

Minutes

Village of Bartlett Economic Development Commission

December 11, 2017

G. Kubaszko called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm

Roll Call

Present: G. Kubaszko, C. Green, R. Perri, T. Smodilla, N. Gudenkauf, J. LaPorte, S. Gandsey,

Absent: D. Gunsteen

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: T. Smodilla

Seconded by: R. Perri

T. Smodilla Abstained

Motioned carried.

T. Fradin added for the record that **J. LaPorte** was present.

Bartletter Coupon Insert

T. Fradin gave a Bartletter coupon page to each commissioner. He informed them that this was started to help promote local businesses through the harshest times of the recession in 2009. Many local businesses participate. Local businesses are annually sent email and USPS invitations to be included in the insert. This year's insert has included fifty two businesses including service providers, restaurants and retail establishments. Two businesses that have participated in every insert include Banbury Fair and Bannerman's.

Commissioners were encouraged to share the coupons with their neighbors and remind them to shop and dine local during the holiday shopping season. It was pointed out that Pasta Mia had one of the most generous coupons, which include a free pizza and two glasses of wine.

N. Gudenkauf asked if there was a cost for businesses to participate

T. Fradin confirmed that there was no cost.

N. Gudenkauf asked if the invitation to participate was sent to all businesses.

T. Fradin confirmed that the invitation is sent to every business with a registered business license with the Village.

T. Smodilla asked how many businesses receive the invitation.

T. Fradin estimated between 340-350 invitations were sent.

T. Smodilla asked when the invitation was sent out.

T. Fradin confirmed that a letter is sent out in mid-October, giving businesses three weeks to reply. He also added that the Chamber also sends out reminders as well.

T. Smodilla encouraged sending out the invitation sooner, and to have the coupons available prior to “Small Business Saturday”, to encourage shopping local throughout the holiday season.

The commissioners debated the merits of sending the newsletter out sooner, including the ideas of sending it out sooner, or making it digital.

C. Green added that the Bartletter is already digital, so that option is already being taken advantage up. She also expressed that she believed that there are benefits to separating “Small Business Saturday” and the coupon insert, and that the two messages could be lost if they were combined.

S. Gandsey asked if they were already sent out.

T. Fradin confirmed that they had.

Bartlett Business Spotlight

During the last meeting, **T. Fradin** debuted the new initiative to create “Bartlett Business Spotlight” videos to showcase local businesses. At the last meeting, commissioners suggested that at the end of videos to add in the businesses’ address, which has been added since. Videos are shared to the Discover Bartlett Facebook Page. At the last meeting, commissioners were shown videos featuring D’Licious Crepes & Roti, VIP Baber Shop and Bartlett Coin & Card shop. Since then, videos have been made featuring Book Lady’s Book Attic, Pietanza’s, Rodney Ohlmann Trees, and Lisa’s School of Dance. Staff also has other videos ready to be filmed and edited. It was also added that they all have had substantial amount views already.

T. Fradin then showed the commissioners the new videos.

C. Green thanked staff for the work that was put into the videos.

T. Fradin added that this was a great way to support local businesses, and get them some free exposure to the community. Tony encouraged commissioners to share the videos, adding that they can exponentially expand the reach of the posts.

S. Gandsey asked if the videos were posted to YouTube, so that the businesses could share that link on their own websites.

T. Fradin said that they were not posted to the Village YouTube page.

S. Skrycki added that by having them on the “Discover Bartlett” page will help share the future videos and expand the “Discover Bartlett” page’s reach.

T. Fradin confirmed that they will be added to YouTube.

T. Smodilla thanked staff for including her suggestion about adding addresses to the videos from the previous meeting, and added that it was nice to see the storefront and the sign in the video as a point of reference. She was also interested in knowing if Bartlett Tire had contacted staff in regards to doing a video.

T. Fradin confirmed that they had not contacted him, and added that the current focus of the videos is for dining and retail, and that they will later shift to service providers, including Bartlett Tire.

Solicitation of Bids for 1.87-acre Town Center parcel

T. Fradin informed the commissioners that in an effort to implement one of the TOD Plan strategies, staff has crafted a solicitation of Bids document in an effort to attract a developer of multi-family housing to a village-owned 1.87-acre property in the Town Venter Subdivision.

