

**VILLAGE OF FOX RIVER GROVE  
PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES  
SEPTEMBER 27, 2011**

**CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL**

Chairperson Melissa Schladt called the meeting of the Planning and Economic Development Commission to order at 7:04 p.m.

Present were Chairperson Melissa Schladt and Members Ron Hameetman, Don Kendeigh, Kevin Lantz and Chris Mattran. Also in attendance was Village Administrator Art Osten, Jr. as staff to the PEDC, and Secretary Alison Dal Compo. Rich Lauritsen has resigned.

**REVIEW & APPROVAL OF THE AUGUST 16, 2011 PEDC MINUTES**

The minutes from the August 16, 2011 PEDC meeting were approved as presented following a motion by Kendeigh and seconded by Hameetman. The motion carried.

**RESIDENT'S COMMENTS**

Chairperson Schladt welcomed Village President Bob Nunamaker and residents John and Eric Martin. The residents asked to be brought up to speed on the purpose of the PEDC.

Chairperson Schladt explained that it is a grass roots effort to promote business activities in the Grove. Mr. Eric Martin said that he feels the downtown area is embarrassing. Member Mattran stated that he agrees the downtown needs much work, but a catalyst for change will be the new Metra station. Mr. Eric Martin further stated that with the amount he pays in taxes, he feels the Village should be providing more amenities. Administrator Osten explained that while the Village can encourage businesses through TIF incentives and taxes, the developers really set the tone. Things will improve when the economy improves. The Village does not control what types of businesses go in. Chairperson Schladt added that the PEDC does not possess legal authority to make changes. Members can only foster cooperation and help enable existing businesses to succeed.

Mr. Eric Martin asked if the PEDC can lean on property owners. Administrator Osten said that the Village can only force businesses to meet minimum standards.

**BUSINESS RETENTION ACTIVITIES**

*FEBRUARY 2012 BUSINESS ROUNDTABLE*—Member Kendeigh attended the 2011 roundtable. There was not a large draw, so there is a need to energize local business owners

to attend! The agenda needs to change also, and it might be advisable to have an outside speaker. Village President Nunamaker noted that an outside person could do the presentation, but the essence of the information would remain the same. Chairperson Schladt suggested a speaker from the ISBDC. Administrator Osten suggested a speaker who could address how businesses can survive in this economy.

Member Lentz said that as a business owner himself, he felt that more specific tactical information would be helpful to other business owners. For example, how can owners use Facebook effectively in their businesses? Village President Nunamaker said perhaps Member Lentz would be a good choice for a speaker!

Chairperson Schladt said that as liaisons, members should contact their businesses and encourage them to attend the roundtable meeting. For now, polling can be done to find out what specific concerns owners have. Then, as the date draws nearer, they can be reminded to be there. She further suggested that the time could be extended to 90 minutes instead of 60; however, Village President Nunamaker said that the audience may shrink as the time grows longer.

Member Kendeigh pointed out that by February, the PEDC may have more information on the mural project, as well as train station updates. Mr. John Martin commented that the polling surveys need to be targeted, but simple. Administrator Osten said that the process of putting together the comprehensive plan included targeted information from business owners. Member Lentz said that in addition to going to the businesses with the survey, the members should be looking for opportunities to bring businesses together. Member Mattran said the survey should include three to five pointed questions. Administrator Osten suggested questions like: "How can owners work together for mutual profit? What can the Chamber do for you?"

Member Lentz commented that he has stores in two different towns. When they send out information about business growth, he will not respond unless it specifically helps to drive sales.

Chairperson Schladt recommended the following questions: "Did the owner attend the 2011 roundtable? Why or why not? Did they participate in the FRG card program? Why or why not? What keeps them up at night?" Administrator Osten asked that everyone e-mail him a list of five potential questions to be chosen from. Chairperson Schladt further suggested having a spotlight testimonial, such as one from the owner of Top Shelf Liquors. Member Lentz recommended Jim from CarX.

