



VILLAGE OF BARTLETT
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MINUTES
FEBRUARY 14, 2022

1. CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Kubaszko called the regular meeting of February 14, 2022 of the Economic Development Commission (EDC) of the Village of Bartlett to order on the above date at 7:00 PM

2. ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Commissioners Erickson, Gorski, Kubaszko, Ohlson (Chamber of Commerce Representative), Perri, Smodilla

ABSENT: Commissioners Hughes, LaPorte, Lewensky

ALSO PRESENT: Economic Development Coordinator Tony Fradin, Assistant Village Administrator Scott Skrycki

3. APPROVAL OF JANUARY 10, 2022 MEETING MINUTES

Commissioner Smodilla moved to approve the January 10, 2022 meeting minutes, seconded by Commissioner Erickson.

AYES: Commissioners Erickson, Gorski, Kubaszko, Ohlson (Chamber of Commerce Representative), Perri, Smodilla

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Commissioners Hughes, LaPorte, Lewensky

MOTION CARRIED

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

NONE

5. DOGFATHER BEDA APPLICATION

Mr. Fradin stated that Dogfather has been and remains one of Bartlett's most popular eateries. Located in the Apple Valley Commons shopping plaza for over fifteen years, Mr. Passaro's restaurant is well-known throughout the area and specializes in hot dogs, Italian beef sandwiches, gyros and more.

Tony knows many customer names and what they like to order. He also sponsors many community events, such as Bartlett Little League and those supporting the local police



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and fire district. On many occasions, when he's not behind the grill, Tony is usually sitting with his customers, sharing their fries, and entertaining their kids.

The Dogfather was inducted into the Vienna Beef Hall of Fame this past November due to his tremendous work in the industry over many years.

The Dogfather is upgrading its sign this spring.

The rendering from Bartlett-based Mark Your Space is attached as well as an estimate totaling \$4,217.

Because permit fees are not considered BEDA-eligible, the sign cost for this project is \$4,042.

Mr. Fradin stated due to the petitioner's long-term success as a small business owner, his great contributions to the community, and the smaller scope of this project, staff is recommending a maximum fifty percent BEDA grant in the amount of \$2,021, to be reimbursed to the applicant after the sign is installed per Village Code and receipts are submitted.

Commissioner Perri stated that the Dogfather has been a mainstay in Bartlett, and that he wishes them well.

Commissioner Gorski asked the petitioner if they are intending on dropping the "the" in the name "The Dogfather", based on the renderings in the packet.

Mr. Passaro stated that it is being removed from the sign, but not from their name.

Commissioner Smodilla complimented Mr. Passaro's commitment to the community, and asked if he is planning to maximize the square footage.

Mr. Passaro stated that he is.

Commissioner Erickson commended Mr. Passaro for partnering with another local chamber business to do the work of putting up the sign.

Commissioner Perri moved to recommend a BEDA grant in the amount of \$2,021 to The Dogfather, Seconded by Commissioner Gorski.

ROLL CALL VOTE

AYES: Commissioners Erickson, Gorski, Kubaszko, Ohlson (Chamber of Commerce Representative), Perri, Smodilla



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NAYS: None

ABSENT: Commissioners Hughes, LaPorte, Lewensky

MOTION CARRIED

6. ECONOMIC INDICATORS REVIEW

Mr. Fradin walked the commissioner's through the following report:

About seven years ago, the village's economy was struggling somewhat with an overall commercial vacancy rate around twenty percent and the downtown area over thirty. Over half of Bartlett Plaza (now Streets of Bartlett) was vacant, as were some of the buildings that currently are and many others that have since been filled.

Dominick's Finer Foods was vacant at the time, contributing to the high rate throughout town.

At that time, the Economic Development Commission discussed marketing and incentive strategies based on the various areas of town in an effort to encourage development of vacant land as well as filling key vacancies throughout the community.

Since that time, the overall economy has continued expanding and the village, in particular, has implemented multiple business-friendly programs including the creation of the BEDA program and aggressively working to attract development to village-owned sites.

The village has also entered into multiple sales tax sharing agreements to attract sales tax producing uses including Culver's, MORE Brewing and, most recently, an agreement with the Bartlett Auto Mall including the village's first Class 7 incentive.

The village has recently also endorsed two Class 6 incentives to attract major projects to the Cook County portion of Brewster Creek Business Park now that the DuPage County portion is nearly built out.

CURRENT INDICATORS:

Despite the many challenges associated with the ongoing pandemic, the village's economy has continued to expand over the past several years.

Industrial

On the industrial side, the trend towards rapid distribution of goods and "last-mile" facilities have definitely contributed to the growth.



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Also, as inner-ring industrial areas continue to age, some businesses that want to continue to grow view our area as providing an opportunity for them to access a great workforce or bring their current workforce with them while developing build-to-suit projects to meet their specific needs.

