

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
MINUTES
November 14, 2007**

The Economic Development Committee of the DeKalb County Board met on Wednesday, November 14, 2007, @ 7:00p.m. in the Legislative Center's Freedom Room. Chairman Eileen Dubin called the meeting to order. Members present were Julia Fauci, Jeff Metzger, Sr., Michael Stuckert, Pat Vary and Steve Walt. Mr. Andersen was absent. Others present were Ray Bockman, Roger Hopkins, Paul Rasmussen, Doug Dashner and Greg Millburg.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Moved by Mr. Metzger, Sr., seconded by Mr. Stuckert, and it was carried unanimously to approve the amended minutes from October 2007.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Moved by Mr. Stuckert, seconded by Mr. Metzger, Sr., and it was carried unanimously to approve the amended agenda.

CHAIR'S COMMENTS

Chairman Dubin updated the committee on items that she has been working on for the last couple of months. She has met with the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (IDCEO) representatives. They brainstormed with other local community leaders to discuss economic development issues, quality of life issues and brownfields. At the first meeting Mr. Andre Ashmore of IEPA said that he could help us with funding. He will be visiting with us in December to discuss the beginning processes of a planning grant for a target industry study. She will keep the committee informed on what happened at the meeting in December.

TAX ABATEMENT REQUEST

Mr. Hopkins, Executive Director of the DeKalb County Economic Development Corporation, brought forward a tax abatement request for the construction of a new facility in Park 88. The facility will be around one million square feet. The wages proposed for this new project start at \$14.50 an hour and there is health insurance for the employees. He feels that this will have a pretty significant impact on the local community

Ms. Fauci, asked how many trucks a day are we looking at?

Mr. Hopkins, said that he didn't know for sure, but felt around 250 to 300 trucks a day.

Mr. Metzger, Sr., asked, is the conditions of our roads okay for this?

Mr. Hopkins said that in a truck survey that was taken in the spring of 2007 predicts that 90% of the truck traffic travel will go to the Interstate.

Ms. Vary said that it states that 250 employees will be hired, including people that are already working there?

Are they relocating jobs? Asked Mr. Stuckert.

Mr. Hopkins said that he did not know, but he does know that some of the offices that are located in other states may be consolidated. He doesn't know for sure.

Mr. Stuckert said that if we want to attract businesses then we would grant them the abatements. Otherwise, say no and you will have empty buildings out there.

Ms. Vary said that she felt that this request meets our criteria of the guidelines that the committee has previously talked about. She feels that we should go with it.

Mr. Metzger, Sr., asked if we need to make a decision in December?

Mr. Hopkins said yes, he feels that we do.

After further discussion, it was moved by Ms. Fauci, seconded by Mr. Metzger, Sr., and it was carried to forward this Resolution of Intent to the full board for approval at the December County Board meeting. Mr. Walt said that he would abstain from voting on this issue because he felt that the committee did not ask all of the questions from their guidelines.

Ms. Vary said that she thought that the committee did address the guidelines with this evening's discussion.

The committee then expressed their best wishes to Mr. Roger Hopkins, DeKalb County Economic Development Corporation's Executive Director for his many years and service and best wishes on his new venture in DuPage County.

COMMUNITY-BASED FARMING: JULIA FAUCI AND PAUL RASMUSSEN

Ms. Julia Fauci, County Board Member, approached the committee about community-based farming, along with Mr. Paul Rasmussen of the City of DeKalb. The model that they are referring to regarding this issue is Dane County located in Wisconsin.

Ms. Fauci and Mr. Rasmussen explained how the could county support community-based agriculture. The program must first establish a market area where the products are produced, marketed, and sold. A 150-mile radius has been proposed. We could encourage our grocers to buy the products from our local farmers instead of the product coming from out-of-state and even out-of-

the-country. This would also save on gas costs (please see attachment to these minutes).

They feel that there is a base of people here in DeKalb County that is ready for this type of market.

Some things that the County can do to help with this issue is:

1. Providing a long-term, yearlong farmers market selling products that are grown here locally.
2. To create a webpage to offer technical assistance for smaller communities who may want to start up one of their own markets.
3. Re-examine our regulations for tax incentives by revising ordinances that may hinder the establishment of small agricultural businesses.
4. Educational programs.
5. Create the radius of 150-miles.
6. Create a positive image for the County by making us look wholesome.

Mr. Rasmussen felt that this would create a very positive image for the County by doing this.

Ms. Stuckert asked if this could keep this at a level that the consumer could afford this?

Ms. Fauci said that people are already picking their own fruits and vegetables, cutting down their own trees, etc. People who live in cities are just starved for this. It may not be for everyone, but it is a way for rural and urban values to come together.

NACO, said Ms. Fauci, is a tremendous organization, they have a booklet on Counties and local food system, so they are already thinking about this.

Mr. Rasmussen said that the prices are the same as the grocery stores in Madison and to remember that you are buying products that have no pesticides and such.

Ms. Vary said that this would get away from the middlemen and this should be less expensive.

Mr. Rasmussen said that what the average Anglo goes shopping for food 1.5 times a week. The average Hispanic goes four times a week, and what they are demanding are the same things that the Asians are demanding. They want fresh vegetables and fresh produce, they don't buy things out of cans.

He continued by stating that this is a long-term vision, 20-years out, where a central location that had those kinds of foods plus foods that are locally grown.

Ms. Vary said that she has wanted something on conservation easement for a while now. Part of the County's economic development it is to maintain

farming. If you go into any site in Wisconsin government, you will see how many programs they have, and see the money that they have invested to keep farmers on the land.

Chairman Dubin asked what the next step should be then?

Ms. Fauci said that we should look at things that we could come up with immediately like a timeline and establishing financial support possibly from the public and private sectors.

Mr. Dashner said that there are already about 12 – 15 people that are involved in this and maybe your committee would want to invite them.

Mr. Stuckert volunteered to help with a sub-committee on this issue.

Ms. Fauci said that we could contact Dane County and see what kind of similarities that we may have already. One similarity is that we are both university towns.

CONSERVATION INITIATIVE UPDATE: JULIA FAUCI AND PAT VARY

Ms. Vary and Ms. Fauci updated the committee on the Conservation Initiative that they are involved in.

Ms. Vary said that they have divided up the Conservation Initiative into two halves. She said that the initiative is mainly educational right now. One of the halves is the website and one is the first workshop. She and Julia Fauci are working with Lisa Sanderson, the County's Webmaster and Mary Supple, the DeKalb County Coordinator, on the website and writing copy. They are wanting to inform the public as to what the County is doing in ways of conservation. The other information will relate to what the public can do in ways of conservation, housing construction builders, tradesmen, etc. They hope to have the website up and running sometime in the next month. The first seminar will be scheduled in February 2008. Right now they are securing speakers for that event. They will be contacting the Cooperative Extension Office and Soil and Water Office about maybe co-sponsoring one of these events, too.

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Ms. Fauci, seconded by Mr. Walt, and it was carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting

Respectfully submitted,

Chairman Eileen Dubin

ED:mcs

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