

***ECDC: Economic & Community Development Committee***

**Tuesday April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2024 5:00 PM**

**Committee Members Present:** Chris Chapman, Mike Glenn, Don Griffin, Phil Lehmann, and Terry Schuster.

**Also, present:** City Manager Darin DeHaan, Cheryl Hilton, Chris Manheim, and Mayor Ken Williams.

**Present via Zoom:** Mike Delaney, Kim Ewoldsen, and Tom Mahoney.

**Absent:** Erin Folk, and Rebecca Hazzard.

Don Griffin called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm.

Don Griffin called roll call. A quorum was present.

No public comment.

Tom Mahoney moved to approve the March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024 Minutes, Seconded by Chris Chapman.

Motion carried. No nays.

**County ECDC:** City Manager Darin DeHaan said the committee is working on establishing investment levels, setting policies, and procedures. He said they have also discussed the importance of holding open meetings.

**Discuss Ogle County Bike and Rec Committee:** City Manager Darin DeHaan said a group of individuals is interested in connecting the Oregon, Mt. Morris, Polo, Byron, and Dixon communities via bike paths. There are approximately fifteen people and they have held two meetings. They have plans to meet with IDOT, Ogle County, and the Oregon Park District. Terry Schuster said a bicycle culture needs to be established to increase awareness in the community.

**Oregon ED Update:** Chris Manheim has been working with Charlene Coloumbe and Darin DeHaan on commercial and retail marketing. He has met with property owners along Rt 64 and Rt 2 to discuss the potential of commercial retail development. He is continuing to work on affordable housing and attended a meeting scheduled with officials from the City of Rockford.

**Business Development Update:** Mayor Ken Williams said once the materials from the meeting held today with the officials from the City of Rockford have been reviewed, they will be shared with the group.

**TIF and Enterprise Zone Updates:** Mayor Ken Williams said the Enterprise Zone meeting will be held tomorrow.

**Discuss Redefining Future of ECDC:** Don Griffin said he would like to hold a brainstorming session. He said he would like to see the committee become more active, possibly create working groups to focus on individual projects, such as commercial development and affordable housing. The committee agreed to hold a brainstorming session to redefine and set the vision for the committee.

**Chamber News/Oregon Together Report/Schools/Community Events:**

Chris Chapman said the Chamber of Commerce has filled the Chamber Director position. Upcoming events include a ribbon cutting for Rustic Paw, Headshots and Happy Hour at the VFW, and a Mother's Day Brunch at River's Edge. Terry Schuster said Headshots and Happy Hour is a social networking event

that will help with social media and business marketing. The registration deadline is April 9<sup>th</sup>, and the fee is thirty dollars. He also said on June 30<sup>th</sup> the Nash Car Club will be at Stronghold for a car show. There will be approximately two hundred cars. Zappy Cards are being distributed to area businesses as well. The cards provide a link for patrons to leave a google review.

Tom Mahoney said this is a stressful time for teachers. Several required state tests are being performed by the school district. The teachers and school staff have worked extremely hard over the last several years and the school and community are seeing the benefit of all the hard work with test scores. He also said spring sports have started. City Manager Darin DeHaan said on May 8<sup>th</sup> the city will be partnering with the school district for Walk, Bike, & Roll to School Day. The event is held annually and encourages children to safely walk, bike, or roll to school.

Mike Glenn said the dioramas are complete at CMAAA. A concert is being held on Friday, a tribute to Cole Porter. The high school jazz band will be the opening performance. They are also holding a Focus on Photography Art Exhibit and workshop in May.

Mike Delaney stated housing seems to be the most pressing issue for the region. A program has been created with the curriculum that reverses the idea that young people need to leave small communities to succeed. The program asks for youth to create a project showing how interesting their community is.

Kim Ewoldsen said current 8<sup>th</sup> graders are encouraged to register before September 1<sup>st</sup> for the SVCC Impact Program to avoid paying fees for the program. She also said Commencement will be held on May 10<sup>th</sup>.

Chris Chapman asked about business signage downtown. He said many businesses are confused by the regulations on signs and would like to use perpendicular signs. Mayor Ken Williams said the city encourages business owners to use perpendicular signs. City Manager Darin DeHaan will provide information regarding the regulation of signs.

Meeting adjourned at 5:45 PM.

Submitted by City Clerk Cheryl Hilton