The ongoing strength in the industrial market is one of the reasons why large institutional investors like Ridge Development, Logistics Property Company and Conor Globe Commercial have been willing to invest \$30 to \$50 million or more on speculative projects with a high level of confidence that they will be able to lease these buildings.

When the industrial rate rose to around ten percent in late 2020, that was due to a 436,000 SF speculative project coming online, which has since been leased to Colony Display Company.

Also, please note that staff believes that the much-delayed redevelopment of the former Main Steel building on Devon Avenue should be completed this spring and the owner and brokers have the building preleased to three tenants assuming that it can be completed soon.

The current industrial vacancy rate remains at a virtual all-time low of only 3.5%.

Commercial

Like industrial, the retail/commercial sector remains strong with a vacancy rate of 5%. Most of the vacancies consist of chronically vacant older buildings like the former Bartlett Tap and the garage behind JC's Mexican restaurant. These properties require a significant amount of reinvestment to be brought up to Code and staff has offered BEDA grants and worked with multiple prospects in an effort to fill these.

Bartlett Town Center also has a higher vacancy rate than in recent years, with the recent closing of Trakside Diner, the relocation of D'Licious Crepes, closing of the insurance office and the corner space that is yet to be occupied. We are working with multiple prospects at Town Center and anticipate a higher occupancy rate by the close of this year.

Throughout the rest of the town, small spaces have largely been filled by the temporary use of COVID testing facilities as well as a new comic book store coming soon, a new health drink business in Streets of Bartlett, and a new Wing Stop restaurant in Brewster Creek shopping plaza. Most of the shopping centers along Route 59 have remained near full capacity, with some lingering vacancies in Stearns Crossing shopping center.

A vacancy rate under ten percent is generally considered strong in the retail sector.



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Office

Bartlett remains a community without large office tenants, which is a mixed blessing.

Although there are no major employers with hundreds or thousands of office workers, the village has also not suffered the loss or decline of such a business.

Although office uses are allowed throughout all commercial zoning areas and most shopping centers have multiple office tenants, there has only been 286,000 SF in 29 properties designated as offices throughout the village.

The vacancy rate has actually improved of late after hovering in at 6% to 7% for the past several years to 3.9%. Additionally, the average rate has risen to over \$27 PSF.

Jobs

One of the top economic indicators, both the jobs within the village's borders and the jobs held by village residents has improved over the past year.

Long known as a bedroom community, the village has worked for decades now to build up the daytime population in order to support and attract new business to serve our residents.

Per Jobs EQ, total employment in the village was 9,881 in Q2 of 2021, with employment having increased by 7.2% throughout the region.

With the imminent relocation of Colony Display's employees and other projects, we expect this number to eclipse 10,000 by next year. Also note that wage trends increased 8.7% last year to an average of over \$70,000.

Lagging by a few years, the Census shows a slight increase from 2018 to 2019 in terms of inflow and outflow of jobs within Bartlett with 7,674 people residing outside the village and working in town, 1,055 people who both work and live in town, and over 22,000 residents who leave the village to work elsewhere.

Depending on the precision of the statistics in years to come, this has likely changed dramatically due to many of the village residents being employed as professionals who have worked completely or partially from home over the past two years.

The unemployment rate of village residents has dramatically improved over the past year, dropping by over fifty percent from December of 2020 (6.9%) to December of 2021 (3.4%).



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Sales

Overall taxable sales in the village were nearly identical to last year, rising by two percent from \$2,533,479 collected from July 2019 thru June 2020 to \$2,587,520 in the same time span through this past June.

As in past years, this is due to no major retailers entering the village or leaving it. We anticipate this number to grow dramatically in the coming years due to the Bartlett Auto Mall.

We are also working with potential retail developers on the west side of town near West Bartlett Road and Route 25 as well as potential development at the intersection of County Farm and Stearns Road.

Population

With the census completed, the village's population was reported to be nearly identical to ten years earlier.

With several residential projects on the horizon, including Eastpointe Estates, the project at TOD Site E and possibly an additional site coming online in the near future, and renewed interest in the Crown site at the northwest corner of Route 59 and West Bartlett Road, we hope to increase the number of residents in the coming years.

Safety

Long-known as a safe, family-oriented community, the village remains one of the safest twenty-five smaller cities per MoneyGeek. Crime takes a toll on communities — not just emotionally but also economically. In addition to direct costs from property loss, services for victims and [policing and corrections](#), residents and businesses in higher-crime locales often pay higher rates on insurance.

To quantify the cost of crime in smaller cities and towns, MoneyGeek analyzed crime data and calculated the cost of crime in each place. They included data on violent crimes — such as murder, rape and aggravated assault — and property crimes — such as burglaries and car theft. Though property crimes are much more common, violent crimes are costlier.

Bartlett ranked the fifth safest and second safest in Illinois in the latest update late last month.



