

VILLAGE OF PRAIRIE GROVE
Economic Development Commission
Meeting Minutes

Dec 8, 2008 at 7:30 AM

Call to Order: Economic Development Chairman, Keith McConnell, called this meeting to order at 7:36 AM.

Roll Call: Present were EDC members Bob Gray, Sean Rathjen, Chairman Keith McConnell and Village Administrator, Jeannine Smith. Member Rene Zamudio absent.

Public Comment: none.

Approve Oct 30, 2008 Minutes: Approved as amended by unanimous vote.

Old Business:

a. What kind of businesses does EDC recommend at various locations?

- Ms. Smith suggested that demand for new businesses is currently low. Many are waiting for the Obama administration to see what they will do. But certain products are appropriate for this time. Recession proof businesses include grocery stores and fast food stores. On the residential side, apartment products do well in recessions.
- Ms. Smith indicated that the Prairie Grove Sales tax incentives have been helpful. For example, a car dealer in Prairie Grove is the only one in the Chicago – Milwaukee area selling that brand that is profitable. And that dealer attributes this directly to Prairie Grove's tax incentives.
- Mr. Rathjen noted that one challenge in attracting auto dealers is that many dealerships will be consolidating.
- Lack of water & sewer is one of the largest obstacles to attracting new businesses along Rt. 31 and Rt. 176. Mr. Rathjen asked how new water & sewer might be financed. Ms. Smith suggested that Federal Funds or an SSA would be worth looking into. Chairman McConnell suggested that developers might be interested.
 - Mr. Rathjen asked what we might expect regarding Federal Funds.
 - Ms. Smith said that in some cases up to 100% could be covered if approved if there is an absolute need/void. Ms. Smith recently submitted a grant application to the Obama team to improve some local roads and intersections based on impact of through traffic and that McHenry county is the 3rd most congested in the country. Submissions to the Obama team had to have been previously engineered to qualify.
 - Chairman McConnell asked if we should anticipate the Obama administration providing additional grants in the near future. Mr. Rathjen asked if we should go ahead and do the engineering. Ms. Smith indicated engineering for Rt. 176 alone would cost around \$100,000. Mr. Rathjen asked if matching grants for the engineering might be available.
 - Ms. Smith indicated that Illinois American might be interested in investing in this.
 - There was some debate, but no resolution, if the scope of the Rt. 176 portion should go all the way to the river or stop at the end of Prairie Grove's current border.
 - Mr. Rathjen asked what kind of timeframe we might expect to bid out engineering and complete the project. If there was potential to be part of Obama's economic package. Ms. Smith responded that we only had one week to put something together and the deadline had passed, but we don't know what January will bring. Chairman McConnell suggested that we make this an urgent project so that we would be ready in case more federal funds become available in 2009.
 - Chairman McConnell agreed to make the recommendation to the Village Board of Trustees to have Staff investigate funding options for engineering of water & sewer on Rt. 176 and Rt. 31. RFP for engineering would be part of this.
- Chairman McConnell suggested that the EDC members review the recommended business types recommended in the Rt. 176 corridor plan proposed by Houseal & Lavigne to see if we had any concerns. Chairman McConnell indicated that he would prefer to see quiet businesses such as office buildings adjacent to current residential areas to minimize the impact. EDC members are to provide their comments to Chairman McConnell before Christmas who will synthesize the inputs before the next EDC meeting in January. The next EDC meeting will be held prior to the Rt 176 public hearing in January so that we may provide our inputs prior to that event.

b. Wildflowers Business District Brochure:

- No updates. Chairman McConnell is working on a Detailed brochure including the same type of data the MCEDC has been requesting. This includes: transportation & utilities, distance from Chicago, Competing businesses, education, employment data, etc.

c. Economic Development Model: No updates.

New Business: none.

Next Meeting: Jan 12.

Adjournment: Motion by Mr. Rathjen, 2nd by Mr. Gray to adjourn at 8:53am AM. On a roll call vote all members voted aye. Motion carries.