

Meeting of the Northbrook Economic Strategy Commission (ESC)

**Terrace Room
Northbrook Village Hall - 1225 Cedar Lane**

**Wednesday, April 26, 2023
5:30 PM**

Agenda

- 1) Call to Order**
- 2) Review of Minutes – March 22, 2023**
- 3) Public Comment – Hear from the Audience** (items not on the agenda)
- 4) Economic Strategy Commission Topics Review**
 - a) Downtown Redevelopment**
- 5) Old Business**
- 6) New Business**
- 7) Adjourn (7:00 PM)**

Questions? Contact Michaela Kohlstedt at 847-664-4057 or michaela.kohlstedt@northbrook.il.us

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DRAFT

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE VILLAGE OF NORTHBROOK
ECONOMIC STRATEGY COMMISSION (ESC)
VILLAGE HALL, TERRACE ROOM
MARCH 22, 2023**

ESC Members Present: Chairperson Marci Carl, Matt Cassidy, Patrick Keefe, Katie McKillip-Von Feldt, Michael Nortman, & Ron Weil

ESC Members Absent: James Karagianis

ESC Staff Present: Cara Pavlicek, Village Manager

Public Present: None

Call to Order & Introductions:

Chairperson Marci Carl called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. She welcomed the two new members Matt Cassidy and Michael Nortman and everyone introduced his/herself and offered background.

Manager Pavlicek called the roll.

Review of Minutes:

A motion was made by Member Weil, and seconded by Member McKillip-Von Feldt, to approve the February 22, 2023, ESC minutes as presented. Ayes: all. Nays: none.

Public Comment – Hear from the Audience

There was no Public Comment.

Economic Strategy Commission Topics Review

a) Downtown Redevelopment

Chairperson Carl stated the focus is on making change in the vision for downtown based upon prior meeting discussion of the Committee. Regarding retail establishments, a train cuts through downtown, restaurants aren't prevalent, parking is a challenge; there are eyesores. She believes changes should be facilitated with design, etc. and asked what should be tackled as a commission.

Member Nortman offered some background (regarding 2008-2009) and the property in downtown where the Walgreens used to be. He noted the memos on economic tools is enlightening.

Manager Pavlicek shared now is the time to plan the entitlements.

Member Weil discussed a hardware store elsewhere, the Village's position, etc. He noted the Walgreens Center is the easiest place to start. Member Weil said the Village has to develop an entitlement framework (an RFP noting the goal); build a dense project; be invited to the table.

Member Weil said the Village doesn't need to redo the zoning. The Village could develop an RFP and approach obvious developers. Developers would be interested with Village participation.

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46 Member Nortman stated residential is the key to downtown and can survive on its own.

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48 Discussion took place on opportunities at Techny & Shermer.

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50 Chairperson Carl asked how the difficulty in Northbrook could change. Member Cassidy said, regarding
51 fears of developers in Northbrook, it sounds like they are concerned about public reaction as well as
52 government reactions.

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54 Member Nortman stated messaging is important for progress. Member McKillip-Von Feldt said
55 communicating beforehand regarding branding is key.

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57 Chairperson Carl asked how we get there. Manager Pavlicek noted Director Kohlstedt prepared a draft
58 memo to discuss this. Recommendations can go to the Village Board. She referred to the document with
59 the draft watermark (Downtown Development Outlook) stating this is a suggestion.

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61 Member Nortman discussed contacting the owner of Sunset Foods (has 4-5 years remaining).

62
63 Member Cassidy asked and Manager Pavlicek stated this is a framework brought to the ESC; enabling to
64 communicate; strategies to accomplish this. She gave an example from the Sustainability Commission;
65 Staff facilitates.

66
67 Member Cassidy discussed the original downtown plan. Member Keefe noted the Grainger property
68 should be mixed-use. Member McKillip-Von Feldt asked if people in the community participated.
69 Manager Pavlicek stated they did. Chairperson Carl and Member Keefe suggested exploring the idea of
70 mixed-use. Member Cassidy said this should be action and future-oriented.

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72 Member Weil asked if this letter could say *you have to spend money to make money*. A recommendation
73 should be made to have a downtown that's relevant. Member Keefe noted we need to share what
74 other communities are doing; educate people. Impact on schools could be included. Member Cassidy
75 shared the public is looking at this as an eyesore; won't be as much resistance as the Grainger project.
76 Member Weil said, regarding the Grainger project, people need to evolve with their thinking. Past uses
77 are no longer viable. The Village has to be on board. He stated people on Cherry Lane will discuss traffic.

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79 Chairperson Carl recommended a Village newsletter noting a *sign of the times*. More people have to use
80 the services of downtown. There is no lunch crowd because there are no offices. She noted we have to
81 change the density. The Village has no choice. House values would go up. Communication has to start
82 now and from the top. Member Nortman said if a developer wants to spend money, help them to do so.

83
84 Chairperson Carl stated there is no necessary retail that facilitates a daily trip. Member Nortman said
85 the Village could have some retail downtown. Member Cassidy referenced Wilmette and apartment
86 buildings were erected along Green Bay Road. Chairperson Carl reiterated current retail outlets could be
87 offered new beautiful spaces.

Chairperson Carl asked what Northbrook is spending money on. Manager Pavlicek replied water, streets, sewer, fire, etc. Member Weil shared a lot of communities spend money on infrastructure. Manager Pavlicek said yes.

