

APPROVED

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.

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

Discussion took place on opportunities at Techny & Shermer.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Chairperson Carl stated there is no necessary retail that facilitates a daily trip. Member Nortman said the Village could have some retail downtown. Member Cassidy referenced Wilmette and apartment

buildings were erected along Green Bay Road. Chairperson Carl reiterated current retail outlets could be 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