*BUY FRG CARDS, SALES AT EVENTS*—Administrator Osten reported that six more cards have already been sold than all of last year. Member Lentz asked what may have made the difference. Chairperson Schladt said that Village President Nunamaker and Trustee Schiestel had made most of the sales last year. Administrator Osten pointed out that any

new program can take a while to develop. Mr. John Martin asked if there has been follow up with the businesses as to how the cards have helped their business. Chairperson Schladt explained that many of the discounts on the card are the same as ones the business is giving in mailer or coupon form, but the cards ads are free!

Member Hameetman stated that New China's staff commented on how impressed they were with the card program, and how people would end up recommending it to each other at the restaurant. Member Kendeigh noted that the car wash discount is great! Administrator Osten said that it would be helpful to find out if the businesses track their discounts directly.

*9/7 CRUISE NIGHT*—Member Mattran reported that Member Hameetman, Administrator Osten and he had set up a table between Armanetti's and CarX. About 10 or 11 cards were sold that night. Administrator Osten suggested that there should be more coordination with the other commissions (Parks, Zoning, etc.) for these types of projects.

Member Mattran said that Brunch Café served brats and beer for \$7. Mr. Eric Martin asked why the Cruise Night wasn't held in the Ace/Tuesday Morning parking lot. He was told that it was at CarX because the Cruise Night is sponsored by the Chamber, and CarX is a Chamber member. Member Hameetman felt that there was not enough advertising done for the event. The Chamber pays for the advertising. Mr. Eric Martin suggested using flyers in people's doors in the future.

Chairperson Schladt brought up the idea of getting the PEDC involved when permits are taken out for rental of Lion's Park. She explained that the PEDC may be able to foster business relationships by matching up restaurants which could provide food with groups who are sponsoring events. Administrator Osten liked the idea but thought that the Parks Commission may be in a better position to follow up on such an endeavor.

*9/10 LION'S FEST*—Although there had been previous discussion about some members attending this event, none did. The Lionesses did sell some cards, however.

*10/1 & 10/2 NORGE SKI JUMP*—Member Lentz is already committed to parking for the event. Member Hameetman said that he could work from 12-2 on Saturday.

*11/23 SPAGHETTI DINNER*—Lionesses will sell cards at this event.

Member Lentz suggested donating a card to baskets made for the silent auction at Ladies Day Out for the P.T.O. It may help to increase awareness of the card, as well as usage.

*RETAIL BUSINESS LIAISONS*— Chairperson Schladt reiterated that the two new members would take over any currently unassigned businesses. The priority now should be getting the survey for the roundtable into the hands of the business owners.

Member Hameetman still needs to send his introductory letters out. It also must be

determined if Rich Lauritsen had sent his out to his assigned businesses.

*DOWNTOWN MURALS PROJECT: DIGITAL PRESENTATION*--Chairperson Schladt explained that Rich Lauritsen had been heading up this project, but has since resigned. She reiterated the details of the project for the benefit of the residents in the audience.

Mr. John Martin asked why the vacant lot at Opatrny and Lincoln hasn't been taken over by the Village. Administrator Osten stated that the owner will not part with the land at a reasonable price. The owner was just taken to court for property maintenance violations.

Member Mattran explained that Jim Purcell of Jimano's was looking into taking over the Café Salsa building, but again the price was too high. He is now looking into the property next to Dunkin Donuts.

Administrator Osten said that the meeting with Metra regarding possible murals on the new Metra station will be held on October 5 at 10:15. Mr. John Martin asked if any high school art students had been approached in regards to the mural project; he was told no. Member Lentz explained that a level of professionalism is needed due to the high visibility areas the murals will be in. Chairperson Schladt said that the bar was set high, and the caliber of art students can vary greatly. A quote was obtained through Dr. Mahaffey from the artists that did the mural at the middle school.

There has been an article in the Daily Herald about the mural project, as well as on the Village information boards.

*SOCIAL NETWORKING FUNDRAISING:* Member Lentz is coordinating. He explained that the PEDC is trying to determine what is currently the best mechanism to get the word out to people. There is an effort to get some samples of the murals onto the Village website.

Two types of "buttons" were tested. The smaller button takes you to the Razoo website, while the larger button stayed on the current website. The larger button seemed to be preferred. Administrator Osten said that if Metra agreed to put up as much as 80% of the needed funds, it would be a great morale booster on the website.

