



**VILLAGE OF BARTLETT**  
**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MINUTES**  
**June 14, 2021**

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1. CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Kubaszko called the regular meeting of April 12, 2021 of the Economic Development Commission (EDC) of the Village of Bartlett to order on the above date at 7:00 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Commissioners Kirstin Erickson, Robert Gorski, Nan Gudenkauf, Gerald Kubaszko, Joe LaPorte, Robert Perri, Tracy Smodilla

ABSENT: Commissioners Michelle Hughes, Adam Lewensky

ALSO PRESENT: Economic Development Coordinator Tony Fradin, Assistant Village Administrator Scott Skrycki, Management Analyst Joey Dienberg, Village Trustee Stephanie Gandsey

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Gorski pointed out an error in the minutes that the wrong intersection was listed for the Alexian Brothers office. Staff stated that they would make that change.

Commissioner Smodilla moved to approve the amended Economic Development Commission Minutes from April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021 and that motion was seconded by Commissioner Erickson.

AYES: Commissioners Erickson, Gorski, Gudenkauf, Kubaszko, LaPorte, Perri, Smodilla

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Commissioners Hughes, Lewensky

**MOTION CARRIED**

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

5. TRACKSIDE DINER BEDA APPLICATION

Mr. Fradin stated that Trackside Diner is a new business that opened in the space formerly occupied by O'Hare's Pub & Restaurant in Bartlett Town Center. Owners Monika



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Bashllari and Brennan Lucado began work soon after O'Hare's vacated the space early this year, opening their diner concept in late March.

As a way to enhance their business and attract more passers-by, economic development staff encouraged Ms. Bashllari and Mr. Lucado to add an outdoor dining option.

With outdoor dining having expanded in the downtown area throughout the pandemic, the option not only attracts customers more comfortable in an outdoor setting, but creates excitement on those days when outdoor diners can be seen throughout the downtown area.

Mr. Fradin stated that he informed them about the BEDA program and how outdoor dining enhancements are one of the eligible items for reimbursement.

The applicants have estimated the project cost to add outdoor dining to be \$5,000, which will include 8 tables, 16 chairs, four parking stoppers and new fencing. The fencing estimate is over \$2,300 including tax, the umbrellas are \$783, the curb stoppers \$373 and the tables and seating \$1,938. The estimates come out to \$5,394.

This is the first BEDA application of this fiscal year, with several more anticipated including others for the addition of outdoor seating.

Although a small project, we believe that the addition of outdoor seating at Trackside Diner will be a good addition to the business and Bartlett Town Center. The neighboring business, 2 Toots Train Whistle Grill, does not include outdoor seating since the primary attraction is having the food delivered by model train. While doing a brisk pizza carry-out and delivery business, Marco's Pizza rarely has any outdoor diners.

Mr. Fradin concluded by stating that staff recommends a grant in the amount of \$2,000, or just under forty percent of total project cost. We hope that this grant will result in additional patronage of the business and increased sales to help retain a newer business that has added to the dining options in downtown Bartlett.

Commissioner Smodilla applauded the applicants for moving in so quickly after O'Hare's decided to move. She asked the applicants if O'Hare's previously had outdoor seating and also asked about the current number of seats inside while clarifying how many outdoor seats they were looking to have.

Mr. Lucado stated that they will have the same setup as O'Hare's and it should not interfere with pedestrians. He also stated that they will have five tables with ten chairs based on the amount of space they have. He also stated that they have 66 seats inside.



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Commissioner Gorski moved to recommend a BEDA Grant in the amount of \$2,000 to Trakside Diner and then move to the Village Board for a final vote and that motion was seconded by Commissioner Smodilla.

AYES: Commissioners Erickson, Gorski, Gudenkauf, Kubaszko, LaPorte, Perri, Smodilla

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Commissioners Hughes, Lewensky

MOTION CARRIED

## 6. BRANDNG DISCUSSION

Mr. Fradin stated that in their Strategic Planning session last week, the Village Board expressed the desire to implement branding as a marketing tool.

Municipal branding is an important aspect of successfully marketing a community. With many towns throughout the northwest suburbs, the state and the entire country competing for businesses that are able to select where they prefer to be located and often request incentives from multiple potential locations, differentiating your town from the others is both more challenging and more important than ever.

