

COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

February 12, 2024 – 6:30 pm

Chairman Dan Carncross called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm. City Administrator Leone called roll to establish a quorum. Committee members present: Chairman Dan Carncross, Alderman Jay Schulz, Alderwoman Lori Lancaster and Alderwoman Rosa Luna. Also present were Mayor Michael Kelly, Alderman Charles Gorman, City Administrator Lou Leone and Community Development Director Donovan Day.

Public Comment

Chairman Carncross opened the floor to public comment for any item not on the agenda. There were none.

Revolving Loan Fund Discussion

City Administrator Leone and Mayor Kelly reviewed current policy for the revolving loan fund. As noted at the last City Council meeting, the current program, by policy, is used for façades in the downtown district. Current policy has 0% interest rate. Staff would like to expand the program to help businesses obtain low interest loans for interior improvements. Policy needs to be determined and possibly expanded beyond Ayer St. for any commercial/retail type projects.

- Expand the scope of the program to allow for anything related to the business that makes sense; physical improvements including interior upgrades, remodeling and mechanicals within the building. It would not include costs for permit/licensing or operating expenses.
- Mayor Kelly recommended that the business have a hard physical address (not home-based) within the City.
- Maintain current loan limits of \$50,000 with a 5 year payback, so long as funds are available, with an interest rate range of 1-3% depending on the specific loan application. Current funds available are \$160,000 with 2 pending applications at \$50K each.
- Staff is exploring alternate sources of revenue, one of which was to add a fee to permits.
- Donovan recommended the funds be used for business attraction and expansion. There should be some caveats and guidelines in place, i.e. the impact on the City, time limits and requirements that hold people accountable. City Staff will draft a policy/guideline for the next Community Development Committee Meeting.

Potential Uses of Principal Funds in Turtle Crossing Money Market Account

- Staff recommends engaging City Engineer Gary Rozwadowski, Christopher Burke Engineering to obtain an estimate on emergent care for the retention pond in Turtle Crossing. There is no HOA in the subdivision. The retention pond is owned by the property owner of all those lots, not the City. Any remedies would be the onus of the property owner. Donovan related the bigger concern is the culverts within the subdivision that go under the road that that feed the retention pond, many of which are overgrown. Staff would like to engage the City Engineer to provide a baseline assessment on what needs to be done to maintain them. The consensus was for staff to move forward and contact Gary.
- Partner with the Mayor's Monarch Pledge to make the islands in the subdivision pollinators for monarch butterflies. Alderman Schulz suggested doing the same for the islands on Harvard Hills Rd.

Upcoming Community Development Programs

Staff is working with two individuals on the soccer tournament who would also like to have a Mexican Independence Day Festival this year and Cinco de Mayo in 2025, both events to be held at Milky Way Park. Both events are in the early stages; additional details will be forthcoming for Committee review.

Proposed New City Logo

City Administrator Leone reviewed his memo pertaining to rebranding the City, specifically to develop and implement a new City logo. The Committee reviewed the options presented for a new logo design which will become part of the City's overall brand style guide to be implemented as needed. All four design options are owned by the City and can be used at any point in the future. A motion was made by Alderwoman Luna, seconded by Alderwoman Lancaster to recommend to the City Council to adopt a new logo as depicted below:



All ayes. Motion carried.

Draft RFQ for the Broadband Feasibility Study

City Administrator Lou Leone gave an overview of the revised draft RFQ for a Feasibility Study for the Harvard Municipal Internet Project to determine if it is a viable project. Alderman Gorman indicated that his previous input and suggestions for the RFP have been addressed and it looked good to move forward. A motion was made by Alderwoman Lancaster, seconded by Alderman Carncross to recommend to the City Council to move forward with the RFP as presented. All ayes. Motion carried.

Rental Inspection Program

Community Development Director Day related that the City has been inspecting rental units of a certain age every five years pursuant to Section 19.13, Inspection of Dwellings. In his experience, non-home rule municipalities do not have the authority to inspect rental units. Attorney Clifton opined on the matter and concurred with Donovan in that the Illinois Constitution and State Statutes do not give non-home rule municipalities the authority to routinely inspect. City staff is working on revisions to the existing ordinance to fall within State Statutes; basically, the City can register rental properties for a fee. Any property that becomes a nuisance will then be classified as a nuisance property, at which point routine inspections can be done (specifics yet to be determined). The consensus was to ask Chairwoman Haderlein to have the draft ordinance on the Administration Committee agenda for review.

New Business

City Administrator Leone commented that the City is trying to do things that will help improve the City and attract new residents with different activities. One of the principal goals assigned to him was to breach the gap between both halves of the City; the City is working on activities and making strides towards that goal.

Mayor Kelly stated that the Chamber of Commerce is creating a subgroup for Spanish businesses through the Chamber focused on Latino businesses.

Business Updates

Donovan updated the Committee on various businesses:

- Dunkin is starting their buildout.
- USMG is ramping up their need for employees and has been connected with MCC and the High School.
- Staff has been in discussions with a couple people about bringing a dispensary to town.
- The Lonesome Rd. apartment project has made some changes to their original plan and will be making a full presentation soon. Alderman Schulz noted the project will necessitate discussion on the Northfield Ave./Rte 14 intersection and how that will be addressed.
- Conservatively estimating 31 housing permits for this year.
- The City is working with Luis Castaneda and Teska Associates to create the TIF redevelopment plan. The general theme for TIF's going forward is to encourage the applicant to secure a loan which provides less risk to the City.

A motion was made by Alderman Schulz, seconded by Alderman Lancaster to adjourn the meeting. All ayes. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 7:50 pm.

Submitted by:
Chairman Dan Carncross