

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
MINUTES
December 6, 2005**

The Economic Development Committee of the DeKalb County Board met on Tuesday, December 6, 2005, @ 7:00p.m. in the Legislative Center's Freedom Room. Vice-Chairman Steve Slack called the meeting to order. Members present were Julia Fullerton, Jerry Augsburger, Sally DeFauw, Mr. Sands, Michael Haines and Mr. Metzger. Others present were Roger Hopkins and Eileen Dubin.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Ms. Supple, Secretary for the committee, stated that as a point of clarity, she was suggesting to change the minutes on page two, paragraph three, second to the last line, to read "Sycamore School Board's maximum abatement....." Moved by Ms. DeFauw, seconded by Mr. Haines, and it was carried unanimously to approve the amended minutes from November 2005.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Moved by Mr. Augsburger, seconded by Mr. Sands, and it was carried unanimously to approve the agenda.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Vice-Chairman Slack said that Mr. Hopkins had mentioned that if there were any questions by the committee regarding last month's tax abatement issue that he would be glad to answer them. Mr. Hopkins mentioned that the Project Oak tenant can now be revealed and it is 3M. They are hoping for breaking ground in the Spring (2006) and taking occupancy in August of 2006. Mr. Hopkins stated that he was concerned when 3M was looking for space because they were looking at a spec building in Rochelle, Illinois. Vice-Chairman Slack asked Mr. Hopkins if he was saying that he favored more spec distribution? Mr. Hopkins said yes, both spec distribution and manufacturing, as an example, would be Fullco Industries.

Mr. Hopkins informed the committee that 3M also said that the advantages of them moving to DeKalb County were because the County offered a well-educated labor supply, transportation and close proximity to I-88. He continued by stating that one disadvantage is the high-energy costs that the County has here. That is because high-energy costs for the Midwest have been one of the highest in the country.

He then informed the committee that CCI in Sycamore was sold to Tate & Lyle Company of England. There may be changes there in the administration, but there may also be a chance of more job openings, too.

Mr. Hopkins said that eventually next year the County will need to adopt another resolution on the 3M tax abatement issue.

UPDATE ON MCHENRY COUNTY NITCO FORUM ON AGRITOURISM BY STEVE SLACK

Vice-Chairman Slack attended a seminar on agri-tourism in McHenry County. He said that about 8 to 10 entrepreneurs with some kind of agri-product did attend. There were people that owned orchards, bed and breakfasts owners and those that want to open one, people who owned wineries in McHenry County and people who promote festivals.

One of the people that spoke at the seminar was a representative from a company that provides marketing support for agri-tourism entrepreneurs and told them what to expect. They also explained insurance liabilities the new entrepreneurs might not have thought of. They taught them how to promote their business better, too. A representative from the State Treasurer's Office spoke about low-interest loans to agri-tourism operators. The representative from the Illinois Wine Council spoke about the problems and potential for the wine industry of the State of Illinois. There was a consultant for bed and breakfast owners, and a representative from the Illinois Tourism Bureau explained what grants are available.

Vice-Chairman Slack continued by stating that promotion is the key for success. The speakers explained that a person needs to find an agri-business where people come to an event or business and then stay overnight and use the County's hotels, motels, etc.

He suggested that the committee could hold a workshop and discuss how people could stay overnight. We would need to suggest a date for next year as to when we could hold it.

Ms. Dubin suggested having a social the night before to introduce ourselves to the speakers and network.

DISCUSSION ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP AND GOALS

Ms. Fullerton said that we have been discussing in the past to hold a small workshop for county board members first and then branching out to the community later for their input.

Some suggestions and questions that the committee discussed were: 1.) We could discuss with N.I.U. about a research park for high technology companies; 2.) Speak with N.I.U. Outreach personnel and see what their goals are; 3.) Have N.I.U.'s Dean of Engineering visit with the committee or speak at the workshop; 4.) Should we just be looking at a single issue to get involved in?; 5.) Speak with Kishwaukee College and Waubensee College about their economic development goals; 6.) How far ahead in the future should we be looking into?; 7.) Is there a public role to be played in all of this?; and 8.) Should we focus just on high-tech companies?

Mr. Hopkins said that with the last suggestion he feels that the County should play a role in advance telecommunications. He feels that if the County made the investment that it would pay off. The County should get as advanced as it can. He said, as an example, Panduit and Ideal Industries are both interested in fiber optics.

Ms. Fullerton asked Mr. Hopkins if any high-tech companies have approached him about moving out here? Mr. Hopkins said yes, but that some banks here in the County are uncomfortable to take risks with young high-tech companies.

Ms. Dubin said that she feels that we need to be educated as a board first; they ask where are we currently; discuss what our options are; and what kind of money is out there to develop these ideas?

Mr. Sands said that he would like to also include in the workshop, how we, as a County, can help existing businesses in the County to grow.

Ms. Fullerton said maybe we should just hold a workshop with the DeKalb County Economic Development Corporation and Mr. Hopkins, and the Illinois Department of Commerce. Vice-Chairman Slack said that we need to discuss what how we need to enhance what Mr. Hopkins and the Economic Development Corporation does.

Mr. Haines said that maybe we should have a speaker from the American Farmland Trust to speak about the commitment to preserve farmland and if there is a model out there that we can look at?

Mr. Augsburger suggested that the committee would need to set parameters for this group to share and then flush the ideas out.

After further discussion, it was agreed by the committee to come back at next month's meeting and bring their likes in topics and develop a workshop out of that.

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Mr. Haines, seconded by Mr. Augsburger, and it was carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:25p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Steve Slack, Vice-Chairman

Mary C. Supple, Secretary