Member Lentz said that it would be necessary for a 501 (C) (3) to be set up. Administrator Osten and Chairperson Schladt both stated that various other organizations had tried to set them up and found it costly and difficult. Member Kendeigh said that he had been in charge of setting one up for Friends of the Library, and Chairperson Schladt asked if he would look into doing one for the mural project.

Member Mattran asked for clarification as to who the audience from Metra will be. He was told it will be the Mayor of Ringwood, the President of the Council of Governments, the representative who will be overseeing the Metra station project, and a government relations

person. Chairperson Schladt recommended having specifics in the proposal and to go for higher numbers rather than lower. Member Lentz asked what the exact point of the meeting will be. He was told 1) to obtain permission to have the murals on the Metra station and 2) to ask for financial assistance. Chairperson Schladt said that the original line item budget that Member Kendeigh put together should be a part of the presentation. Administrator Osten noted that it will be important to show how enthusiastic the PEDC is about this project.

### **NEWS AND UPDATES**

***DOWNTOWN RE-DEVELOPMENT/REFERENDUM:*** Village President Nunamaker gave a short presentation regarding the situation. The block across the street from the train station will no longer be the main target. There is a big thirst for apartments among many age groups because few people now have the 20% down needed to buy a home. The Village used a tax increment financing tool, and has set aside \$27,000 for a TIF study. This will target the area from Auto Audits to A & C Electric, then from Viking Stairs to Grove Plating. Another area will be from 14 to Opatrny.

The Village engineers said the Village would need \$1 million for infrastructure, but of course this amount of money is not available currently. Thus, there is a need to launch a referendum to increase the sales tax by ¼%. This works out to about \$.25 on \$100. Much of the current sales tax revenue actually comes from people who live outside the Village itself.

Recently, the Village got the electricity bills of residents dropped by about \$90/year. The various commissions need to get on board with this idea and encourage residents to also.

The proposed steps are: 1) take a plot of land about 50 square feet by 80 square feet 2) include shops and restaurants 3) potentially have five in a row!

This type of construction would generate both property tax and sales tax into the community. The property tax yield would be about \$15,000 to \$16,000. The sales tax yield may be about \$50,000 per year. If the Village voted to pass the referendum, it would pay off a \$1 million bond.

All the trustees have been assigned tasks with regard to the referendum. Additionally, Village President Nunamaker also sits on the Citizens Advisory Board, and regularly asks for updates about the new train station.

TIF districts have gotten the town of Fox River Grove both the Walgreens and Dominick's. Administrator Osten explained that developers expect about 15% in the "war chest". The project must be sustainable and a partnership. This is macro implementation. Member Hameetman commented that he feels TIF's are sacrificial. Administrator Osten said that this would not be money that someone else got. Village President Nunamaker said that

Member Hameetman's point is well taken, but the fact that both the Grayhill plant and the Escape building being empty cost the Village about \$3,000 a year! This project would create a stream of revenue that would stay in the Village forever.

Member Hameetman made the point in these projects, the real estate person and the developer all get their money and go on their way. What happens if the project then does not come to fruition? Administrator Osten said that the developer does not benefit unless the building is actually built. Mr. John Martin commented that no one wants a situation like what happened at Routes 31 and 62 in Algonquin, where the developer walked away.

Chairperson Schladt reiterated that the developments would be anchored with apartments. Member Kendeigh added that it would be multi-use. Administrator Osten said that the marketing survey suggested the need for high-end apartments, and neighboring communities like Crystal Lake are already working in that direction.

*MCEDC & MCCVB:* The ISBDC has a new director, as Mary Margaret Maule has started her own business.

*CGA CHAMBER:* The Montessori School is opening. They have room for up to 110 students. There is also a Home Health Care company opening, and Aetna has started building next to Jimano's. Café Salsa has a serious inquiry from a Greek restaurant. The Chamber is having a Board meeting this Friday night at 7:30 p.m.

**OTHER BUSINESS--none**

**NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting is scheduled for October 18, 2011 at 7:00 p.m.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**A Motion was made by Schladt and seconded by Kendeigh to adjourn the meeting at 9:28 p.m. Motion carried.**

**APPROVAL**

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Date

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Melissa Schladt, Chairperson

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Alison Dal Compo, Secretary