

MINUTES OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION:

March 24, 2011

A meeting of the EDC was held on Thursday, March 24, 2011.

The meeting began at 8:01 A.M.

Joe Penar, Don Olson and Nick Sisto resigned their commissions to the Economic Development Commission and were replaced by Kirk Allen, Dan Olson and Bill Geary (respectively). Bill Geary and Kirk Allen were appointed at the February 22, 2011 Board of Trustees meeting. Dan Olson was appointed at the March 21, 2011 Board of Trustees meeting. Deputy Clerk Roberta Johnson swore Mr. Geary in on March 23, 2011 and Messrs. Olson and Allen on March 24, 2011 before the EDC meeting came to order.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mike Giannelli, Perry DuBose, Dan Olson, Kirk Allen and Bill Geary.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Mike Briggs and Tom Herbstritt.

ALSO PRESENT: Jeff Eder- Community Development Director, Nicole Driskell- Community Development Administrator, Mark Lawton- Pioneer Press Reporter, and Barrett Pedersen- Village President.

Mr. Giannelli chaired the meeting.

MOTION TO ACCEPT minutes from last official meeting held on Wednesday, December 22, 2010, as presented by Nicole Driskell, was made by Perry DuBose. Dan Olson **SECONDED** the motion. **VOICE VOTE CARRIED.**

New Business:

6b Application – Cozzi O’Brien Recycling, 3747 N. Acorn

- Mr. Eder informed the members that Cozzi O’Brien Recycling withdrew their 6b application the previous afternoon because of property condition issues and concern regarding traffic flow upon the completion of the Elgin O’Hare western bypass.
- Mr. Eder informed the members that Cozzi O’Brien is still looking for a new site.
- Discussion commenced on what Franklin Avenue building(s) would be vacated if Cozzi O’Brien’s 6b and resulting relocation had occurred.
- Discussion commenced on former Cozzi O’Brien facilities in Franklin Park.

Discussion Items:

Mr. Eder and Mr. Giannelli led a discussion on 6b application requirements, requirements for approval and the application process in general. Mr. Eder led a discussion on the application fee, why the amount was chosen, and why it is not refundable.

- Mr. Olson inquired about the criteria for granting 6b’s
 - Job creation and wage rates
 - Building investment/planned improvements
 - Vacancy status

- Landscaping/beautification and safety improvements (sidewalks, etc.)
- Mr. Eder noted that ‘green’ initiatives are becoming a bigger topic
- Stormwater detention
- Mr. Giannelli noted that the Commission must be respectful to the people of Franklin Park by approving 6b applications that will benefit the community as a whole.

Mr. Eder led a discussion regarding Fresh Express’ expansion and the status of the project.

Mr. Eder led a discussion regarding the EDC’s desire to see the end users of 6b’s.

Mr. Eder led a discussion regarding an MWRD flood study conducted by Christopher Burke Inc. The study encompasses the two major watersheds in Franklin Park: Crystal Creek and Silver Creek. Mr. Eder informed the members that box culverts have already been installed under Irving Park Road in Schiller Park and that other measures are being proposed to improve conditions in the area. Christopher Burke has proposed three projects in Franklin Park and the Village has requested that further options be reviewed. No residential purchases are being considered as a remedy to the problem. Mr. Eder and Village President Pedersen have discussed a grant to assist the Village in purchasing a few residential properties for value as some home owners have expressed interest in selling their property to the Village.

Mr. Eder led a discussion on the Elgin O’Hare western bypass and O’Hare Airport expansion. He reviewed maps of the project including a post-construction view of the area. The project is currently in the process of obtaining funding and beginning to purchase property. In addition, Mr. Eder discussed the various phases of the project, changes to the area, access points to local interstates, and the Village’s detention request in exchange for its support of development.

- Village President Pedersen noted that the project cost is now less than originally anticipated as the project has been scaled back in order to improve feasibility.
- Mr. Olson inquired about the number of businesses in Franklin Park that will be affected by the project. Mr. Eder informed the members that six to eight businesses will be affected. These businesses are currently located in older buildings that are less conducive to current operating trends.
- Mr. Eder informed the members of the alternative development options for the project that were proposed before this option was chosen and project financing.
- Village President Pedersen discussed his lobbying efforts to promote the project.
- Mr. DuBose inquired if there are any new plans for runway reconfiguration. Mr. Eder informed the members that an agreement has been reached between the City of Chicago and the airlines.
- Mr. DuBose also inquired about the traffic impact to Franklin Avenue and Mt. Prospect Road once the project is completed. Mr. Eder informed the members that area roads will greatly benefit from the project, namely, the Village is looking to rebuild Wolf Road within Village limits and the project includes the rebuilding of Franklin Avenue.
- Mr. DuBose inquired about the time frame for completion. Mr. Eder informed the members that completion is expected in 2016 to 2018.
- Mr. Olson inquired about the configuration of Irving Park Road. Mr. Eder informed the members of the proposed new configuration of Irving Park Road.
- Mr. Allen inquired about concerns regarding noise with the new runway configuration. Mr. Eder and Village President Pedersen discussed the O’Hare Noise Compatibility Commission and its efforts to ‘noise-proof’ the area. Mr. Eder discussed the Franklin Park residential areas affected by airplane noise.

