

## Minutes

### Village of Bartlett Economic Development Commission August 13<sup>th</sup>, 2018

#### 1) Call to Order

G. Kubaszko called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm

#### 2) Roll Call

**Present:** S. Gandsey, N. Gudenkauf, D. Gunsteen, G. Kubaszko, A. Lewensky, J. LaPorte, T. Smodilla, R. Perri

**Absent:** C. Green

**Also Present:** T. Fradin, Economic Development Coordinator;  
S. Skrycki, Assistant Village Administrator;  
J. Dienberg, Administrative Intern;  
Lakshami P. Nookala, BEDA Applicant;  
Sunder Nookala, BEDA Applicant;  
Jaikumar ("Jay") Balasubramanian

#### 3) Approval of Minutes

**T. Smodilla** moved to amend the minutes from the July 9<sup>th</sup> 2018 Meeting, clarifying that Commissioner Gandsey seconded the motion to recommend an award of \$25,000 to Indian Express to the Village Board for approval, not Commissioner Smodilla.

**T. Fradin** said that staff would make that amendment.

**R. Perri** made a motion to approve the minutes from July 9<sup>th</sup>, 2018

**Seconded by: T. Smodilla**

#### 4) BEDA Application: Siri Indian Grocery 947 S. Route 59

**T. Fradin** introduced the newest BEDA applicant from Siri Indian Grocery at 947 S. Rt. 59, and introduced the owner Lakshami P. Nookala, her husband Sunder Nookala, and their business partner Jaikumar "Jay" Balasubramanian. Tony reviewed their plan to expand their current grocery space to add a hot food section which would supplement and add to the business's current offerings. He reviewed that the BEDA program can be used to expand existing businesses. He shared that Siri has been located in the village for 6 years, and shared that the grocery store currently specializes in Indian grocery items. Tony stated that the petitioners included a full proposal that has been included in the EDC packet. He shared that the kitchen buildout would cost approximately \$75,000

and a list of the new equipment needed was also listed in the packet. The proposal includes the cost of all equipment and contractor fees.

The applicant requested BEDA grant of \$30,000-\$45,000 and said that if approved the buildout would take approximately 2 months. In terms of job creation Tony stated that the petitioner estimates adding 2 additional positions including both food preparation and a clerk position. Being cognizant of the \$150,000 available for the current fiscal year and other applicants, Tony stated that staff is asking the EDC to recommend that \$15,000 be awarded to the petitioner by the Village Board. Mr. Fradin opened up the floor to questions for either him or the petitioners.

**T. Smodilla** asked to clarify the roles of the applicants, and if Ms. Nookala was the proprietor and if there is any sit-down aspect to the grocery store. She also asked if they planned to expand the footprint of the business at all or if they would be reconfiguring the space.

**S. Nookala** shared that he manages the store, while his wife is the owner, and added that Mr. Balasubramanian is his partner. He shared that they opened Siri Indian Grocery 6 years ago with success, and that with this new component they would like to add only carry-out at this time to the grocery store. Mr. Nookala also shared that this expansion would be limited within the space that they currently have and that they would be reconfiguring.

**G. Kubaszko** asked what the projections are of new revenue.

**S. Nookala** stated that it would be easily a 25-30% increase.

**S. Gandsey** asked if they would serve both lunch and dinner.

**S. Nookala** stated that they would serve both, and would consider adding breakfast down the road. Mr. Nookala also added that they will also consider extending their hours if needed.

**R. Perri** asked if with the increase in revenue, they will hire more employees.

**S. Nookala** stated that they will hire a clerk and an assistant cook immediately, and 2 chefs in the future.

**R. Perri** shared enthusiasm with the idea of job creation, and stated that the EDC would be happy to help with that in mind.

**T. Smodilla** asked if his current restaurant in Schaumburg was dine-in, or carry out/grocery. She also asked for his role in the new business, interested in knowing that he has experience in hot food preparation

**J. Balasubramanian** stated that his restaurant is dine-in and that he would be setting up the kitchen, arranging the chef, assistant cook, and setting up the entire kitchen, and managing that aspect, sharing that is based on his current experience.

**T. Smodilla** stated that hot food is taxed differently than grocery items, asking if they have discussed that differentiation for taxation and made projections for that.

**J. Balasubramanian** stated that with the 25-30% increase, with the grocery sales being static and the increase coming from the hot food, adding that they are anticipating \$4,000-\$5,000 per week in carry out sales.

**T. Smodilla** stated that that was an ambitious goal, and asked how they came to that number.

**J. Balasubramanian** stated that with his current restaurant and looking at avenues like Uber-Eats, Grub Hub, etc. that he was able to come to those numbers.

**D. Gunsteen** asked if the applicants had any plans to expand to a full restaurant, or if it was only carry-out.

**S. Nookala** stated that it would be only carry out.

**T. Fradin** added that with the current tenants in that shopping center, there is not room for such an expansion.

**D. Gunsteen** asked about the current terms of the lease.

**S. Nookala** stated that they have extended the lease for three more years.

**T. Fradin** added that there is a high demand in Bartlett for spaces that have kitchens, adding that it would be a worthwhile improvement to the space. He also added that the petitioners have shown a dedication to that space, and that this would be a long-term commitment.

