MINUTES
CITY OF DEKALB
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MEETING
OCTOBER 4, 2019

The Economic Development Commission (EDC) of the City of DeKalb, Illinois held a regular meeting on October 4, 2019 in the Executive Conference Room of the DeKalb Municipal Building, 200 S. Fourth Street, DeKalb, Illinois.

The meeting was called to order at 8:32 a.m.

A. ROLL CALL

Executive Assistant Ruth Scott called the roll and the following EDC members were present: Grant Goltz, Mohammed Labadi, Chair Trixy O’Flaherty, Jeff Richardson, Mark Sawyer, and Sam Walt, as well as ex-officio members Paul Borek (DCEDC) and Matt Duffy (DeKalb Chamber of Commerce). Member Vernese Edghill-Walden arrived at 8:32 a.m., just after roll call was called.

Others present included: City Manager Bill Nicklas, Mayor Jerry Smith, Alderman Carolyn Morris, and Executive Assistant Ruth Scott (as recording secretary).

B. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

MOTION

Mr. Sawyer moved to approve the agenda; seconded by Mr. Richardson.

VOTE

Motion carried by a voice vote of the majority of members present.

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES


MOTION

Mr. Goltz moved to approve the agenda; seconded by Mr. Walt.

VOTE

Motion carried by a voice vote of the majority of members present.
D. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation during this portion of the meeting.

E. REPORTS

1. City Manager Report.

City Manager Nicklas reported on development on the southern most part of DeKalb, providing status of the progress being made with two interested parties. He noted that the DCEDC has been helpful and engaged during this process. Mr. Borek stated that the enterprise zone was very important to both manufacturers.

City Manager Nicklas also reported that the former O’Leary’s building no longer had an interested buyer. He also reported that the Egyptian Theatre was still under construction but moving along, noting that the rainy weather has caused delays. City Manager Nicklas further stated that the Plaza DeKalb project is moving along on schedule.


Mr. Duffy reported that the State of the City would be held on October 15, 2019. He also reported that the “In the Loop” video series regarding the Elburn train station stop would be released today. He noted that other videos were in the works, including Route 12 just before the route starts in late October.

Brief discussion ensued. It was suggested that perhaps an “In the Loop” video could be created regarding the construction and changes in the downtown area, or perhaps a segment on Northern Illinois University once a month. It was noted that the “In the Loop” videos regarding the new bus routes could be shown at the next meeting.


Mr. Borek reported that Solo Tech has begun construction of their office space located in Park 88, which will enable the company to expand their employment from 20 to 40 employees.

Brief discussion ensued.

Mr. Borek also reported on the 2600 Wirsing building (former 3M building), stating that he was working with someone interested in purchasing the building.
Mr. Borek also reported on a metal supplier and fabricator that’s considering sites to purchase that would focus on train rail, as well as a local manufacturer looking for space to grow and expand.

Brief discussion ensued.

F. OLD BUSINESS

1. Elburn Train Station Transit Service (Route 12).

   This service will begin operating at the end of October. It was noted that Council approved amendments to the agreement the City has with Transdev on September 23, 2019.

2. South Industrial Park Transit Service (Route 19).

   This service will begin operating at the end of October. It was noted that Council approved amendments to the agreement the City has with Transdev on September 23, 2019.


   Mr. Nicklas noted that while the survey is important, there are no staff to spare to get it done at this point. Mr. Nicklas stated that he and Mr. Borek worked together to give the EDC a couple models. Mr. Nicklas stated that at this time he’s working on business attraction. This item will return to the EDC on the November 1, 2019 agenda.

   Brief discussion ensued regarding the direction of the survey, perhaps with small retail and restaurants. Mr. Borek stated he would provide a list of the top 20 small businesses in DeKalb to reach out to.

   Discussion ensued regarding the data collection process, information that’s been compiled over the years, how it’s used, goals of the surveys, and questions that can be moved along to the City Council so policy can be changed if needed.

   Mr. Nicklas noted his observations with building permit issues and the length of time it was taking to get permits reviewed. He stated he was working on a plan to speed the reviewing and permitting plan along quickly.

   Ms. Edgehill-Walden noted the use of technology and its importance to this generation of future entrepreneurs, adding that electronic applications should be able to be submitted. Mr. Nicklas noted it’s a matter of personnel and old habits, but he’s working on a solution.
Brief discussion ensued regarding other boards, commissioners or committees reaching out to businesses. Mr. Nicklas noted that he does, as does Mayor Smith, but there’s not necessarily a list. He also noted that he speaks to downtown businesses daily regarding the ongoing construction and assisting with on the spot issues.

Chair O’Flaherty noted that this item should be made the first topic on the November 1, 2019 agenda, with a two-step discussion: 1) the EDC could go out and meet with businesses; and 2) a scientific survey and action on issues that businesses may be having.

Council Member Morris stated that perhaps the EDC could use a Google doc to record research and surveys. Discussion ensued.

It was noted that at the November 1, 2019 meeting, all EDC members would provide five questions to be used on the survey.

Ms. Edghill-Walden stated she would not be present for the November 1, 2019 meeting.


Discussion regarding this item began with the issue of grant money and if it exists; it was concluded that it does. It was noted that a follow-up from Transit Manager Cox is needed. This item will be placed on the November agenda.

Mr. Goltz noted that the backup memo regarding this item Grant noted that provides ample information.

G. NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Nicklas noted that the City Council would start their review of FY2020 budget soon, noting he’s heard a lot about the condition of DeKalb’s streets, noting unfortunately the City doesn’t have a recurring source of funding for repair and a new revenue source is needed. Mr. Nicklas asked the EDC if they would be interested in reviewing some capital options. There was consensus that they would. Mr. Nicklas stated he will provide an update to the EDC at the November meeting.

H. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the EDC will be on November 1, 2019.
I. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION

Mr. Richardson moved to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Ms. Edghill-Walden.

VOTE

Motion carried by a voice vote of the majority of members present. The meeting was adjourned at 9:46 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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RUTH A. SCOTT, Executive Assistant/Recording Secretary

Approved by the Economic Development Commission: November 1, 2019.