

**Minutes**

**Village of Bartlett  
Economic Development Commission**

**June 8, 2015**

**In Chairman Kubaszko's absence, Donna Weir called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm**

**Roll Call**

**Present: C. Green, D. Weir, R. Perri, N. Mehta, T. Smodilla, B. Krall, J. Petro**

**Absent: M. Sobel, G. Kubaszko**

**Also Present: T. Fradin, Economic Development Coordinator, J. Plonczynski, CD Director**

**Approval of Minutes**

**A motion was made to approve the minutes of the May 11, 2015 meeting.**

**Motioned by: R. Perri**

**Seconded by: T. Smodilla**

**The motion carried with all members voting aye (voice vote).**

### **Status of Proposed Downtown Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District**

Tony Fradin explained that this will be a verbal report, since the EDC packet was produced prior to last Tuesday's Public Hearing. He provided a summary that a new Downtown TIF District was one of the recommendations made by the EDC in fall 2013 as a way to improve the Downtown Business District. Staff worked with the TIF consultants from Kane, McKenna and Associates for over a year to create the Redevelopment Plan and TIF Qualification Designation Report that was recently presented to the Joint Review Board.

Tony Fradin explained that the Joint Review Board is comprised of representatives from the various taxing bodies effected by the proposed TIF, and that their meeting commenced on April 22<sup>nd</sup> and was adjourned until May 14<sup>th</sup> for further discussion and consideration. Tony reported that at the conclusion of the May 14<sup>th</sup> meeting, the resolution recommending in favor of creating and approving a new Downtown TIF District failed by a two to five vote. At that meeting, the Township presented an alternative resolution in opposition to the creation of a new TIF, which passed by a five to two vote. To be clear, the original resolution to create a TIF failed and the alternative resolution opposing the creation of a new TIF was approved by the Joint Review Board.

Tony explained that at last Tuesday's Village Board meeting on June 2<sup>nd</sup>, there was a Public Hearing about the proposed TIF. It is a statutory meeting required by the State's TIF laws, and the TIF consultants from Kane, McKenna and Associates presented a PowerPoint on TIFs in general and the particulars of this proposed TIF. It was almost the exact same presentation that the EDC viewed a few months ago at the January EDC meeting.

Tony reported that twenty-two people spoke at the Public Hearing last week, many in favor and also some opposed to it. A few of the E.D. Commissioners were present and both Commissioners Mike Sobel and Robert Perri spoke.

Tony stated that the Village Board heard a lot of testimony and received an abundance of information about the proposed TIF at the Public Hearing. The way the State statute reads, the Village Board would vote on the TIF ordinances from 14 to 90 days following the Public Hearing. The vote will not be at the June 16<sup>th</sup> meeting, and Tony will let the commissioners know when he learns of the vote being scheduled on the Village Board agenda. It is undetermined at this time if there will be another public hearing or town hall session dedicated to the proposed TIF.

Commissioner Green asked why there would be another public hearing on the TIF. Tony Fradin replied that a public official may want to hear more testimony on the matter.

### **Video Contest**

Tony Fradin explained that the Village invited the public to produce short, 30 to 120 second, videos last December to promote local venues within the Village. The details of the contest were promoted on the Village website, Village newsletter and the Discover Bartlett Facebook page. Four videos were submitted, and Commissioner Green noted that there was a fifth today, which was received and will also be presented tonight.

This was sent to the EDC for viewing and judging. The selected winner will receive recognition and a commendation at an upcoming Village Board meeting, as well as \$250 in gift certificates from local businesses.

Commissioner Weir asked Tony to remind the EDC about the objectives of this video contest. Tony replied that it was to be broken down by age group; however, only adults submitted videos. None by children or high school kids. The objective was to promote shopping and dining. One could argue that none of them promote shopping and dining, but we ask the EDC to review the ones that were submitted by the fine organizations like Arts in Bartlett, Heritage Days and the Park District's Life Center. Although none are specifically for shopping or dining, we will watch the videos tonight and pick the one that best depicts a local venue in the Village.

Jim Plonczynski loaded the videos on the laptop, and played all five videos for the EDC to view. Video #1 promoted Arts in Bartlett, Video #2 promoted Bartlett Park District's Life Center, Video #3 promoted Heritage Days, Video #4 promoted Arts in Bartlett's Festival of the Arts and Video #5 also promoted Arts in Bartlett.

After viewing the videos, Commissioner Green recused herself as a member of Arts in Bartlett and the Heritage Days Board.

Commissioner Krall asked that if the promotion of shopping and dining was the objective, did the EDC see any of that in any of these videos? Considering the limited response, he asked if the EDC should re-post this contest.