**T. Smodilla** clarified that the lease has been extended through the year 2021.

**S. Nookala** stated that was correct.

**S. Gandsey** asked if they would have to close down during construction.

**S. Nookala** stated that they would not close, and that the grocery section would remain open.

**R. Perri** asked for the address of the business

**T. Fradin** shared that the address is Grocery 947 S. Route 59

**A. Lewensky** stated that he was inclined to support the petitioner, but told Mr. Fradin that it is difficult as a commissioner to make these decisions with a finite amount of resources and asked for a roadmap for what is coming instead of going first-come-first-served. He also asked if staff figures future applications in mind when recommending amounts such as tonight's \$15,000.

**T. Fradin** stated that it will remain first-come-first-served, and added that developers often ask for confidentiality. He also shared that staff keeps future projects in mind when recommending applications to the EDC. Mr. Fradin alluded to multiple projects coming down the pike, stating that they may be large applications.

**G. Kubaszko** asked if the Village is in a position to offer marketing or advertising assistance to Siri Indian Grocery.

**T. Fradin** stated that the Village would love to feature Siri Indian Grocery in a Business Spotlight when they expand as well as featuring them in the December coupon insert, and many other options that the Village uses to support local businesses. Mr. Fradin also added that he would recommend they join the Chamber of Commerce if they are not members already. Mr. Fradin added that they are a unique business and that the Village would be sure to feature them when possible.

**G. Kubaszko** agreed with the uniqueness of the business and stated that he would like them to have a robust start with their expansion.

**T. Fradin** stated that it is getting close to time to create the fall dining guide, and that this would be something to include. He added that between social media and the Bartletter, there is a lot of exposure for a local business.

**A. Lewensky** asked for the current food and beverage tax rate in Bartlett.

**S. Skrycki** stated that there is no local food and beverage tax, and that there is a 1% sales tax and a 1% home rule sales tax, equating to a 2% tax.

**D. Gunsteen** stated that he was happy to see a grocery store in town, and asked what made them change their business strategy.

**S. Nookala** stated that many of their food that they sell is sold ready to make, and that people regularly pick food up to cook as soon as they get home and that they would also come in looking for something quick at lunch time, stating that there was an opportunity. He stated that everybody is in a hurry and is looking for quick food.

**D. Gunsteen** stated that he is confident that they will be successful.

**R. Perri** stated that he believes they are in the right part of the trend of adding a restaurant component to a grocery store.

**S. Nookala** stated that this expansion gives them an edge to better serve their customer.

**T. Smodilla** stated that a key to business longevity and relevancy, it is important reinvent themselves, and applauded the effort.

**T. Smodilla** made a motion to recommend that the Village Board award \$15,000 to Siri Indian Grocery.

**Seconded by R. Perri**

**T. Fradin** stated that it would be forwarded on to the Village Board.

## **5) New Business/Public Comment**

**T. Fradin** shared that the Goodyear in Oakfield center abruptly closed with a few weeks notice, and that staff is currently working with a broker to fill that space. He added that the special use for automotive repair was made several years ago, and that staff would make filling that space a priority.

Mr. Fradin also shared that the current Metra Coffee vendor has ceased operation, and that after several inquiries, staff is currently in communication with Nick Patel, who manages multiple other stations along the Metra Line, and is scheduled to be on the next board meeting for approval.

Mr. Fradin added that there is a new Starbucks and Great Clips on the West side of Rt. 59 near home depot.

Lastly, Mr. Fradin added that there may be a new BEDA Applicant that is leasing the former Platform 18 in the near future.

**T. Smodilla** had no questions about the new business, but asked about a company in Brewster Creek that left for Knoxville Tennessee in search of tax relief and a stronger workforce. Commissioner Smodilla asked if other businesses are considering leaving for the same reasons.

**T. Fradin** stated that is not happening to his knowledge, stating that while many do take issues with their property taxes, Brewster Creek is in DuPage County. He added that he hadn't heard that, adding that businesses do their due diligence looking into and planning for their property taxes before moving in. He also added that the Chicago Metro-Area will not be able to compete with Tennessee in terms of property taxes, adding that the Chicago Area offers many other advantages such as transportation and the robust workforce.

**R. Perri** asked how much work needs to be done in Platform 18.

**T. Fradin** stated that they are not at the stage yet, adding that there needs to be code improvements as well as general buildout. He added that it was an operational a little over a year ago, and that some aspects are turnkey ready.

**T. Smodilla** asked what the new operator's concept is.

**T. Fradin** stated that it will be a bar and grill.

**R. Perri** asked if it makes a difference to the Village whether the rehab is done by the tenant or the owner.

**T. Fradin** stated that there isn't a big difference, adding that both are common within the Village.

**T. Smodilla** asked how many "lives" that building has had since "The Tap" went away.

**T. Fradin** stated that there have been two, including Papa Pacino's and Platform 18.

**D. Gunsteen** asked if the Village has started to Market the Lucky Jack's site.

**S. Skrycki** stated that the Village is in discussions with people relevant to that property, stating that staff wants to bring a good solid plan to the board for a focal point of the community, adding that staff is being cautiously optimistic.

**S. Gandsey** asked about the current relationship with SVN in terms of the Village owned property at 59 and Lake.

**T. Fradin** stated that the relationship is good, as they have brought the Village four letters of intent, and that they are looking to renew their contract with them, as there should be many potential projects for that site in the coming months.

**R. Perri** asked if the letters of intent were all for different intents.

**T. Fradin** stated that they are residential in nature with opportunity for future commercial, adding that the intents were similar, but none the same.

### **Adjournment**

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

**Motioned by: S. Gandsey**

**Seconded by: R. Perri**

**Motion Carried. The Meeting Adjourned at 7:57 PM**