

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE VILLAGE OF NORTHBROOK
INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**

Remote Meeting

May 26, 2020

ICDC Members Present: Chairman Patrick Lederer, Mark Bernhard, Jill Carlisle, Tensley Garris, David Gottlieb, Steven Lewis, Richard Rushkewicz & Curtis Wilens.

ICDC Members Absent: Ron Goldblatt, Doug Mahute, Harrison Oh

Staff Present: Tom Poupard-Director, Development and Planning Services

Guests Present: None

Public Present: None

Recorder: Sue Anetsberger

Call to Order & Introductions:

Chairman Patrick Lederer called the meeting to order remotely at 7:35 a.m.

Review of Minutes

A correction on Page 2, Line 27 should read “*he*” not “*her*”. A motion was made by Member Garris and seconded by Member Lewis to approve the minutes as corrected from the February 25, 2020 Joint ICDC/EDC Meeting. The motion passed.

Public Comment-Hear from the Audience-None

Community Planning Report

Tom Poupard-Director, Development and Planning Services provided an update on the following items:

- 1) 755 Skokie Blvd. Skokie Greenhouse construction has started. A permit was issued for the interior renovation;
- 2) Northbrook Court – The expectation is that Lord & Taylor will reopen for liquidation. The current owner of Lord & Taylor did not purchase the real estate, only the name of the store and all of the merchandise. It will be possible that the space can be repurposed for athletic uses or other uses. It appears that Nieman Marcus will come out of bankruptcy proceedings and still be

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able to operate their store. The Northbrook location is a strong performer. The Village has approved building permits for the interior of the mall. A permit for a new face for the exterior of the mall has been approved. A permit has been approved for an area of future restaurants. Permit drawings for the multifamily buildings have not yet been seen. Brookfield will still be the developer for the multifamily. Fresh Farms will be the new grocer at the mall. There is a proposal for a second story element above the grocer.

- 3) The Board of Trustees will review at its meeting tonight the northwest corner of Pfingsten and Willow. The property involves six different parcels at the northwest corner. Three of the six parcels are already zoned commercial. Fresh Farms has decided not to build at the corner. The developer that received approval for the Glenview side (south) is the same developer for the Northbrook side (north) of the road. There is a proposed gas station/ convenience store/car wash along with four different restaurant/ coffee type uses, all with drive thru, and some type of auto related use. There has been some public comment from the single family homes about the project. IDOT controls the curb cuts but the Village is able to provide input.

General Update Business Activity and the Pandemic

The Village has been closed but is still operating and providing all services. The Development & Planning Services Department has continued all acceptance of permit applications. All building inspections are still under way. Contractors are able to take pictures of some items and submit them to the Village for approval, to avoid close interaction. All in all, both the Village and the construction community have adapted well.

Residential projects include 1) Jacob's Townhomes have been issued permits for the next three buildings. Construction fencing is in place; 2) Permits were released for several more buildings at MI homes, the townhomes on Techny Road; 3) The Village continues to receive requests for new single family home permits.

Responding to a question, Director Poupard will seek updated information from the Village engineer on the bridge at Pfingsten over the spur ramp and will disburse it to the Commissioners.

Commissioner Wilens inquired about the increased number of water main breaks. Director Poupard stated that Public Works has been bringing the new water tower in Sky Harbor online which has

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increased pressure on the system. That may be playing a role. We have also had a huge amount of rain, which impacts subsurface conditions. He stated that Dundee Road and Cherry Lane corridors seem to have been hard hit.

The Village is very concerned about maintaining health standards and is accelerating online applications. Things took a significant turn last week with the Governor's phasing plan. Retailers will be allowed to reopen, but with restrictions regarding the number of customers and sanitizing and restaurants will be allowed to open with outdoor dining and sanitizing. Social distancing must be maintained along with special cleaning regimes.

The Village will work with the restaurants to allow temporary outdoor dining and drinking areas. Reusable bags will not be allowed. Social distancing must be maintained. Barber shops and hair salons can start to reopen. Customers and employees must wear face covering and also maintain social distancing. Gyms will be allowed to operate outdoors. State guidelines for manufacturing and offices must follow the State guidelines, i.e. using Clorox wipes on vending machine surfaces.

Unemployment at the state and national level has skyrocketed. The rate for Northbrook, using April numbers, is quite low. He showed a map illustrating which areas in the Chicago Metro Area had the highest concentrations of restaurant and hotel workers. Those areas have seen the highest unemployment rates. It has not yet impacted Northbrook significantly, but as the economic impact of the pandemic deepens, it could also impact Northbrook and other suburbs with more "white collar" jobs.

IN response to a question, Director Poupard stated that it seems home break-ins are down, with more people working from home but there is some concern about an uptick in armed robbery. Fraud efforts are going on all over.

Director Poupard asked for insight on how the Commissioners' businesses have been impacted.

Chairman Lederer stated he has approximately 150 tenants with broad ranges of businesses. Some of his businesses have been hurt and are contacting him for help while other businesses are booming. His parking lots are mostly empty and maintenance calls have decreased in number.