Tony Fradin replied that the contest was posted since last December. If it was re-posted, there is no guarantee of any additional submittals but a possibility that a few might come in.

Commissioner Krall asked how this contest was promoted and who the other submittals came from besides Cecilia's organization. Tony replied that Stephanie Fitsimmons from the Park District submitted a few of them, a participant in Heritage Days submitted one. For some reason, only adults submitted videos for this contest and there is no guarantee that a few months from now, the EDC would be reviewing more submittals if this contest is extended.

Commissioner Petro noted that the Heritage Days video covered some of the topics, like the flea market and jewelers row, that promote shopping in the Village.

Commissioner Mehta stated that the videos were not in line with what the EDC was looking for. He remarked that the original scope was how to attract commuters to shop in Bartlett. The EDC wanted videos that promote businesses so the participants either did not know what the EDC was looking for or were not capable of doing what we were asking for. Commissioner Mehta noted that, in his opinion, the message from Heritage Days was good and promoted various activities.

Commissioner Petro asked if the EDC was asked to comment on these or to do a vote on it. Commissioner Weir and Jim Plonczynski replied that the EDC would be voting on one tonight to recommend as a winner to the Village Board.

Tony Fradin noted that this may be the type of contest that starts very slowly, but if we re-issue it and stress that we want more business-oriented videos, the EDC may receive more submittals like we are looking for.

Commissioner Perri stated that if what the EDC was looking for was videos promoting shopping and dining, that these submittals were off the mark. However, if these are what we have to work with, there is no alternative than to vote on those that were received.

Commissioner Smodilla stated that it is her opinion that the EDC should not vote on these, since they did not meet the criteria encouraging people to shop Bartlett. She noted that those that submitted did take time and resources to create the videos, so we should thank them and re-direct them to submit videos that fell within the specific parameters from last December. They are not particularly difficult to produce. They used a lot of still photos and she would like to see them go into the Village and do interviews with business owners and patrons to encourage people to shop and dine in the Village.

There were some further comments by Commissioners Krall and Mehta questioning if the EDC wants to re-issue the contest or provide an additional prize.

Commissioner Petro asked Cecilia Green if somebody could walk into Arts in Bartlett and purchase an item. Cecilia Green answered, yes, you could.

Commissioner Weir noted that, in her opinion, the Heritage Days video was the closest to what the EDC was looking for and that the Village should acknowledge a winner. Maybe we did not make it clear enough what the EDC was looking for. She noted that this is a tough time of year to re-launch the contest and aim for students, since they are off of school now.

After some further discussion amongst Commissioners, the EDC agreed to take a vote on the videos that were submitted and viewed tonight.

Jim Plonczynski called roll-call votes on the videos one by one. Videos #1 and #2 received no votes. Video #3, promoting Heritage Days, received all six votes. Videos #4 and #5 received no votes. Jim Plonczynski announced that the Heritage Days video is the winner.

Commissioner Weir mentioned that one of the suggestions made by the EDC was to install a video screen in the Metra train station and asked if that was done and if the videos could be played on it. Jim Plonczynski replied, yes, the screen was installed and the videos can be played there as well as on the screen in Village Hall.

Tony Fradin stated that he heard from the Commission to run this contest again, to blast it out more via the Village's media, and to stress the business-oriented parameters of the contest. Also, to try to reach the younger audience more in order to get some submittals from kids.

Commissioner Krall noted that it could be for them to visit 20 different businesses in two minutes; it does not have to be formal, it can be fun and "Facebook-y." If we could have the schools announce the contest, it would generate more interest.

Commissioner Green returned to the dais at the conclusion of this discussion.

### **Business Visit: O'Hare's Pub and Restaurant**

Tony Fradin detailed a business visit conducted with Susan DuChesne to O'Hare's Pub & Restaurant at 1085 W. Army Trail Road on May 21<sup>st</sup>.

Husband and wife Bill and Peggy O'Hare Vance have operated O'Hare's Pub and Restaurant upon purchasing the former Sheep & Fiddle Pub and Restaurant in the fall of 2013. Bill runs the bar and Peggy takes care of the front of the establishment. They have a chef/manager named Simon Kearney. Tony noted that there had been a series of restaurants at that location in his ten years with the Village including two others prior to O'Hare's Pub, like Hoss' Roadhouse. Tony noted that this visit was scheduled following a "Smart Up, Start Up" presentation that he made at the Library last month, where Ms. Vance attended and had numerous questions including about signage, landscaping and lighting that would be better answered in a personal visit.

