by developers and site selectors when considering Woodstock for development.

In response to a question from C. Hallenstein as to why McHenry and Crystal Lake attract big box stores, C. Carlson explained that population and income are the factors used and that the developers must feel that there is enough disposable income. He also stated that when Crystal Lake is considered, the developer also looks at Lakewood and Cary, for example, noting that when you travel east and south of Crystal Lake you get a

denser population with higher incomes. Concerning McHenry, it was noted that most of its development came at the time of the housing boom and that they were very pro-growth at that time. It was further noted that for a time, Woodstock had a no-growth reputation while other communities were pro-growth and that this was at a time when significant development was occurring. Mr. Carlson stated that Woodstock was on the cusp of this development trend when the crash of the housing market occurred, halting development for a time. C. Carlson also discussed the impact population and the location of existing restaurants in neighboring communities have on recruiting new restaurants to Woodstock. He stated that while some of these restaurants have expressed an interest in Woodstock, they are not going to expand to within the same market area until their existing restaurant is performing strongly. He noted that Woodstock is ready when the market is ready. In response to a question from R. O'Connor, C. Carlson stated that the City has a plan in place to try to attract businesses who do not already have a presence within a 10-mile radius.

C. Carlson noted that there is now movement of retailers starting in Chicago and moving west through the suburbs to re-tenant existing space that was vacated during the economic downturn. Unfortunately, because Woodstock had been in a no-growth mode and does not have such vacant space to redevelop, we are not in a position to take full advantage of this trend. This means that the process will be slower for Woodstock as we need to find developers who wish to build and find tenants for new space.

C. Hallenstein noted the devastating effect the "no-growth" contingent had on Woodstock which led to many of the businesses we now want to attract going to other communities.

C. Carlson noted that there has been positive movement on the residential side within the last year and a-half, with some of the developers looking to revive existing developments which were stalled.

Discussion followed of the Old Courthouse RFP process with C. Carlson updating the Commission on the respondents. He noted that the RFP Review Committee will meet tomorrow to discuss the submittals.

R. O'Connor discussed the need to attract small businesses with 5-20 employees as there seems to already be available space for such businesses. He asked if the EDC could help with this effort in some way to which C. Carlson replied that this could certainly be taken on by the Commission if the members wish to do so.

Discussion followed of how to attract such businesses with H. Patel suggesting advertising aggressively through the radio, other media, and on-line. R. O'Connor suggested examining where the economic tides are turning and market Woodstock as a supportive location for these types of businesses...identify the business categories and then go after those.

C. Carlson reported that the Rt. 47 CAG is getting back underway and will have preliminary plans for the Rt. 47 expansion. He stated that there would be new public meetings held later in the summer.

C. Carlson reported on other projects that are in the various planning stages.

ADJOURN

Motion by H. Patel, second by C. Hallenstein, to adjourn to the next regular meeting of the Economic Development Commission on Tuesday, June 10 at 8:00AM in the Council Chambers at City Hall. Ayes: Hallenstein, O'Connor, Patel, and Lynes. Nays: None. Absentees: Francois. Abstentions: none. Motion Carried. Meeting adjourned 9:12AM

Respectfully submitted,


Cindy Smiley
Chief Deputy Clerk