

## Minutes

### Village of Bartlett Economic Development Commission

November 13, 2017

**T. Smodilla called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm**

#### Roll Call

**Present:** C. Green, R. Perri, T. Smodilla, N. Gudenkauf, D. Gunsteen,

**Absent:** G. Kubaszko, J. LaPorte, S. Gandsey, R. Martino

**Also Present:** T. Fradin, Economic Development Coordinator,  
S. Skrycki, Assistant Village Administrator  
J. Dienberg, Administrative Intern

#### Approval of Minutes

**A motion was made to approve the minutes of the October 9, 2017 meeting.**

**Motioned by: N. Gudenkauf**

**Seconded by: R. Perri**

**T. Smodilla Abstained**

**Motioned carried.**

#### Small Business Saturday

**T. Fradin** presented a memo about “Small Business Saturday” (SBS). SBS is an American shopping holiday that is held on the Saturday after Thanksgiving; sharing that it was created by American Express in 2010 to compete with the popularity of black Friday, encouraging shoppers to visit small, local businesses. American Express sends out promotional materials, and **T. Fradin** added that the Village requested and received these materials for the second year in a row. Staff shared these promotional materials with the EDC and local businesses to help spread the word about SBS. As Bartlett does not have many big box retailers that often come to mind with holiday shopping, it is important to showcase its local retailers. Staff has created a 30 second cable TV ad that will appear up until Saturday, November 25<sup>th</sup> to advertise Small Business Saturday, and the cost was roughly \$2,500 for the ad to appear around 900 times within a period of two weeks across all cable channels. **T. Fradin** added that it has already been noticed during high profile sporting events like Bears and Bulls games, showing that it is being seen locally.

**T. Fradin** showed the commissioners the ad.

**T. Fradin** added that the businesses featured in the ad are always very appreciative, and that every year he pays them a visit to drop off the promotional materials (Buttons, doormats, etc.).

**N. Gudenkauf** added that the Chamber has also featured Small Business Saturday in their holiday shopping guide.

**T. Fradin** was appreciative to the chamber, adding that many small businesses rely on this holiday, emphasizing how important it is to advertise the event. He also reminded commissioners to share the event on their own Facebook pages.

**T. Smodilla** asked if the village was encouraging business to query their customers on Small Business Saturday asking why they came in, in order to measure the success of these ads.

**T. Fradin** responded that there are no official queries, however businesses did say that customers have mentioned that they did see the ads, and that the businesses have thanked him for the advertisement.

**T. Smodilla** asked if there was an opportunity for the village to further capitalize on Small Business Saturday throughout the rest of the holiday shopping, possibly through the use of a banner at Oak and Lake.

**T. Fradin** reminded the commissioners that they do have a large sign in front of the town center, but also agreed that the Village could invest in a banner or two in prominent locations, and wasn't sure about using their logo.

**C. Green** pointed out that in past years, many people didn't know that Arts in Bartlett was located in the town center, adding that this year they will be having a pop-up shop where vendors will be outside with tables, and will use the Small Business Saturday logo on their Facebook pages, encouraging others to do so. She asked if Tony would be able to send the logo out to local businesses so that they could do the same.

**T. Fradin** agreed, and thanked the commissioner for the idea.

**D. Gunsteen** asked about the possibility for long term solutions to signage, similar to the Park District's electronic sign.

The commissioners and staff discussed different options, coming to the conclusion that it the Village would pursue the low hanging fruit and utilize the Bartlett Hills marque to promote local businesses

**S. Skrycki** confirmed that the Village can use that sign, especially in this time of year.

### **Bartlett Business Spotlight**

**T. Fradin** Informed the EDC about a new initiative started on the Discover Bartlett Facebook page. As the popularity of social media continues increasing, and a larger percentage of Village residents turn to the Village's social media outlets, staff has commenced shooting and producing short videos to post on the Discover Bartlett and Village of Bartlett Facebook pages.

These short videos are entitled Bartlett Business Spotlight and will be a regular feature of the Village's marketing strategy to promote existing businesses.

The first business featured was D'Licious crepes & roti on October 30<sup>th</sup>, which already has 2,600 views, followed by the Bartlett Coin & Card shop, and VIP Barber Shop. Staff is in contact with several other businesses about featuring them in future posts.

This is a low-cost way in which to promote local businesses and for them to attract new customers.

**T. Fradin** showed the commissioners the three videos.

**T. Smodilla** complimented the videos, but added that it would be beneficial at the end of the videos to list the business's name and address, so that those viewing them will remember more easily.