Tony Fradin provided the Vances with the new Sign Ordinance, adopted last year, and talked about trees and shrubs obscuring the shopping center's monument sign; the lack of lighting in the shopping center; scheduling a safety check with the Police Department; about their issues with their landlord including some upcoming sewer work at the shopping center; and about their marketing efforts including Groupon and other discounts to attract customers. The Vances reported that they have been utilizing Amazon deals, which has more parameters in terms of minimum purchases than Groupon; we also spoke about their Yelp reviews and the importance of monitoring comments and replying to negative reviews.

Most of their customers are local, including many regulars from Woodland Hills, people attending events at Bartlett High School and churchgoers from Resurrection Church. Ms. DuChesne suggested handing out their menus at local equestrian businesses such as Jaynesway Farms, Dunham Woods Farm and Lamplight Equestrian Center. Peggy Vance noted her intentions of asking the three hotels east of the Village in Bloomingdale to include their menu in their pamphlets for local businesses.

Tony reported that they discussed future plans. Ideas discussed included a Beer School, attended by different brewers and offering a certificate upon completion; hosting a Prohibition Event in January, offering a shuttle bus between them and other establishments; installing a sliding door where windows are currently located and offering outdoor seating in front of their business; and even a rooftop beer garden.

Tony noted that he will keep in touch with them to gauge what, if any, of these ideas they wish to pursue and will let them know if any similar or larger restaurant locations become available in the next year, as their lease expires at the close of 2016.

Commissioner Smodilla asked about the lighting and signage issues facing the Vances. She noted that they were not aware of the updated Sign Ordinance and asked if they could utilize temporary signage, perhaps along Route 59 in order to attract more patrons. For example, an inflatable sign or a four by four-foot banner.

Tony Fradin replied, yes and no. We did discuss them using temporary signage including banners and sandwich board signs. Businesses are allowed temporary signage for up to 90 days per year, and we discussed them breaking up the 90 days to cover their slower times of year, for instance in the summer.

However, Bartlett's Sign Ordinance does not allow for off premises signage, which would be considered a billboard sign, so they cannot place their signs along Route 59. That corner is owned by CVS, so they are the ones that can put temporary signage on that corner, so long as it is not on the public right-of-way. The Vances noted that they will approach some property owners in unincorporated areas near their restaurant to seek permission to place small signs on their properties.

Commissioner Smodilla stated that she is glad to hear that they are considering outdoor seating, and asked if there is something in the Village ordinance that would allow for them to create a beer garden by temporarily utilizing parking spaces.

Tony replied that they could, and that, as Staff, we encourage them to work with their landlords on a project like that. Considering they only have a lease for 18 more months, a project of that scope would take a number of months and an investment to approve and build, and that is something that the shopping center owner should handle. As it could be considered a permanent improvement and an alteration to their site plan, Tony stated that he encourages businesses to work with the property owners on projects like that if they are renting the space.

Commissioner Smodilla stated that she had a more temporary, seasonal outdoor dining area rather than a permanent improvement.

Jim Plonczynski replied that even a temporary fix would require the landlord's cooperation and a special use approval. Because it involves liquor, it would need fencing. There has been some interest by other businesses, and the only place to do it is on the sidewalk. Or, they could build something in the parking lot. So far, all of the landlords have been reluctant to take away parking from other businesses. Jim cited McMae's as an example of a business that Staff has discussed this with. TL's also wants to do this and would have to obtain a special use permit, but wants to put the seating in front of the property next door. A new video gaming establishment wants to open in the old Station Cleaners location and wants outdoor seating, and has enough space on the sidewalk. He stated that it is mostly a logistics issue. Starbucks has a bigger outdoor seating area.

Commissioner Smodilla asked about how to enter into a more robust dialogue with property owners on how to help these businesses. Jim Plonczynski noted that most landlords will try to accommodate them and used Bartlett Commons as an example with the Season's Produce market. However, with Bannerman's, he can only do the outdoor seating in the back. The owner has not made that move because it is not as attractive. Jim noted that outdoor dining works better where there are sidewalks or other areas that can accommodate it, like at Tpsi Monkey and Savoury Restaurant [in Westgate Commons]. That works better than putting it in parking lots. Right across the street [in Bartlett Town Center], you see outdoor seating with the wider sidewalks. Jim said that, in O'Hare's case, he knows the landlords pretty well and they are good to work with, so hopefully they will do it.

Commissioner Smodilla stated that it would behoove the Village to look at best practices in examples such as this. Jim Plonczynski said that the best way to do it is when the center is initially designed. The Village had an outdoor dining space designed years ago at Westridge Square for a restaurant that was going to go there, but it was never built. A lot of our older shopping centers, the landlords were looking at it wrong. He described the Starbucks space as having been originally designed to accommodate outdoor seating. He said that there will be some restaurants designed in the future with some outdoor seating spaces, although the neighbors may not like it.