This property consists of the undeveloped parcels of Lots 11, 12, 14, and 14 in the Bartlett Town Center Subdivision located at the southwest corner of East Railroad Avenue and South Berteau Avenue. These properties were never purchased by New England Builders and continue to be owned by the Village.

In 2016, the Village Board approved the Downtown Transit Oriented Development Plan (the “TOD Plan”) which identifies the site as Opportunity Site E. The TOD Plan details that the site will be attractive to potential residential developers because it is vacant, cleared and within close proximity to the Metra station. The site is one of the most viable Downtown development sites and should be a marketing priority for the Village, with many amenities within walking distance. The size and dimensions of the site are suitable to many layouts of apartment building floor plans.

SCB recommended a three-story, 38-unit apartment building with 57 parking spaces, which is a non-binding recommendation about the Subject Property’s development potential.

With these considerations in mind, staff has worked with the Village Attorney to craft a Solicitation of Bids, Statement of Qualifications and Proposed Preliminary Development Package for the purchase and development of this property.

The draft document was presented to the Committee of the Whole at its December 5th meeting. Following a brief discussion of the item, the Committee directed staff to issue the Solicitation of Bids this month with a due date in approximately two months.

T. Smodilla asked if the Village would have a preference for mixed-use.

T. Fradin informed the commission that the solicitation of bids does not include a requirement for mixed use, and added that it specifically is a more challenging site for mixed use. The Village is expecting submittals of residential only.

S. Gandsey asked if the TOD Plan included a thru street for the site.

T. Fradin confirmed that it does, and offered to send the commissioners a link to the TOD online to view the details of the site.

C. Green asked two months was a typical response time for this type of project.

T. Fradin responded that the deadline was actually longer than needed, and that this type of bid could be completed in some instances within a week or two.

S. Gandsey asked what the target size of the units is.

T. Fradin responded that there isn't necessarily a target size for the units, adding that there is a preferred layout to compliment the current town center building.

J. LaPorte asked if they had wondered if it has been indicated where the thru street would go, while expressing concern that if the street runs north-south, current residents' parking could be displaced, adding that those details should be reviewed before moving forward.

T. Fradin responded that he didn't have the exact specifications, but there is a rendering in the TOD plan. He added that the North-South road would be a connection to Bartlett Plaza. He also advised the commissioners to keep in mind that whichever submittal is chosen, that they will still go through the zoning process and that the details of the thru street are yet to be determined. He also added that the thru street is a part of the TOD plan, and that the developer is only advised to implement parts of the plans, not required. Tony also added that the EDC will be kept in the loop throughout the process.

S. Skrycki added that all developers will be going through the regular process, and that the Village Board will review the plans, and any displacement of families will not be taken lightly.

New Business

T. Fradin informed the commission that the Village has moved forward in marketing the Village owned site with the broker SVN (Sperry Van Ness) and that a sign has been put up. Staff has also been informed of a few early prospects. One of the recommendations by the EDC was to annex part of the site to make it fully apart of the Village, which would make the site more desirable. Tony informed the EDC that the process of annexation has commenced through the Village's Community Development Department, and staff is looking to get it on a Village Board agenda, so that a potential developer doesn't have to go through the process of annexing it.

Tony also added that Ambrosia has opened, and that staff will be doing a Bartlett Business Spotlight Video to help with promotion.

T. Smodilla asked for an update on Amita Health.

T. Fradin responded that there is no update other than their submittal of plans, and added that this is a project that will consume 2018 and into early 2019. The plans are currently under review. He added that Amita will be utilizing all but 8,000 Sq. feet, and that staff is working with a business that is wondering if the site will have excess space available.

T. Smodilla added that it is great news to share with the community that a business is going in.

R Perri asked if the owner has expressed any estimated cost for renting out the 8,000 square feet.

T. Fradin said that they haven't. He added that the entire duration of collaboration with Amita has been with the project manager, who does not deal with the real estate size.

R. Perri expressed concern with the vacant buildings, saying that residents are considering them as a "blight" to the Downtown area, and was wondering if anything has been or can be done about it.

