

VILLAGE OF HINSDALE
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)

Minutes of the Special Meeting on
Tuesday, January 26, 2010

Members Present: Marc Cella, Eileen Crane, Craig Chapello, Jan Grisemer, and Steve Potter

Members Absent: Jeanie Janes, John Karstrand, Alan Schneider, and Brad Summers

Staff Present: Timothy Scott, AICP,
Community Development Strategist

Others Present: Jan Anderson, Executive Director of the Hinsdale Chamber of Commerce

Call to Order

With Chairman Karstrand unavailable for the meeting, Ms. Grisemer made a motion to approve Mr. Chapello as Acting Chairman. Mr. Cella seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously.

Acting Chairman Chapello called the special meeting of the Economic Development Commission (EDC) to order at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 26, 2010. (Agenda Item 1)

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Cella made a motion to approve the minutes of the special meeting of the EDC that was held on December 15, 2009. Ms. Grisemer seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously. (Agenda Item 2)

Tax Revenue Review: Sales and Food & Beverage

Staff reported that base sales taxes increased 3.3% for the month of January (October sales) versus the previous year and added that the increase, when viewed in conjunction with what could be considered a larger than expected decline for the previous month, produced a two-month period reflective of the same period for the previous year. Staff commented that the lower figure for December could have been due, at least in part, to late reporting. Staff then noted that total sales taxes had declined by \$222,480 (-11.5%) for the fiscal year-to-date and added that the decline is less than had been projected by the Village in its budgeting process.

Staff stated that food and beverage tax revenue was averaging approximately \$20,865 for the first nine months of the fiscal year, noting that this amount exceeded the Village's budget projection. Staff remarked that if the trend continued, the EDC would potentially receive additional resources for use in the current fiscal year, and added that the topic could be revisited during the group's budget discussion later in the meeting. (Agenda Item 3)

Business Registrations/Licenses

Staff reported that 459 registrations/licenses had been received, representing \$34,425 in revenue and approximately 69% of the Village's base goal of \$50,000 (or 667 paid registrations). Staff commented that a tally for retail businesses would be prepared in order to understand compliance by the sales tax-producing businesses in each district. Staff remarked that reminder notices would be prepared and sent in the near future. Mr. Cella inquired about how the current pace of submittals compared to the past, and Staff responded that the rate was at least equal to that of last year. (Agenda Item 4)

2009 Holiday Program

Staff commented that the holiday program could be considered a success when measured by the public's participation in the festivities based in Burlington Park, with 899 children having visited the gingerbread factory (a.k.a., cookie decorating tent) and 650 people having ridden on the horse-drawn carriage on the three Saturdays leading up to the Christmas holiday. Noted was that this year's attendance had been achieved even with a reduction in media spending, with the Commission having elected to rely primarily on dedicated ads in *The Hinsdalean* in the editions of the three weeks of the promotion.

Members noted improvements to the Village's holiday lighting and decorations, and Staff stated that a new scope of services would need to be prepared as the contract had just expired. Ms. Grisemer stated that an additional level of decoration could increase Hinsdale's appeal as a holiday destination but that it was contingent on merchants' willingness to adorn the interior perimeters of their display windows with simple white lights. Staff noted that such decoration would cost each retailer very little in terms of material, and Ms. Grisemer commented that volunteerism could be one approach to installation of the lights. The group was receptive to the idea and suggested that it and other elements of the holiday promotion be discussed at a meeting or meetings of the EDC well in advance of next year's holiday season. (Agenda Item 5)

Advertising Campaign

Staff stated that more than 27 retailers had participated in the “who, what, wear” campaign, adding that those who had shared positive feedback on the style, content, and exposure that the campaign affords featured businesses. Staff reviewed the various means by which participation had been solicited, including: a letter to all retail businesses, mentions at quarterly and after-hour meetings of the Chamber of Commerce, phone calls, and mass e-mail. Mr. Grisko suggested that an additional e-blast or blasts be sent to retailers to continually remind them of the free advertising opportunity.

Mr. Potter expressed his support for the campaign and added that the free exposure shows a demonstrable commitment by the Village to its retailers. Mr. Potter added that the busy nature of the holiday season may have affected participation and remarked that he would consider ways to increase participation by fellow retailers. Staff also added that he and Direct Advantage would consider the potential for other “shop local” themes within the established framework. (Agenda Item 6)

Village Place Signage

Staff stated that the first of the two signs planned for Village Place had been installed at the north end of the internal street and reported that the project had come in under budget. Staff noted that he had slightly altered his original design in order to permit the addition of at least one placard to the panel assembly should the need arise in the future.

Since the project was considered a priority of the Commission, members expressed their desire to pursue fabrication and installation of the second sign during the current fiscal year. Staff commented that resources may be available as a result of being under budget on the first sign and a few other EDC budget items, as well as the potential to receive additional revenue should food-and-beverage tax receipts exceed budget projections. Staff reminded members that at least eight weeks are required from both the pole manufacturer and sign fabricator. (Agenda Item 7)

Consideration of Local Retailer Survey

Mr. Chapello stated that he, Mr. Summers, and Staff had met to discuss the retailer survey and how the Commission could best use the results. Mr. Chapello suggested that a summary should reveal what the Commission had done in response to the results of the survey, what had yet to be completed, and what was planned. Members discussed how the proposed summary could be communicated to retailers, and ideas included distribution of a written document and a public meeting. (Agenda Item 8)

Budget Review Current Fiscal Year

Staff provided updates on expenditures to date for each budget item, noting that the Commission was: at budget for most items; under budget for several items, including but not limited to snow removal of downtown sidewalks and the first identification sign for Village Place; and \$250 over budget for the holiday event-based promotion. Members were pleased with the status of the budget and expressed a desire to complete the second sign of the two-sign Village Place sign project during the current fiscal year. Additional updates on and discussions about the budget were suggested for a future meeting. (Agenda Item 9)

Hinsdale Chamber of Commerce

Jan Anderson, Executive Director of the Hinsdale Chamber of Commerce, addressed the Commission, providing members with an update of their efforts to generate resident and business owner awareness in “The ‘3/50’ Project”. On behalf of her Board of Directors, Ms. Anderson expressed her appreciation for the financial support the Village is providing to the Chamber for the program. Ms. Anderson stated that regular advertising was occurring through weekly inserts in *The Hinsdalean*. She added that other ideas to activate the campaign, such as distribution of branded eco-friendly shopping bags around Earth Day and vertical banner signs that would rotate businesses around town, were to be discussed at upcoming meetings of the Chamber’s marketing committee. (Agenda Item 10)

Adjournment

With no additional business before the Commission, Mr. Cella made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Crane seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. The January 26, 2010 special meeting of the EDC was declared adjourned at 9:07 p.m. (Agenda Item 11)

Respectfully submitted,

Timothy Scott, AICP