- Mr. DuBose asked if the project maps are available online. Mr. Eder noted that he was unsure, but copies could be made if necessary. Mr. Eder also noted the upcoming project meeting for those that would like to attend.
- Mr. Giannelli inquired if any runways were eliminated with the new configuration. Mr. Eder noted that some runways were no longer used as such, but instead will be used as taxi-ways. Mr. Eder then led a discussion regarding the new runway layouts/plans and the current runway layout.
- Mr. Olson inquired about the western access to the airport. Mr. Eder discussed the project.
- Mr. DuBose inquired about cell phone parking lots. Discussion commenced.

Project Updates:

Mr. Eder noted that 10800-10900 Belmont Avenue has been generating some tenancy interest.

Mr. Eder noted that Hill Mechanical has taken occupancy in their new facility (the former Centrella/Central Grocers site at Belmont Avenue and Wolf Road). He also discussed the work done to the facilities, the EDC's tour in 2010 and the recent interest in their lease-able space.

Mr. Giannelli inquired about the Seymour Avenue Central Grocers site. Mr. Eder informed the members that there has been some interest in the property, but no one has committed to a development.

Mr. Eder noted his desire to meet with local developers and brokers to discuss current real estate market conditions.

Village President Pedersen noted that a number of new businesses have moved to Franklin Park in the last month and the last year. Mr. DuBose inquired if any were start-up businesses. Mr. Eder noted that most are downsizing companies. He also noted that he is not seeing larger users in the market for new space.

Mr. Olson inquired about the industrial vacancy rate in Franklin Park. Mr. Eder noted that it is approximately ten percent which is roughly the same as last year. Mr. DuBose inquired about the survival rate of local companies. Mr. Eder noted that he is seeing more companies consolidate their multiple facilities than close down.

Mr. Giannelli noted that 6b applications are increasing. Mr. Eder discussed the EDC's policy of not renewing 6b application. Mr. Giannelli noted that the EDC may have to start considering renewals soon with the current economic climate.

Discussion commenced on property taxes and the burden on smaller properties.

The relocation of Ace Metal Craft was discussed.

Village President Pedersen led a discussion regarding where the members believe Franklin Park is going and where it should be in ten to twenty years.

- Mr. DuBose noted that the Elgin O'Hare project and water management will improve conditions and make Franklin Park a better village.
- Mr. Geary noted that support for business is key, namely manufacturing and that flooding improvements must be made.

- Village President Pedersen asked if any of the members had seen a trend in manufacturing moving back to the United States. Mr. Geary noted that he had noticed such a trend as the cost of doing business in China is rising. Mr. Allen noted that Sloan Valve is working on bringing jobs back into Franklin Park: they are making investments in expanding their facility.
- Mr. Allen noted that the only employee complaint concerns access to roads, but the Elgin O'Hare project will improve that problem.
- Mr. Giannelli noted that property taxes are a problem, but the Village has no control over that issue. He also noted a concern for flooding and the downtown area, though this is improving. Mr. Giannelli also noted that a healthy community finds a balance between residential and industrial and that the Village needs to improve this balance. He discussed aesthetic improvements and the need for business and residential improvements to match. Mr. Giannelli provided his view on whether or not businesses are returning to the United States and led a discussion with Mr. Allen regarding China.
- Mr. Olson noted that he considers working with the Village of Franklin Park to be an asset. He noted that property taxes are a problem, but also that in retail, no new local residents means no new local business. He discussed O'Hare Airport expansion and how it will benefit the area. He also discussed community pride and how it needs to be brought back, namely by making high visibility areas nicer to attract residents and businesses to the area. He noted that quality retail businesses should be recruited to fill vacant properties in high visibility areas and all businesses should maintain their property in a professional manner. Mr. DuBose noted that simply patrolling their property for debris and any problems will make a difference.

Mr. Eder discussed vacancies in the Grand Avenue/Mannheim Road area.

Village President Pedersen and Mr. Olson led a discussion regarding the look of Mannheim Road and the future of the thoroughfare.

Village President Pedersen led a discussion regarding his desire for long-term retail tenants instead of transient retailers, which is the current trend. Mr. Eder noted that retail property brokers must increase awareness.

Being no further business before the Commission, Perry DuBose **MADE A MOTION** to adjourn. Bill Geary **SECONDED** the motion. **VOICE VOTE CARRIED.**

Meeting adjourned at 9:29 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicole Driskell