As we make our way out of the pandemic, during which a fair number of projects have moved forward, the village is once again looking to position itself for future growth through the remainder of the twenties and beyond, thus we are looking at ways to rebrand the village.

The last time that the EDC and village looked to rebrand itself, we moved away from the "Bartlett Pear" concept to the "Never Far Away" tagline and logo depicting various building structures, a Bartlett "skyline" image.

At the time, many businesses and developers would claim Bartlett to be "to far out" beyond the range of dense suburbs where they considered expanding into.

As development has continued expanding and this issue has declined over the years, and the village has been better able to distinguish itself from the surrounding suburbs, we now embark to incorporate a new branding strategy.

Mr. Fradin added that the EDC briefly discussed developing a marketing campaign designed to brand Bartlett's eating, drinking, industrial strength, and quality of life this past



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January. The village anticipates building on this campaign for a multi-year marketing initiative extending beyond the impacts of the pandemic.

It is important to define *what* we want to brand. The objective is to attract visitors from outside the village to dine and shop at our businesses, or increasing the awareness of the same for our residents, many of whom remain unaware of all the village has to offer. This may be two different messages or branding efforts.

Mr. Fradin concluded by stating that staff is seeking to engage a branding consultant with extensive knowledge and prior municipal experience, as branding a community is inherently different than a product or company.

Since this branding campaign may take some time, we request that commissioners consider the various elements that you would like to see.

He added that suggestions for the project scope include, but are not limited to:

- Conducting identity, image, and perception research.
- Engaging the business community with their thoughts on Bartlett's unique characteristics.
- Engaging the residents on the above. Perhaps the EDC could host one or more public input meetings, charettes, or open houses similar to the process that we undertook while creating the Downtown TOD Plan.
- Creating surveys in various formats to gain interaction and input including via social media and other village platforms.
- An analysis of existing brand and/or marketing materials.
- Identification of village assets and differentiation.
- Detailed implementation schedule based upon available research.
- Estimated costs and budget associated with the implementation process.
- Presentation of the proposed brand identity including the elements listed above.
- Strategy for staff to continue branding initiative following the initial launch.

Mr. Fradin asked the EDC for their input regarding overall strategy for this campaign as well as additional elements that the village should consider when engaging in a consultant for this project.

Commissioner Perri stated due to much of the civil unrest throughout the country, that part of the branding for the village should emphasize the high safety ratings that the village repeatedly receives.

Mr. Fradin confirmed the high safety rating, and stated that in his opinion safety is a component to their advertising when they attend trade shows, but is more difficult to



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incorporate into a branding plan for the actual imaging of it. He also added that many developers regularly express safety concerns with new developments, and added that the village's safety is a great advantage when marketing sites in town.

Commissioner Smodilla agreed with Commissioner Perri that safety is an identifiable asset of the community, and it is a message that will resonate with many of the multiple audiences that we are targeting. She added that we need to think about the other assets that we have, and that there is an opportunity to develop a broad-based message to many of those audiences, whether they are new residents, new developers, etc.

Mr. Fradin agreed with Commissioner Smodilla, and added that marketing for new residents hasn't been necessary as of late, due to the fact that when new residential developments come in, they fill up extremely fast.

Commissioner Perri reiterated that he believes advertising safety should be front and center in all facets of this plan.

Mr. Fradin added that before the commission starts diving deep into the attributes of the community, the task on hand is to decide on the path to start the rebranding process, whether it is an RFP, bringing in some branding consultants to the EDC, etc.

Commissioner Erickson stated that the only thing missing that she would like to see is giving Bartlett High School students a chance to have some input. She believes that it will be beneficial for them to come in, share some ideas from a different demographic that the EDC may not hit on as much. It would be a good partnership within the schools.

Mr. Fradin stated that he loved the idea.

Mr. Skrycki added that one challenge could be the turnover with students, given that this could be a 3-4 year process.

Commissioner Erickson added that she would just love to see the different perspective of younger residents have, and then let the branding experts take that information as a part of their process.

Commissioner Smodilla emphasized that when residents move to Bartlett, they stay. She stated that having so many multi-generational families in such a transient society, it is a great asset to keep in mind.