T. Fradin responded that to answer that question it would have to be done individually by property, as they are all unique situations. Tony specifically discussed the two vacant bars on Railroad Avenue. He added that the village is engaged in a demolition lawsuit with the former Lucky Jack's, and that staff has been in contact with the bank that has taken possession of Platform 18, who has confirmed that it will be placed for sale, and that staff has prospects for the purchase of that building.

R. Perri asked if a TIF plan would be worth talking about in creating interest in the Buildings that have been vacant for a number of years.

T. Fradin said that it would, specifically citing the former Bartlett fresh market space, which is in need of major renovations. Tony added that a TIF can help offset the costs on these renovations, as well as for other sites with similar needs. He also added that TIFs aren't meant to put people into business, they're meant to fill a gap between the cost of investing in a property and the extraordinary costs of renovations. He cited that many of these buildings are simply a shell, as the entire interior needs to be redone, and that a TIF would definitely benefit any developers in the downtown area.

R. Perri recommended to the rest of the commission that a TIF discussion be added to the next month's agenda, and expressed that he believes it is stopping progress in the downtown area.

T. Fradin said that he could put it on agenda, and that it may delay the yearly economic analysis.

S. Skrycki added that if the commission wishes to put a TIF discussion on the agenda, then it will be on the agenda.

T. Smodilla stated that if a TIF discussion is going to happen, then the discussion should include all current TIFs in the village, including their deadlines and what the economic impact has been to the Village. She acknowledged and agreed with Commissioner Perri about the advantages of a TIF, but also wanted to see the potential "perils" to the taxpayers as well.

T. Fradin said that could be done, as he regularly does multiple TIF reports throughout the year. He also added that the Village is home to one of the most successful TIF's in the state in Brewster Creek Business Park, as well as another good example in the Blue Herron Business Park. On the other end of

the spectrum, Tony added that the Village has a completely undeveloped TIF at 59 and Lake, due to many different factors, and that has remained undeveloped for 13 years. He added that the main peril of a TIF is that without development, values decline and if there aren't projects the EAV of properties decline and creates a gap after the TIF.

T. Smodilla pointed out that the TIFs that had the least amount of development in the Village are the ones that fall in Cook County. She suggested that before the idea of any TIF in Cook County is entertained, that the Commission gets a response from the Cook County Board of Review or even the Cook County Commissioner in regards to the tax situation in Cook County, adding that it is the kindest thing that the EDC can do for the businesses in Cook County.

T. Fradin did agree that there is a disparity between county taxes. He added that the EDC can't just declare a TIF area, and that there has to be a study done on a pin by pin bases, requiring an overall decline in the area's EAV opposed to the entire community. Tony added that he believes the downtown would qualify.

Tony also added that with the last TIF study that ultimately didn't pass in the summer of 2015 didn't qualify as a blighting TIF, but qualified as a preservation area TIF, which focuses on preserving the EAV of an area. This is a less stringent qualification, and the area would still qualify, as it requires 50% or more buildings in a given area are 35 years or older.

S. Skrycki added that it would be beneficial for commissioners to review the downtown TIF that ended in 2010.

T. Fradin added that the TIF closing report can show the progress that was made in the former Downtown TIF in creating the Town Center. He added that he would send that report to the Commissioners.

R. Perri added that the Village is doing an excellent job on the commercial and industrial side, but from the resident perspective and not seeing much done downtown, they view the Village as a "do nothing Village", adding that the best thing that can be done is revitalize the downtown.

T. Fradin understood the perception of the downtown looking at the two vacant bars on railroad avenue, and the large vacancy in Bartlett Plaza, acknowledging that long term vacancies like that do not look good. He also added that one of the first questions that are asked by most developers looking into the downtown area is if there is a TIF. He also added that Commissioner Perri's point is well taken by staff, and that everybody wants to be proud of their downtown.

R. Perri stated that a part of developing and growing as a Village is filling vacancies and demolishing old buildings. He said that these aren't big problems, but they are problems. He believes that these problems are not being put on the front burner by the village.

