

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE  
MINUTES  
FEBRUARY 13, 2008**

The Economic Development Committee of the DeKalb County Board met on Wednesday, February 13, 2008 @ 7:00p.m in the Legislative Center's Freedom Room. Chairman Eileen Dubin called the meeting to order. Members present were Mr. Andersen, Mr. Metzger, Sr., Ms. Vary and Mr. Walt. Ms. Fauci and Mr. Stuckert were absent. Others present were Ray Bockman, Paul Borek, Aaron Ruder and Stephen Haliczzer, Ph.D.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

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

**APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

Mr. Andersen asked to discuss Welcoming signs coming into DeKalb County? Chairman Dubin placed it as item number 5a.) right after Go Green on the agenda.

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

**CHAIR'S COMMENTS:**

Chairman Dubin said that she received an email from Bob Rosemier about the Health and Human Services Committee who is holding a March 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting on affordable housing. Mr. Rosemier is wondering if this committee would like to have a joint committee meeting with them?

The consensus of the committee agreed to hold a joint meeting with the Health and Human Services Committee on March 3<sup>rd</sup>. They would not hold their Economic Development Committee meeting in March then.

**REPORT ON "GO GREEN" WATER CONSERVATION & MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE**

Ms. Vary said that the "Go Green" conference took a lot of organizing. She said that Ms. Fauci, Mary Supple and Aaron Ruder helped with the organizing of the event and Ms. Vary worked on the website. She said that they had about 130 people with 20 of those being walk-ins. Ms. Vary stated that everyone talked about how good the speakers were, the food and the organization of the event was.

Ms. Vary said that the next event would be held at September 13, 2008, hopefully at Kishwaukee College. They have not had the location confirmed yet.

### **WELCOMING SIGNS COMING INTO DEKALB COUNTY**

Mr. Andersen said that he was wondering if “Welcome to DeKalb County” signs could be placed at every major highway around the county? Maybe the project could be sent out to the schools around the county to design it he suggested.

The committee thought that it was a great idea and Mr. Steve Walt would check with the Highway Department about the capabilities to do this.

### **INTRODUCTION OF NEW ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION DIRECTOR**

Mr. Paul Borek, the new Executive Director of the DeKalb County Economic Development Corporation, introduced himself to the committee and briefly reviewed his background to the committee. He said that he has experience in planning and economic development and marketing. Most recently he was the Executive Director of the City of Sandwich’s Economic Development Corporation. He mentioned the new Convention Center that has opened in Sandwich. The Center will be hosting a Home Show in a couple of weeks there. A large year-round indoor water park will be built next door to the hotel in Sandwich, too.

He worked in Aurora for about ten years before Sandwich and will be moving to DeKalb County in the very near future.

He did some work on the startup of a new research and technology park in Manchester, New Hampshire. One of the first businesses that came to this park specialized in laser technology so he does have some experience there. He also worked with a strategic planning consultant on the development of a global, strategic and economic growth plan for Manchester. He learned a lot about current state-of-the art strategic planning and target industry research.

Ms. Vary said that she would really like to see biotech companies moving here. There is a technology consortium for the whole western part of Chicago, she said, and wondered if Mr. Borek had heard of them? She would find out more information on this consortium and get back to Mr. Borek about it.

## **DRAFT APPLICATION FOR GRANT WITH DCEO**

Chairman Dubin passed out copies of a grant that she would like to submit to the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity as soon as she can. This is a relatively small planning grant, Chairman Dubin explained. She explained that we are hoping if the grant is funded it will give us the necessary information to proceed in developing a marketing strategy to attract businesses with better paying jobs. She feels that we are in a good location because there are many things happening in the area and also having a major university located in this community.

Mr. Bockman said that there were questions raised by the executive committee of the DeKalb County Economic Development Corporation (EDC) about scope and think that Bob Gleeson would be the best person to answer them. They all feel that it is a good idea. He is trying to set up a meeting with Bob Gleeson and some people from the EDC so that Dr. Gleeson could explain the grant proposal he drafted to them. Mr. Bockman doesn't feel that the meeting should take any more than an hour to get the answers that they need.

Ms. Vary directed her comment to Mr. Borek that what we have been trying to do here in this county is to attract industry higher paying jobs, knowledged-based companies, medical, etc. so that we can actually use our major university and their resources.

Mr. Borek said with strategic planning and collaboration we could promote the inevitability of these resources to more companies in and outside the county. Maybe if some companies outside the county need a certain kind of collaboration, a certain kind of research, or a certain kind of facility, to allow them to grow or incubate in the county, maybe we could do things to make it happen. Like bring together certain entrepreneurs with certain business owners, researchers from the University, and leaders from the community in the same room discussing how we can make this happen. How can we build that research and technology park, or attract more medical companies, biotech, etc., Mr. Borek continued.

The committee discussed holding a high-tech workshop where we could bring these types of people together and collaborate with entrepreneurs.

A Mr. Stephen Haliczzer in the audience mentioned people that are at the University who are experts in their fields. The community needs to develop knowledge-based products using the WEB. This county is loaded with fiber optic and he feels that a lot more can be done with the infrastructure that we have. These are areas that the County and the

community could capitalize on. In your deliberation you need to look at this huge infrastructure that could be utilized more, said Mr. Haliczner. The community also needs an investment pool to help the entrepreneurs.

Mr. Bockman said that the community needs to welcome the creative class of people and students. We have a tremendous music scene here with the university. Ms. Vary agreed with him.

Chairman Dubin said that she knows lots of students here that like DeKalb and would like to stay here if they could find a good paying job.

Mr. Borek said that in a book that he read it stated that young people are deciding where they want to live first before they decide what they want to do. This is because they have the power through technology, their education and their creativity to do so. The industry that can go anywhere can go where these people are, he further commented.

Chairman Dubin thanked everyone for a very good and informative discussion.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

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

Respectively submitted,

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Eileen Dubin, Chairman

ED:mcs