### **Broker Email Blast**

**T. Fradin** explained that in the Village's continuing effort to attract new businesses to vacant and undeveloped sites throughout our community, Staff recently sent out an email blast to nearly three hundred retail and industrial brokers in the area highlighting opportunity sites.

Using MailChimp, a short note highlighting the Village's new user-friendly, interactive vacancy database and highlighting the Village-Owned property at Lake Street and Route 59, the blast was sent out on Friday, November 3<sup>rd</sup>. Similar ones will be sent out every few months, the next one being a 2018-themed blast, a spring-themed one in March, and another inviting brokers to meet with Staff at the SCSC ReCon show next May.

Tony has received some follow-up questions following the blast and also plans on growing the list of recipients as more contacts are made through future trade shows, by brokers who contact Staff via phone or email and at other local events.

**T. Smodilla** asked if videos could be made to send out in similar blasts, highlighting success stories of businesses in the village.

**T. Fradin** responded that that would be a good idea to link to some emails down the road, but not quite this soon. He added that AMITA Health, which filled the former Dominick's space could be that potential success story to feature, along with ACE Hardware and other businesses.

**T. Smodilla** asked about the Verizon store, and if they had plans for expansion.

**T. Fradin** informed the commissioners that there were not talks of expansion and that they are planning to stay in the Village.

### **USB Drives**

**T. Fradin** informed the commission that over the past few years, while attending area trade shows, business expos, and chamber of commerce events, businesses and their brokers have increasingly avoided picking up paper materials such as folders and listing sheets for properties, instead requesting that the details be emailed to them following the event or for the information on a USB drive.

When attending the fall ICSC Chicago show at Navy Pier in late September, the village shared a space at the Choose DuPage booth with several other DuPage county municipalities. Several of these municipalities were primarily distributing information about their respective communities via USB drives.

**T. Fradin** included photos of USB drives from other communities to the commissioners.

Following the previous trade show, staff placed an order for 100 USB drives with the Village Seal on them, allowing them to be used for more than just trade shows. The USB drives allow for staff to give people individualized sets of information. The goal is to have the USB drives ready to be distributed at the upcoming ICSC show in early 2018.

**T. Fradin** passed an example USB Drive to the commissioners.

**T. Smodilla** advised that the term “Discover Bartlett” be used prominently in the branding of the Village on the drives, in a larger font.

**S. Skrycki** said that that is a good idea, and that staff would do so in the next batch.

**D. Gunsteen** added that staff could put together a video showing the process of opening a business in Bartlett to do away with the assumption of how difficult the process is. The video could be included on the USB drives, along with all of the necessary forms for starting a business to streamline and simplify the process.

**T. Fradin** thanked the commissioners for their input and advice, adding that the beauty of the USB drives is that they can be custom tailored to who they are being given to.

**D. Gunsteen** advised that the Village could also include lists of businesses broken down by category (retail, restaurants, etc.) to give prospective businesses an idea of what is in Bartlett.

**T. Fradin** informed the commissioners that the village currently uses that list when meeting with developers, adding that many businesses are encouraged by lack of competition in some areas.

**T. Smodilla** agreed with the points made by commissioner Gunsteen.

### **Business Visit – Bartlett Gymnastics**

**T. Fradin** informed the commissioners that he and Commissioner Gandsey recently met with owners of Bartlett Gymnastics, Kelly Kenders and Robin Sedlacek, on October 25<sup>th</sup>. Tony had not met with the business since before the change in ownership.

Bartlett Gymnastics has a total of thirty employees, five of whom are full-time with the remainder as part-time coaches and instructors.

At their peak, their enrollment was about 1,000 children. That has since declined to approximately 800. This has been attributed to shifting demographics, with less younger families and fewer stay-at-home mothers in the Village. The classes for young children during weekday hours have declined, while the classes for slightly older children after school remain packed.

He and Commissioner Gandsey spent much of the visit discussing their marketing strategies at length, Commissioner Gandsey focused on their social media efforts, and commended them on the many initiatives that they have utilized including in the park district brochures, the Clipper publication, on several menus for local restaurants and mailing out postcards. Recently, they began advertising in the Welcome Wagon publication that is sent to new residents. Bartlett Gymnastics has also participated in local events including the Fourth of July parade and National Night Out. With them being on top of their advertising, Commissioner Gandsey gave them some advice on Facebook, Instagram, Yelp!, and other

platforms including personal profiles of coaches, students, scheduling of posts, creating hashtags and creating videos.