## **Tenant Update**

Tony Fradin described this report as something that was prepared for the annual Breakfast with the Village event that will be held on June 24<sup>th</sup> at Bartlett Hills in conjunction with the Chamber of Commerce. Every year, the Village does a presentation that includes the number of new and closed businesses.

Tony noted that this list of 21 new businesses and 8 closed businesses is not based on the calendar year, but from last June until this June, when the annual event is held.

Tony stated that he would not read the entire list, but pointed out that the national retailers like AutoZone and Dollar Tree gravitate towards Route 59. Tony noted that he has said for years at the EDC that the nationals gravitate towards Route 59 and Stearns. Tony explained that there are some single proprietorships in the downtown area, such as Ion Nutrition and the Book Lady's attic, and that there are several larger industrial businesses such as Cheese Merchants and Creative Werks in Brewster Creek Business Park.

Tony further noted that several fitness-related businesses opened in the past year, such as Studio Energia, Frontier Fitness, and CrossFit Ariocho. Tony noted that Bremskerl makes brake parts for light rail systems and now occupies the 50,000 sq. ft. building where the Brewster Creek open house was held last fall and is the first building in the business park. He also remarked that Creative Werks occupies the largest building in the business park, 400,000 sq. ft. built by Victory Land Group and recently vacated.

Tony mentioned a few new restaurants that opened including D'Licious Crepes & Roti across the street in Town Center, Marco's Pizza in Town Center and the Still Bar and Grill just south of Village Hall.

Tony mentioned that a new item added to the report this year is relocation/expansions and detailed the relocations of Arts in Bartlett, the Whole Pet, Bartlett Vision and the Walgreen's. He mentioned two proposed businesses currently under consideration including Daniela's Bistro in the Cartland Building at the former Station Cleaners location and a new 50,000 sq. ft. building proposed by Ace Relocation, a moving and storage company, in Brewster Creek Business Park. Tony said that there are at least three additional speculative buildings in the pipeline, like before the Recession, when industrial developers constructed multi-million dollar speculative buildings.

Commissioner Green asked what Pink Pewter does. Tony described the company as a producer of knick-knacks. Jim Plonczynski clarified that they warehouse and distribute fashion accessories and that they are in one of the smaller industrial condominium units.

## **New Business**

Commissioner Weir asked if Tony wanted to comment on the dining guides that were distributed. Tony explained that the EDC initiated this about five years ago, and he was waiting for Smokin' Pit BBQ to open prior to printing these. He detailed a few other changes, including the addition of D'Licious Crepes and a name change from Thai Seasons to Thai Gourmet. Tony ordered 1,500 of these guides and will distribute them throughout the Village. The last version was printed last July.

Commissioner Weir asked if the audience member wished to speak. MaryAnn Nyberg introduced herself as a 31-year Bartlett resident and described why she and her husband are not in favor of the proposed TIF.

Ms. Nyberg proceeded to describe the Cows on Parade program that St. Charles is doing in their downtown. She also suggested painting rain barrels and park benches. She mentioned that individual businesses in the downtown could decorate Adirondack chairs to advertise.

Ms. Nyberg noted that there are five events per year in downtown Bartlett, and this would be a good way for businesses to promote themselves. She noted that this could be throughout the community and the Village should not always focus on the downtown. Each one is unique and promotes businesses. She asked the EDC to think about promoting businesses with this type of endeavor. She wants the Village to come together with Arts in Bartlett and the Chamber of Commerce to accomplish this. Commissioner Krall asked her to describe her opinion of what she would like the Village to do. Ms. Nyberg commented that the Village of Itasca had decorated rain barrels in their downtown. [The rest inaudible].

Jim Plonczynski asked Ms. Nyberg if she was going to ask the Chamber of Commerce to get involved with this proposed promotion and if it would be rain barrels or chairs. Ms. Nyberg replied it would be chairs [the rest inaudible]. Jim Plonczynski noted that St. Charles has a TIF District in its downtown to help pay for things like this.

Commissioner Weir noted that she coordinated a program like this for three consecutive years with the Chamber of Commerce including reindeer, snowmen and penguins, and elaborated on those. They got the schools to work along with the businesses and worked with groups to sponsor the decorations. The Village assisted by providing maps of where the decorations were.

Ms. Nyberg distributed some photos of the decorated chairs to the EDC members and Commissioner Weir thanked her for her comments. Commissioner Smodilla thanked her and mentioned various community groups that could coalesce in a project like this along with the Chamber of Commerce.

Commissioner Perri asked if the Village would have any Code issues with this type of decoration, and Jim Plonczynski replied that it should not be a problem.

The meeting adjourned at 8:25 pm.