Commissioner LaPorte stated that he doesn't believe that they need to reinvent the wheel. He said his family has been here since 77, and while the community has changed, it has been in a positive direction. Instead of hiring a consultant, he would argue for interviewing residents. He also recommended reaching out to communities that have recently hired



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consultants and seeing what they believed was missed throughout the process. He also added that our older residents are a great asset in this process so that we can learn from their experience. Bartlett has always been a family community, and that is not changing. He also added that with changes in how people interact with businesses, he recommended adding more opportunities for outdoor seating.

Commissioner Kubaszko asked Mr. Fradin to clarify who we are targeting with the branding campaign.

Mr. Fradin stated that is not an answer he can give tonight and that it is apart of the process and it will be developed as they work with a consultant, residents, businesses, etc.

Mr. Skrycki introduced Village Trustee Stephanie Gandsey, and opened up the floor to her.

Trustee Gandsey introduced herself and shared her background. She stated that she has a marketing and communication background. She expressed enthusiasm at the EDC heading this process, and one of the biggest things she is interested in is seeing a content-based marketing plan. She stated that will create a buzz for events and businesses in Bartlett. She stated by combining branding and the content marketing, the village can really show off its many amenities, events and activities.

Commissioner Smodilla agreed with Trustee Gandsey's points and stated that there is a great opportunity to create a branding plan now with a full knowledge of the opportunities that social media provides compared to the last branding plan 15 years ago.

Commissioner Gorski asked if this branding plan has been budgeted for.

Mr. Fradin stated that it is not yet budgeted. He added that there is currently an advertising/marketing budget that would be used to fund this for the first fiscal year, and then going forward this would be a part of the budgeting process.

Commissioner Gorski stated that to him, perception research, engaging the community, scheduled implementation and a strategy beyond the initial launch are most important to him based on the list staff provided. He added that the priority should be to look forward, not to the past.

Mr. Fradin agreed with the implementation strategy importance. He added that would be an important part of the budgeting process as well down the road.

Commissioner Kubaszko asked who the branding will be directed at, and stated that he doesn't believe we should focus on current Bartlett residents. Mr. Fradin stated that it is



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all-encompassing, and doesn't have a specific target. He added that it is important to target some marketing to current residents who may not know about local businesses, services, events, etc.

Commissioner LaPorte used the business park as an example, stating that many residents do not know how successful the parks are. He stated that he envisions a 45-60 second video that showcases every aspect of Bartlett as well as a 4-page newsletter that does the same. He also recommended looking into hiring an influencer to come and promote local businesses.

Mr. Fradin agreed, and emphasized that it is something that is evergreen and won't become obsolete too quickly.

Commissioner Kubaszko asked if branding should be focused on people outside the Bartlett Area.

Commissioner LaPorte stated that is a component, but not the entire part, and that its important to engage current residents.

Mr. Skrycki agreed with Commissioner LaPorte.

Commissioner Kubaszko stated that he sees engaging current residents and attracting outsiders as two separate issues.

Mr. Fradin reiterated that it is all encompassing.

Commissioner Perri added that apart of attracting new residents and families is to emphasize safety. He added that he thinks it's important for people to know that Bartlett has the highest safety rating in the northwest suburbs.

Mr. Fradin said that safety is a great feature to market, but something like that isn't necessarily the focus of a multiyear branding campaign.

Commissioner Erickson stated that when branding is done right it is all encompassing and will allow us to attract both businesses and residents, and will allow us to retain them. She added that many residents don't even know that Rana Pasta is made here, and that maybe if they knew that, maybe they would pick Rana when they are at Jewel, which would also help Bartlett. When we do branding correctly, it will touch all of these things. It is not a one size fits all.

Commissioner Kubaszko asked if there is a major focus that branding focuses on.



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Mr. Fradin stated that there is not a specific focus, and as Commissioner Erickson said, it is all encompassing.

Commissioner Erickson said that Bartlett is in a unique position being mostly built up and that the branding needs to represent who Bartlett is now. She added that when this was done 15 years ago there was no business park, and the branding strategy reflected that.

Commissioner LaPorte stated that everyone gets a piece of the pie when it comes to branding.

Commissioner Smodilla stated that part of telling that story is reengaging the residents and businesses community and surveying them and asking what they would want others to know about Bartlett. She added that she thinks it is important to engage the chamber in this strategy.

Commissioner Perri stated that the capacity of the commerce industry is mostly built out in the community and the same is true about residential, and asked where we can go from there.

Commissioner Smodilla disagreed and stated that this is still a dynamic community. People still put their houses up for sale, and we still want to attract new residents. The same is true for businesses, they close or move out of town and we still need to attract new businesses to fill those spaces.