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2022

Mayor Wallace, the Village Board, staff, commissioners, and entrepreneurial residents will continue implementing our marketing strategies including broker blasts and calling upon interested parties and our growing network of developers and business owners in an effort to fill these challenging spaces that remain and working towards assisting them in bringing their projects forward.

With the potential for multiple car dealerships, a microbrewery, new subdivisions, apartments, retail projects, and ongoing industrial growth, we hope to continue on this positive track throughout the year and report similar growth in 2023.

Mr. Fradin concluded his report by asking the commissioners if they had any questions.

Commissioner Smodilla commented that the fact that there have been so many small independent entrepreneurs speaks well to the community that the village is prepared to support them. She added that there have been reports that less people have been returning to the traditional workforce and that more have been opening their own businesses, alluding that there is an opportunity to reach out to the community and reach out to the chamber and make people aware of what the village has to offer.

Mr. Skrycki responded stating that the village is teaming up with an individual making a video about the BEDA program, interviewing different recipients and staff to talk about the program. He added that the video should be done before the next EDC Meeting.

Commissioner Smodilla stated that reflecting up recent event marketing, like the Merry and Bright campaign, she believes that should be rolled into any materials geared towards future entrepreneurs, showing how helpful those can be to local businesses. She also added that there are articles about communities planning for a post-METRA workforce, where more people are working from home. She asked if there are any plans to open up more of the METRA lots for local businesses with that in mind. She also asked if there are any plans to open some of the lots that are closed in the winter on the weekends.

Mr. Skrycki stated that the village recently made all METRA lots free after 11.a.m. on weekdays, and all day on weekends. He stated that the 11.a.m. time was geared around many of the local restaurants and businesses opening time. He added that the village will always look to plow those spots when there is a need.

Commissioner Erickson agreed that it is important to market to the community and the future entrepreneurs, she added that heading into the chambers strategic planning, that they need to remember its not just the business to business interactions, but knowing that there are future entrepreneurs and future chamber members living in the community.



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7. NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Skrycki stated that MORE Brewing's building plans were approved Friday, and that marks a significant point in their moving forward.

Commissioner Smodilla asked about the Bartlett Tap, and about how it needs to be brought up to code. She asked about the recent investment put into the building, and what else needs to be done.

Mr. Skrycki stated that there was a massive investment on the lower level, but if someone was to buy the building, then the upstairs must also be brought to code. He stated that the investment needed to make the upstairs habitable, is very extreme. He stated that he anticipates that when MORE Brewing is completed, that property will see success, and someone will see that building as an opportunity. He added that outside of village owned properties, staff has pushed the sale of that building more than any other property in town.

Commissioner Smodilla asked how the recent fire in Brewster Creek Business Park has affected the neighboring businesses.

Mr. Fradin stated that he hasn't had many communications with them at this point, but stated that it is an inconvenience for the neighbors, but they are understanding. He said once everything is taken care of and cleaned up, then it will be business as usual for the surrounding businesses. He added that it will be a challenge to redevelop the site going forward.

Commissioner Perri asked how the fire started.

Mr. Fradin stated he does not have that information.

Commissioner Perri stated that there are a lot of rumors going around. He added that there is a 30-foot safe that was not damaged by the fire. He added that with them being a document place, that he would like to know what was in that safe.

Commissioner Erickson stated that there's certain documents that require that type of storage to protect them in the event of a fire.

Commissioner Gorski asked about the building behind JC's, and asked if there is anything that can be done to help people visualize other things that can be done with that space. He asked how staff can help people reimagine that space.

Mr. Fradin stated that he has worked three different restaurateurs about that space, and that the reimagination is not the problem. He stated that the problem with the property is a \$250,000-\$300,000 price tag to bring the property to code. He added that staff has



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offered \$50,000 BEDA Grants to multiple restaurants, and the code violations are myriad. He added that it could also require a Phase I or a Phase II. He stated there are some that were close. He also stated the village has had that building for condemnation in the past.

Commissioner Smodilla asked if it has ever been considered to have a partnership with a non-profit like Arts in Bartlett or the History Museum to move into that building, knowing they wouldn't have the Cook County tax burden.

Mr. Skrycki stated that he likes the idea, but there are still many hurdles to the property.

Mr. Fradin added that there are still the costs to bring the building to code.

There being no further business to discuss, Commissioner Erickson moved to adjourn the EDC meeting and that motion was seconded by Commissioner Smodilla.

ROLL CALL VOTE TO ADJOURN

AYES: Commissioners Erickson, Gorski, Kubaszko, Ohlson (Chamber of Commerce Representative), Perri, Smodilla

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Commissioners Hughes, LaPorte, Lewensky

MOTION CARRIED

The meeting was adjourned at 8:01 p.m.

Joseph Dienberg
Management Analyst