

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
MINUTES
September 12, 2007**

The Economic Development Committee of the DeKalb County Board met on Wednesday, September 12, 2007, @ 7:00p.m. in the Legislative Center's Freedom Room. Vice-Chairman Steve Walt called the meeting to order. Members present were Ken Andersen, Julia Fauci, Pat Vary and Jeff Metzger, Sr. Mr. Stuckert and Ms. Dubin were absent. A quorum was present. Others present were Ray Bockman, Roger Hopkins and Greg Millburg.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

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

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Moved by Mr. Andersen, seconded by Ms. Vary, and it was carried unanimously to approve the amended agenda.

TAX ABATEMENT REQUEST – SYCAMORE

A letter was sent to the committee from Mr. Bockman, DeKalb County Administrator explaining that the materials for the tax abatement request came from Mr. Bill Nicklas, Sycamore City Manager, who is asking that the County consider a three-year decreasing term abatement for a small business that plans to relocate to a new building and expand its workforce by three persons in the coming year. The three jobs being added will be in the skilled category paying in the \$35,000 to \$45,000 range.

The three-year request of 80%, 70% and 50% would amount to a total abatement of \$6,967 by the County.

Mr. Roger Hopkins, DeKalb County Economic Development Corporation Director, further explained that the tax abatement request is for an existing small industrial services firm. They have a regional business that extends beyond the County. They want to relocate to the Sycamore Prairie Business Park.

Mr. Metzger, Sr., said that he was very happy to see that the County is doing something for a small business.

Ms. Vary asked Mr. Hopkins if this was Sycamore's normal tax abatement?

Mr. Hopkins said yes.

Mr. Metzger, Sr., also asked if there were clawbacks?

Mr. Hopkins said yes.

Moved by Ms. Vary, seconded by Ms. Fauci, and it was carried unanimously to forward this resolution to the full board for approval.

COMMUNITY-BASED FARMING DISCUSSION – JULIA FAUCI

Ms. Fauci passed out a resolution and information on the Dane County Food Council. This is an introductory presentation and if the committee would like her to do more work on this she will.

She has been a member of the DeKalb Co Op and the truck that always came in came from Madison, Wisconsin. So the idea of where the food came from and what kind of food we eat, has been going on for a long time. There are people here that do want fresh, organic food. She believes that people do want this kind of food.

What Dane County did was expand upon their local food market and form a food council. It consists of 12 members with various backgrounds (see attached resolution).

Dane County believed that food production is a core component of Dane County's economy and they called a food summit. They also wanted to go beyond their council to other counties, cities and State level.

They want to develop strategies to increase the amount of locally produced food the County and other local governments purchase. They want to develop a list of local food producers; develop, devise, support and enhance direct marketing opportunities for local food producers by establishing a county-wide network of farmers markets; work with the City of Madison and others to implement the project; assist with further study and potential formation of a Central Agriculture Food Facility; explore the interest of neighboring counties and cities in forming a regional food council; and to seek and explore actively grants from foundations, the state and federal government and the university to carry out the work of the Council.

Mr. Metzger, Sr., asked if there is anything like this in the County?

Mr. Hopkins said that Boone County has an ag-tech initiative, like soybean, ethanol, etc. They work a little bit with a federal food lab in Peoria, and they have a linkage with NIU's Regional Development Institute.

Ms. Vary felt that the more that we have local sustainability the better we will be.

Mr. Metzger, Sr., said that he feels that the niche market is good like *Trader's Joe*.

Ms. Fauci said that she would call more people about this and gather more information and then bring it back to the committee for further discussion.

Mr. Metzger, Sr., suggested that we try and get the Dane County Food Council minutes to review and see how they started and how they developed to where they are now. He felt it would be very helpful for the committee to review.

QUALITY OF LIFE ASSESSMENT

Ms. Vary said that she outlined what we received with the quality of life study. She bolded several things that she was surprised about the outcomes. One of them was that only 38.8% of our population works in the County. The quality of life section shows that the hourly rate to afford rent in our County is \$14.38 an hour. Under the Public Health section it stated that 30% 12th graders in the last 30 days have smoked marijuana. Immunizations have decreased in our County by 27%.

The committee thanked Ms. Vary for her very informative summary.

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Mr. Andersen, seconded by Mr. Metzger, Sr., and it was carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting

Respectfully submitted,

Vice-Chairman Steve Walt

SW:mcs

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