T. Fradin stated that staff can look into tackling the Downtown, but added that many of these sites need some form of financial incentive to be attractive

J. LaPorte agreed with the perspective of the residents, but countered by saying that the cost of doing business is very high when having to pay for overhead, that it is harder and harder for small businesses to succeed, and that new buildings will bring those prices higher. He added that it's not necessarily the

Village's fault, it's simply the cost of starting up a business. He added that only a national franchise with shareholder money can afford the start-up costs.

T. Smodilla agreed, and argued the only way to truly combat the issue is through tax relief in Cook County. She suggested reaching out to elected officials, including House Representative Crespo who recently sent out a mailer about Cook County property tax relief, Commissioner Tim Schneider, a Bartlett Resident, and State Senators Cullerton and Castro. These individuals could create legislation that would create tax relief.

S. Gandsey asked if there were any studies to see what residents wanted in the downtown.

T. Fradin added that there were, and the most commonly requested was a grocery store. He also added on a positive note that there are multiple successful businesses in the downtown. It is the chronically vacant buildings that are dilapidated and hard to fill that add the negative connotation.

T. Smodilla added that as a commission is charged in providing information to local businesses to keep them in the Downtown. She also added that the sticking point of the TOD was the Metra station, and asked about the current plans to apply for a grant to undo the split platform.

S. Skrycki responded that they looked at the grant, which was a matching grant. He added that the estimated cost of the project was 3-4 million dollars, and the Village would be responsible for half. Due to the current structural deficit plus the state taking away 4-5 hundred thousand dollars out of the general fund for the state to shore up their budget, the board decided not to move forward WITH THAT GRANT, but they did move forward with a different matching grant that entails improving resident walkways that will cost \$28,000, while the village can apply for another grant to pay for the Village's half. Due to this there is no current plan to address the split platform, but it is something that staff will continue to look at.

T. Smodilla agreed that it is something that should be kept on the horizon.

J LaPorte summarized points that had been made and reemphasized the high cost of doing business in town, then added that the Commission needs to keep the entrepreneur in mind, and identify what makes Bartlett attractive for an entrepreneur.

R Perri added that in his experience, most developers do not want to do business in Cook County, and that it is simply less attractive. Adding that entrepreneurial success comes down to the individual and what kind of service they're providing.

T. Fradin agreed with the Commissioner's point.

J. LaPorte agreed and reemphasized Commissioner Smodilla's point about contacting cook county representatives about tax relief.

T. Fradin emphasized that the taxes are a factor, but not the only factor, and that they also need to find businesses that will be well received by the residents. He then emphasized that there are plenty of successful businesses in Cook County, and that it makes it more difficult when you are on the border, and residents can drive over the county line to do their shopping for less.

C. Green added that in Arts of Bartlett often has people coming saying they didn't know they were there and that they do not regularly go Downtown. She also emphasized that the downtown will continue to struggle if people don't go.

T. Fradin that many of the Village's special events attempt to bring people downtown as apart of the marketing plan. The Village also encourages businesses to try and capture people coming downtown to their service providers, and getting them to shop and dine.

T. Smodilla agreed that event marketing is the best way to bring people downtown, and requested a 2018 event schedule be brought the next EDC meeting to review and possibly fill gaps, in order to draw attention to the Downtown.

T. Fradin thanked Commissioner Smodilla for the Idea.

S. Gandsey asked if the Village could share the schedule with surrounding municipalities.

T. Fradin stated that while they do engage in joint marketing of a corridor for economic development, each municipality is more on its own for their own event marketing.

R. Perri asked if other municipalities purchase vacant or failing buildings, to get them on the market faster.

T. Fradin said that some municipalities do that and cited Hanover Park as an example.

R. Perri also asked about Schaumberg and Streamwood

T. Fradin did not know of those communities having that type of program.

S. Gandsey asked where money would go after selling the 1.87 Acre Parcel.

T. Fradin said that it would go to the general fund.

R. Perri asked that EDC be spelled out on the Village Calendar as the Economic Development Commission so that residents know what they are doing.

T. Fradin said that was a good thought.

Adjournment

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting.

Motioned by: R. Perri

Seconded by: N. Gudenkauf

Motion Carried. The Meeting Adjourned at 8:33 PM