Commissioner Perri added that if we project the image that Bartlett is a good family town that is safe for residents and businesses, people will come.

Mr. Fradin agreed with the commissioners and added that this plan needs to be broad enough to be all encompassing. He said that we absolutely will include safety as an asset for the community, but stated that it won't be the only aspect that we will share.

Mr. Skrycki stated that it will be broad and all encompassing and stated that developers look at many aspects of the community including schools, local businesses, sports, arts, safety and so many other things. These will be people from all walks of life.

Commissioner Smodilla agreed that safety is an incredible asset, but we need to have some diversity to the assets we display in our brand. We have a dynamic community and the organization is a living, breathing organism.

Commissioner Perri agreed that there are other assets, but argued that it is the most important.





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Commissioner Smodilla stated that it ranks differently for different families and businesses, and added that we don't even need to force rank them. She added that if we showcase all of the assets the audience can decide what is most important to them. She reiterated that safety is a great asset and is important to families, but there are other assets that we need to highlight.

Commissioner Perri agreed that there are other assets, but if a community was not safe, none of the other assets would matter.

Mr. Skrycki stated that we are fortunate to not have to worry about that. He stated that safety is one of the metrics that businesses use, and luckily, we don't have to worry about it being an issue.

Mr. Fradin stated that staff will start looking into consultants and take the commissioners recommendations and input into account. He stated that they will have some consultants present to the EDC and share what they have done for other communities.

Mr. Skrycki added that if any commissioners have any questions, they can reach out to staff and they can help out.

Commissioner Smodilla asked Commissioner Gorski to restate what he recommended focusing on.

Commissioner Gorski stated that to him, perception research, engaging the community, scheduled implementation and a strategy beyond the initial launch are most important to him based on the list staff provided.

## 7. NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Fradin stated that the 4<sup>th</sup> of July Festivities will be happening this year and that the community is expressing enthusiasm for the event.

Commissioner Kubaszko stated that it is incredible how the word gets around for this event, and stated that it is a great example of good branding.

Commissioner Smodilla stated that going forward with branding, event marketing would be a great way to market the community and asked about doing an event beyond the 4<sup>th</sup> of July festival, and asked about the former Kickstand Classic event.

Mr. Skrycki stated that it was an expensive event. Bartlett was very fortunate to host the event, but it took a lot of manpower and a lot of money. He said that the organization doesn't do the event anymore as well. He also added that there are many other things



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that the EDC does that contributes to branding, adding that every approved BEDA grant makes it to the Daily Herald, giving free advertising to those businesses.

Mr. Fradin stated that when he shares those Daily Herald articles to Discover Bartlett, those are some of the most viewed posts on the page. He also added that other communities also reach out often to ask questions about the BEDA program so that they can replicate it in their own community.

Commissioner Perri asked for an update on the Crown Property.

Mr. Fradin stated that there is a concept plan, and they are anticipating a full concept plan to the Village Board in a multi phased development. It includes some single family, some townhomes and a little bit of commercial on the corner. He stated that they will be sending this information to desirable commercial users. The residential construction would be anticipated to start by next year.

Commissioner Smodilla asked about the parcel on Lake and Route 59.

Mr. Fradin stated that there is some interest from multiple parties and the village is weighing options to bring the most sustainable development to that site.

Commissioner Smodilla asked if it would be low-income housing at the Crown Development.

Mr. Fradin stated that it will not be.

Commissioner Erickson recommended that the chamber and the village should work together to help reduce the amount of 'ugliness' going on on social media, and to encourage positive comments about local businesses.

Commissioner Gudenkauf agreed, and stated that there some efforts that businesses can take to create a positive buzz. She added that people ask what the chamber is doing for Small Business Saturday, and she said that is what the chamber does every single day. She said it can be frustrating when people say "what is the chamber doing for us" when that is their entire focus.

Commissioner Smodilla stated that the complainers should take their complaints to the businesses, and not to the town square.

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



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ROLL CALL VOTE TO ADJOURN

AYES: Commissioners Erickson, Gorski, Gudenkauf, Kubaszko, LaPorte, Perri, Smodilla

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Commissioners Hughes, Lewensky

MOTION CARRIED

The meeting was adjourned at 8:23 p.m.

Joseph Dienberg  
Management Analyst