

City of Evansville **Economic Development Committee**  
**Monday, March 21, 2022 6:00 PM**  
*Meeting held virtually and in-person*

**MINUTES**

**1. Call to Order.** Brooks called meeting to order at 6:00pm

**2. Roll Call:**

	<b>Present/Absent</b>	<b>Others Present</b>
Chair James Brooks	P	City Administrator Jason Sergeant
Ben Ladick, Vice Chair	P	Community Development Director Colette Spranger
Jon Alling	P	Bill Lathrop, Evansville Today
Jason Knott	P	
Abbey Barnes	P	
Sue Berg	P	
Brandon Rutz	P	

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

**4. Motion to waive the reading of the minutes of the January 17, 2022 meeting and approve them as printed by Ladick, seconded by Berg, 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 reported on their time at the Governor's Conference on Economic Development. Takeaways were that the pandemic worsened issues that were already getting bad in 2019/2020, such as the worker shortage and supply chain issues. State and Federal agencies are playing catch up with their funding programs, as many are currently tied to job creation. This puts communities and business owners at a loss, and the money is not getting used.
- Sergeant reported on his time at the Ehlers Public Finance Seminar. The nuances of closing out tax incremental districts was discussed, which resulted in the City keeping TID #7 an extra year in order to accrue a small amount of funding for affordable housing. Brooks asked how much increment was expected from that decision, and which City entity would be in charge of distributing it. Sergeant estimated \$120,000, and that some committee (likely the EDC) would need to recommend to Common

Council how it should be used. That money should be available in 2024. Cyber security was also discussed, as most small communities are at risk for being hacked.

- Sergeant and Brooks reported on their time in Washington D.C., where their focus was on publicly owned power utilities. Sergeant met with Senator Johnson; Brooks with Representative Pocan. Senator Baldwin was unavailable while they were there; they will be meeting with her on March 28<sup>th</sup>. Brooks will be taking over as chair of the American Public Power Association (APPA) in July 2022.
- Spranger spoke briefly about the community survey for the comprehensive plan update. Survey will be open until the end of month, trying to match the number of respondents from 2014. Currently at 380 responses – would like ~700.

**B. Chamber of Commerce Report.** None.

**C. Tourism Commission Report.**

- Berg has arranged for downtown flowers to be watered over the summer.
- The Chamber of Commerce is handling Tourism’s social media campaign.
- April 28: there will be a public meeting about the mural project featuring prominent women of Evansville’s past. Aiming to install murals before Art Crawl (May 6<sup>th</sup>). Dan Stephans, HPC chair, has offered to be a source expert on historic issues for this project.
- Art Crawl is scheduled for May 6<sup>th</sup>. It is in dire need of artists. Qualifications: must be a professional artist, able to process a debit/credit card and cash a check. More information is on the Evansville Art Crawl page on Facebook.

**D. Other.**

Spranger shared information from James Otterstein, who was unable to attend. Namely, there are summer opportunities for high school students, but local businesses are needed to help partner. Otterstein also shared the following update: “The County recently collaborated with Bug Tussel on a WI PSC Broadband Expansion Grant application. The requested funding from the PSC is intended to support the installation / deployment of a 114.5 middle-mile fiber ring throughout Rock County. The proposed route would run through the City; and then meander through the Town of Union toward Edgerton. While it wasn’t part of the grant application, this overall broadband project will have connectivity via fixed-wireless towers too. Assuming everything flows as planned, these projects will be complete and ready for consumer use during calendar year 2024.”

**8. Discussion**

**A. Comprehensive Plan Update**

Spranger launched the group into a discussion about how to organize the update to the economic development chapter of the Comprehensive Plan. Notes that the existing chapter is very general, almost vague, and that other reports commissioned by the City in the past (such as the 2012 Ady Voltedge Retail Market Analysis and the 2008 Economic Development Plan) have yielded concise goals. Brooks commented on how useful the Land Use chapter and plan are. It provides the Plan Commission with a clear directive on what and where a new use is appropriate. Rutz suggests the economic development chapter focus on the three pillars of economic development: retention, expansion, and attraction of businesses. Sergeant agrees, but warns that overlooking quality of life components of economic development would be a disservice to the work the City

has already done, and is what drives some companies to choose Evansville. Discussion continued on suggested approaches. Rutz and Spranger will come back to the committee with a draft chapter in April.

**9. Next Meeting Dates: April 18, 2022 at 6:00pm**

**10. Motion to Adjourn by Ladick, seconded by Rutz, approved unanimously.**