They discussed the December Bartlett coupon insert, which they will participate in, and told them about the Discover Bartlett Facebook page, urging them to send information for posting periodically.

Tony wrapped up by adding that this business plans on staying in town for the long term, and is a Bartlett staple.

**D. Gunsteen** added that his children attend classes at Bartlett Gymnastics, and that he is happy that the Village is supporting their efforts.

**T. Smodilla** was concerned about the 20% decline in enrollment, and asked if the claim of shifting demographics could be substantiated.

**T. Fradin** confirmed that the claim has been confirmed, and that every year the average age in Bartlett goes up every year, and the number of children under 18 goes down every year.

The commissioners discussed the changing demographics and how to combat that, adding that travel sports leagues in town do not compete with neighboring communities, and an intergovernmental meeting between the Village and Park District was proposed to address this issue, as the Village has a great opportunity to increase its sports leagues and bring young families back to Bartlett.

#### **Occupancy/Vacancy Rate Update**

**T. Fradin** shared the Village's Occupancy/Vacancy Rate for November with the commissioners. As it is one of the ongoing goals of the Village's economic development strategy to work on conjunction with property owners, brokers, and businesses to attract new business tenants to vacant spaces throughout the community.

In January 2017 the annual economic indicators review, the Village's retail vacancy rate was 14, its industrial vacancy was 12% and the office vacancy rate was 7.6%.

Since that time, nearly one million square feet of industrial inventory has been delivered, including a 421,000 SF facility by Exeter Property Group, a 271,200 SF by Ridge Development and a 67,550 SF building by G4 Development.

Currently Ridge Development has a second speculative building of 186,000 SF under development to build-to-suits for Camcraft/Matrix, Rana Meal Solutions and Get Fresh Produce are in various stages of construction.

Exactly half of Ridge Development's first building was leased by Winhere Brake Parts, leaving 135,600 SF unoccupied.

Because of this massive surge of new construction, along with the former Main Steel building on Devon Avenue that is undergoing a complete renovation, the Village's industrial vacancy rate rose to 23%.

Staff is currently working with a pet supply company to lease over half of the Exeter Building and anticipates working with additional businesses throughout 2018 to reduce the industrial vacancy rate as the O'Hare and DuPage County industrial markets continue attracting new tenants.

In January, the Village's overall retail vacancy rate was approximately 14%, half of which was attributed to the vacant former Dominick's space in Stearns Crossing shopping center.

With Amita Health having entered into a lease agreement, the 65,613 SF space is no longer considered vacant and available for lease per CoStar, LoopNet and the Village's available space inventory.

The second-most significant retail lease in the Village this year is the Ace Hardware location in Bartlett Plaza, at 10,000+ SF. Other smaller occupancies include restaurants Flappy's, Wee-Dee's and Ambrosia, video gaming café/deli Olivia's Place, the new T-Mobile store and Hallmark Pharmacy in Bartlett Commons and Candi-Man Barbershop in Oakfield Plaza.

The largest and most persistent remaining vacancy in the Village remains the former Bartlett Fresh Market space in Bartlett Plaza at 31,860 SF.

The retail occupancy rate has surged to a healthy 93% in the Village as a result of these new leases, with nearly all vacancies concentrated in the Downtown area.

The Village has thirty-one buildings classified as office for a total of 332,957 SF. As of January, the office vacancy rate has moved from 7.6% to 8.7%. The office vacancy rate has remained in the 7% to 9% for several years.

**R. Perri** asked if Ambrosia had opened yet.

**T. Fradin** said that they have not yet and gave a brief description of the restaurant.

**T. Smodilla** asked if the new Businesses have priority on Discover Bartlett.

**T. Fradin** responded that they always do, and often look to get their information out to the public.

**S. Skrycki** added that they also reach out to these businesses and encourage them to join the chamber, which does fantastic ribbon cuttings for these new businesses.

**R. Perri** added congratulations to Tony and staff for filling the former Dominick's.

**T. Fradin** expressed gratitude, and thanked Commissioner Perri for the congratulations, adding details on the project and how much it will help the community.

**S. Skrycki** informed the commissioners about important dates in the Village, including the Holiday Tree Lighting on Friday December 1<sup>st</sup>, as well as the Village Holiday Party on the following Friday.

### **Adjournment**

**A motion was made to adjourn the meeting.**

**Motioned by: R. Perri**

**Seconded by: N. Gudenkauf**

**Motion Carried. The Meeting Adjourned at 8:16 PM**