Member Nortman suggested looking at what's in the control of the Village. Manager Pavlicek said the Village Board will respond to questions. Communities do buy properties. Member Nortman would propose investing in local facades, streamline and fast-pass the process; make it easier for businesses to come.

Chairperson Carl reminded the ESC has to focus on its mission. Manager Pavlicek shared the zoning code is being updated.

Old Business

There was no Old Business.

New Business

There was no New Business.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Member Weil, and seconded by Member McKillip-Von Feldt, to adjourn the Economic Strategy Commission meeting at 6:58 p.m. The motion passed by voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Gale Cerabona



MEMORANDUM

To: Economic Strategy Commission
From: Michaela Kohlstedt, Deputy Director of Development & Planning Services
Cc: Jonathan Mendel, Director of Development & Planning Services
Date: April 26, 2023
Subject: Downtown Redevelopment Discussion

On March 22, 2023 the Economic Strategy Commission (ESC) conducted a discussion pertaining to the redevelopment of Meadow Shopping Plaza and 1200 Meadow Lane. As a part of that discussion, the ESC opined on future redevelopment possibilities of the sites and reviewed a draft document noting next steps for internal review by staff and the Village Board, with consultation of the Village Attorney if needed.

The draft document was further reviewed by members of the ESC and is included with edits and modifications as submitted by Chairperson Carl. The Commission will spend the April 26 regular meeting reviewing the document as a group to discuss any further revisions and final comments.

MEMORANDUM

To: Village President and Board of Trustees
From: Economic Strategy Commission
Cc: Cara Pavlicek, Village Manager
Jonathan Mendel, Director of Development & Planning Services
Michaela Kohlstedt, Deputy Director of Development & Planning Services
Date: April __, 2023
Subject: Downtown Redevelopment Outlook

On March 22, 2023 the Economic Strategy Commission (the “ESC”) conducted a discussion on the potential redevelopment options for downtown Northbrook. The Commission primarily focused on the Meadow Shopping Plaza located at 1901-1975 Cherry Lane and 1200 Meadow Road which are both under common ownership (collectively, the “Key Properties”). The ESC reached this focus after detailed consideration which determined the redevelopment of these two parcels would make the biggest impact to the community. It is ESC’s opinion that this center requires redevelopment due to its current deteriorating conditions, growing vacancy and lack of variety for shopping options. Lastly this parcel’s central location could have the greatest potential to make a significant civic and cultural impact on our community.

As the Village Board may be aware, the Key Properties have been listed for sale on and off over the last several years. The sites were also noted in the 2012 Northbrook Downtown Plan as a Key Redevelopment Site appropriate for mixed use development with added density and height.

It is the consensus of the ESC that the properties remain key redevelopment sites for the Village of Northbrook and recommends that the Board of Trustees consider:

1. The Village’s future active involvement in the purchase and redevelopment of these two properties;
2. The need for high density residential on the site;
3. The need for shared parking in the downtown;
4. Creating incentives for restaurants and other service business (permit and fee waivers for a couple years?);
5. The decreasing demand for traditional retail stores
6. Review the Downtown Overlay District to allow as a permitted use high-density multi-family on this site including height and density. By taking some initial zoning steps this will send a strong message to the community (development and Northbrook residents) and shave some time off the entitlement process; and
7. The importance of retaining an urban design firm to ensure scale, design and quality of public infrastructure to be considered in this unique opportunity for downtown place making.

The ESC recommends that the Board take an active role in either (i) acquiring the Key Properties, or (ii) acquiring a purchase option to acquire the Key Properties. Concurrent with the pursuit of the Key Properties, the Board should determine the appropriate uses and scale of a new mixed use development on the Key Properties.

While contemplating the future development of the Key Properties, the Board should also determine adequate public financing to be involved in the process. The Commission recommends *[INSERT TEXT: options]*.

Once the Board (i) controls the Key Properties through purchase agreement or purchase option, (ii) has determined the uses and scale of a mixed use development that the Board will support, and (iii) what [financial incentives] the Board will offer, the EDC believes that the Board should engage a national real estate brokerage company to solicit development proposals from qualified purchasers / developers.

The ESC believes that the old adage you have to spend money to make money characterize the redevelopment potential of the Key Properties perfectly. The Key Properties represent the only large scale redevelopment opportunity in downtown Northbrook. As widely reported in the local news, Glenview has recently become very involved through financial incentives and real estate ownership along Glenview Road

in downtown Glenview. The Board might ask if this is such a good idea why wouldn't the current owners of the Key Properties undertake the redevelopment of their properties. The answer is that the Key Properties' current ownership has no incentive to undertake a redevelopment of the Key Properties, as the Key Properties are leased and almost certainly already produce meaningful monthly distributions.

The EDC also believes discussion related to shared parking should be expanded to the entire downtown and that it is beneficial for the Village Board to consider the potential of working with other landowners along the west side of Meadow Road between Cherry Lane and Shermer Road. The intent of working with the owners is to consider a shared parking program in the future for patrons of the downtown to park in the office parking lots after business hours.

Last, the EDC believes that the Key Properties represent the best way to transform Northbrook's downtown to be more commensurate with the quality of the community. The EDC stands ready to assist or advise as appropriate.

Respectfully submitted,

The EDC