Commissioner Bernhard stated that his business has not taken a hard hit and jobs are moving forward. His business is often the last service to come in on a construction project. He stated some jobs are being

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put on hold. His lunch room has been closed. Employees either eat at their independent work benches or outside in their vehicles. Deep cleaning takes place within the plant.

Commissioner Gottlieb stated that some of their employees have been victims of COVID-19, but most are able to work remotely. The Northbrook office will open in phases. A lot of people are being hired in the liquidation area. Northbrook will remain the global headquarters.

Commissioner Lewis' business is practicing social distancing and working by appointment. He is running 40% of where he was last year. He reported that last month he was down only 20% and is beginning to see traffic. Some customers are requesting work while other customers are pushing back 6 – 8 weeks. Originally 80% of his staff was laid off but he now has brought back two-thirds. He is concerned where the money will come to pay for all of this and stated that PPP is not a long term fix. He is trying to provide a safe environment for the customer.

Commissioner Carlisle's business has been shut down the past ten weeks. Her phone-in business was successful and increased the average sale per customer. The business was only down 20% in April. The month of May has been more difficult. She plans to reopen June 1st with in store and curbside pick-up. Her business received a PPP. The store's online site was revamped, but she states it takes a great deal of time and effort to have an effective social media presence.

Commissioner Garris stated that the Chamber has had to cancel all of its normal activities and has gone to virtual programming. The Chamber has worked hard facilitating information to the area businesses and has been increasing efforts to help the small businesses. The Chamber relays information to the small businesses that they need in order to adapt. A survey of local businesses and how they were impacted by the pandemic has been forwarded to the Village Board. All Chamber fundraisers have been canceled. The Chamber will work to reopen in the month of June.

Commissioner Garris stated that there is a lack of local public information due to the ceasing of publishing by 22nd Century Media. She stated that newsletters will become more important.

Commissioner Wilens offered a more national perspective on health care. He stated that a lot of hospitals were hurting financially from not being able to offer elective surgeries. Elective surgeries are now resuming. He stated that telehealth services are here to stay.

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Commissioner Rushkewicz stated the bank offers drive thru and lobby access and offers appointments as necessary. His company has seen 31 cases of COVID-19 out of 5,000 employees. Cyber crime and fraud attempts have increased. His company has completed over 12,000 PPP loans. The average loan was a\$75,000-\$100,000. He stated that shields will be installed for the bank tellers.

Proposed “Northbrook Strong Business Grant Program”

Director Poupard explained that the Village Board is in discussion for a program that will offer some type of local business assistance. They have looked at what other communities have implemented. Elk Grove Village forgave water bills. Lake Forest is offering a sales tax rebate; however, with that program the monies will only be received by businesses in the future as revenue is generated.

The Village of Northbrook has adapted its budget. The Board set aside \$250,000 for some type of grant assistance current program. An outline is in place for a local business to receive up to \$2,000 to help with safe reopening associated practices. The Village Board was interested in a reimbursement program rather than a grant. Restaurants would also qualify and would be able to include costs of renting things used to create outdoor dining areas. If a restaurant has more than four storefronts, it does not qualify. All businesses must be operating in good standing and provide some type of explanation of economic hardship. The employee threshold for restaurants was eliminated. There will be an open grant period with an assigned measure of time. The amount of the grant will be determined by the amount of application requests received.

Business Community Outreach Efforts

Director Poupard states that the Village really wants to ramp up its communication efforts with the business community. He asked about the roll the Village should take to get out information to be of assistance to the business community. One effort would be some type of on-line effort to discuss the grant program. Director Poupard solicited the opinions of the Commissioners.

Commissioner Garris suggests that the Village should focus on regulatory information, as the information changes rapidly. She stated that the Village of Glenview records videos on how the permitting process works.

Commissioner Carlisle agreed that the Village should focus on explaining the different regulations.

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Chairman Lederer agreed and requests simple facts on the regulations that are coming out.

Chairman Rushkewicz agreed and requests information on how things have changed due to COVID-19. He thinks any information on how people can get back up on their feet would be helpful.

The Commission's consensus was for the Village to post on YouTube the Village regulations/fact information/COVID-19 information. The Commissioners want the information to be local. This information can then be accessed when businesses have the need and the time to watch.

Commissioner Garris asked about restaurants being able to serve mixed drinks outdoor and if any streets will be closed. Director Poupard stated he has no details at this time but that the Board may address the issue at tonight's meeting. An application packet will be put together for businesses wishing to have outdoor dining privileges. Village approval will be required. The information required will include layout, and a statement that confirms that the business will meet all sanitation requirements.

Old Business: None

New Business:

The Chamber of Commerce holds a virtual business round table meeting every Monday at 3:30 p.m. A session is set up with Congressman Brad Schneider on June 10, 2020.

The Village is not planning to open Village Hall until mid-June at the earliest and public meetings will be dependent upon the occupancy numbers allowed by the state. It is not clear how long we will have to continue having remote meetings.

Chairman Lederer stated that next month's meeting will contain information on a 6B request.

Adjourn:

On a motion made by Commission Rushkewicz and seconded by Member Carlisle, the meeting was adjourned at 8:57 a.m. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

Respectfully submitted

Sue Anetsberger