

These minutes are submitted by the Community Development Director and are not official until approved by the City of Evansville Economic Development Committee.

City of Evansville **Economic Development Committee**
Monday, December 20, 2021, 6:00 PM
Meeting held virtually and in-person

MINUTES

1. Call to Order Brooks called meeting to order at 6:03pm

2. Roll Call:

	Present/Absent	Others Present
Chair James Brooks	P	City Administrator Jason Sergeant
Ben Ladick	P	Community Development Director Colette Spranger
Vacant	-	James Otterstein, Rock Co. Development Alliance
Jason Knott	P	Christina Slaback, Evansville Chamber of Commerce
Abbey Barnes	P	Bill Lathrop, Evansville Today
Sue Berg	P	
Brandon Rutz	A	

3. Motion to Approve Agenda by Berg, seconded by Ladick, approved unanimously.

4. Motion to waive the reading of the minutes of the November 15, 2021 meeting and approve them as printed by Berg, seconded by Ladick, approved unanimously.

5. Civility Reminder Brooks reminded the committee of the City’s commitments to civil discourse.

6. Citizen Appearances, other than listed agenda items. None

7. Monthly Report

A. Community Development Updates. Spranger and Sergeant shared the Report. Sergeant gave an extensive update of evolving concept plans for Lake Leota and West Side Park.

B. Chamber of Commerce Report – Slaback summarized the Chamber’s annual report.

C. Tourism Commission Report: Berg shared recent updates and planned events for the upcoming year.

8. New Business

A. CUP Compliance and Code Enforcement to Enhance Economic Development

The committee had a lively discussion about how to increase visibility of the downtown, in light of the fact that some of Evansville’s historic storefronts are currently underutilized. Brooks began the discussion, presenting the issue of enforcing conditional uses as a way to ensure a property is providing the highest and best use of the property.

This led to a discussion where suggestions were given about bolstering visibility and business within the City. Barnes comments that she has fielded questions regarding storefronts in the downtown that appear unused, but the current building owner is not interested in renting to a business tenant. Sergeant brought up ordinances elsewhere that require participatory downtowns or business districts, that require that some sort of presence be active with the outside community. He noted that such initiatives are not typically politically popular. Otterstein added that Evansville is not the only city dealing with issues like this, and that any sort of enforcement would have to be fair, consistent, and timely. Rollout of any sort of program would have to be aggressive. Brooks asks if this group feels it could ask the Council to progress to the next step of exploring things further. Sergeant brought up that prior enforcement efforts, such as stair compliance, were largely done out of the building owner's pocket. Suggests that the committee first start looking at ways to start marketing to business and building owners the City's Building Improvement Grant, which has not been used in the past few years. The committee agreed to keep this discussion on the agenda for future meetings.

9. Next Meeting Dates: January 17, 2022 at 6:00pm

10. Motion to Adjourn by Ladick, seconded by Berg, approved unanimously.