

City of Evansville
Economic Development Committee
Monday, September 21, 2015, 6:00 PM
City Hall, 31 S. Madison St. Evansville, WI

MINUTES

1. **Call to Order** - 6:02pm
2. **Roll Call** - Members present: Gene Lewis, Christina Slaback, Blase Strobl, Brandon Rutz, Sue Berg, Sarah Bauer and Jim Brooks. Members absent: Gene Bass and James Otterstein. Others Present: Mayor Sandy Decker, Community Development Director Jason Sergeant and City Administrator Ian Rigg.
3. **Motion to Approve Agenda** – Berg/Bauer, passed unanimously
4. **Motion to waive the reading of the minutes of the August 17, 2015 regular meeting and approve them as printed** – Berg/Bauer, passed unanimously
5. **Citizen Appearances, other than listed agenda items** - None
6. **Monthly Reports**
 - a. **City Report on Economic Development Activities** – Sergeant presented his staff report, including:
 - August 22nd, Ice Age Trail Alliance (IATA) members visited Evansville to see possible routes the trail can take through the city. They were given a tour of all school campuses, historic district, downtown buildings, and Lake Leota Park. The alliance was impressed with the rich history Evansville offers and see it as an exciting attraction along the trail. August 25th an ice cream social was held as well as a meeting for the IATA here in Evansville.
 - August 24th, Plan Commission approved a conditional use permit for a new 2 unit home in the historic district, construction expected to begin in fall.
 - Plan Commission also reviewed and approved final land division for 170 s Union, expecting an application next year to build light industrial space.
 - August 27th, attended Chamber of Commerce Meeting. Chamber members discussed economic development including suggesting investigating ways to help downtown businesses by providing more parking through the removal of buildings, figuring out how to lower taxes and keeping businesses from leaving Evansville.
 - September 1st, attended National Park Service Meeting to summarize planning efforts to date for Ice Age Trail through Rock County. An environmental assessment is underway this year for the corridor and a trail corridor is being refined for a 2016 open house. City is looking into process to request certification of Ice Age Trail inside city limits. National Park service planners visited Evansville later in the day. Excited about the possibilities of a trail hub along Allen creek on Bauer house property.
 - September 8th, Common Council was given an overview of the Smart Growth Plan, including the focus on walkability, mixed use, variety of housing types, and an economic development focus on small business.

- September 9th, toured Janesville Innovation Center. Great example of the benefits of having entrepreneurship support services under one roof.
- Updates on potential start-up businesses: Debroux's is open, has a sign permit in process, Revolving Loan Fund in process and a Building Improvement Grant request in process. Another business owner has signed a lease for a downtown storefront and will be applying for a CUP soon, expected opening in November.
- Only two for-rent storefronts on Main Street are left to be occupied. Lots of inquiries on latent buildings being unused and not available for rent. Staff will be following up with building owners to gauge interest in leasing or selling storefronts.
- Entrepreneurship sub-committee met to discuss how to move forward. Some additional guidance and more members will be recruited, along with a survey of entrepreneurs.
- EDC Budget discussed at September 21st Meeting
- Smart Growth Plan Public Hearing at Common Council meeting in October of 2015, August 21st, EDC reviewed draft and October 5th, Plan Commission will recommend the plan to common council for final adoption.

Rigg noted he spoke with Rick Madre who was impressed with Evansville's efforts regarding the Ice Age Trail and

- b. **Chamber of Commerce Report** – Slaback noted the Business Improvement Group met and strategized ways to help the City with Economic Development. Subjects of discussion included rail connections. Rigg will be bringing more information forward regarding TIF districts. Meeting coming up next month. Chamber had a successful ladies night out and golf outing. Bauer mentioned she noticed Allen Creek Gallery got very little traffic. Weather was not ideal for the events. Attendance was up for both events. The Vintage Workshop will be having a ribbon cutting soon. Next Lunch and Learn is October 13th. November 17th Sergeant will provide a summary of the Smart Growth Plan at a Lunch and Learn event.
- c. **Tourism Subcommittee Report** – Brooks noted the Tourism Committee will meet next in September. Berg also noted Ladies Night Out was a success and a meeting is scheduled on September 30th to review plans for the 150th celebration, all are encouraged to attend.

(Rutz arrived)

7. **Revolving Loan Fund application discussion for G. Debroux** – Sergeant provided a brief overview of what the applicant's request. It was noted that this is the first request for the RLF. It was clarified that the applicant completed the application with the understanding that some of the requirements and terms would need updating. The committee discussed considering the requested amount as working capital, rather than construction improvements, as the building is not owned by the applicant. Decker pointed out that future applications will also come from tenants and not property owners, therefore we should make sure the application can account for that type of situation. Brooks summarized the committee would like to know what the applicant is specifically requesting the money for and would like the landlord to be included. The next steps will include sitting down with the applicant and land owner regarding the application, then

bringing it back to the EDC for approval, hopefully in October. Then the RLF committee will review and Common Council will have final approval.

- 8. 2016 EDC Budget discussion and motion to recommend to council** – Brooks provided an overview of the budget request, noting it is a large percentage increase over years past. Sergeant explained the Economic Development marketing video is intended to replace the usual spending of approximately \$3,000 a year on print advertising. Rigg clarified the website would not be coming out of Capital Projects. The proposed budget includes:

- Ñ \$1,000 for Chamber of Commerce Business Guide
- Ñ \$0 for MadREP Advertising
- Ñ \$2,000 for implementation of Smart Growth Plan
- Ñ \$500 MadREP dues
- Ñ \$500 for Entrepreneurship Sub-Committee
- Ñ \$7,500 for Discover Wisconsin ED Video
- Ñ **\$11,500 total**

Berg/Rutz, passed unanimously.

- 9. Entrepreneurship ad-hoc sub-committee discussion** – Sergeant summarized the recent pre-meeting and noted the sub-committee needed some more guidance and wanted a specific charge to move forward. Brooks thinks of the committee as more about creating strategies. The committee discussed the probability of asking a two part question, or charge for the sub-committee. It was agreed this charge should consist of two parts:

- Ñ **What entrepreneurship support services can the city provide?**
- Ñ **Does Evansville need a business incubator? Why? What should it provide?**

- 10. Smart Growth Plan** – Sergeant summarized the recent efforts and availability of the entire plan online. All members are encouraged to take a look at the drafts and pass forward any comments or things they would like to see added. He noted it is easy to make additions now, but much more difficult to update the plan after adoption.

- 11. Meeting Reminder: Next regular meeting October 19, 2015, 6:00 pm.**

- 12. Motion to Adjourn** – Berg/Stobl 7:48pm