

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
MINUTES
January 27, 2009**

The Economic Development Committee of the DeKalb County Board met on Wednesday, January 27, 2009 @ 7:00p.m in the Legislative Center's Freedom Room. Chairman Eileen Dubin called the meeting to order. Members present were Sally DeFauw, Julia Fauci, Jeff Metzger, Sr., Riley Oncken, Mark Todd and Pat Vary. Others present were Debra Armstrong, Paul Borek, Jamie Sands and Kurt Schweitzer.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Moved by Mr. Metzger, Sr., seconded by Ms. Vary, and it was carried to approve the minutes from December 2008.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Moved by Mr. Todd, seconded by Mr. Oncken, and it was carried unanimously to approve the agenda.

CHAIR'S COMMENTS

Chairman Dubin said that she has found a small grant from the Lt. Governor's office called the Illinois Rain Garden. The grant would include rain barrels and it would need to be submitted by March 2, 2009. She would like input from Pat and Julia. It is unclear as to whether the grant furnishes help to individuals or whether it has to be a group effort. She said that it amounts to \$500.00.

Ms. Dubin then explained to the committee that she found an article in the "L.A. Times" highlighting the new technology of Blu-Ray and HD technology and how interest in it at the corporate level is increasing. Ms. Dubin said that the article also states that "Blu-Ray technology encompasses graphic design, marketing, interactive design, computer science and production, writing, filming and editing, and that people with a basic understanding of computer sciences practices and methodologies" could apply for these jobs or start up a small high-tech company, as a suggestion.

DEKALB COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION MONTHLY REPORT – MR. PAUL BOREK

Mr. Borek, Director of the DeKalb County Economic Development Corporation, handed out a copy of various points that are included in their new Strategic Plan highlighting their goals and mission statement. He also handed out a document on the Technology Resources at Northern Illinois University (see attached to these minutes).

Mr. Borek proceeded to inform the committee on the various happenings of businesses throughout the county. He said that through the Strategic Plan Goals of attracting various businesses and retaining those businesses already established here, he will be visiting with over 60 existing companies over this year to see how they are doing and how the DeKalb County Economic Development Corporation can help them in any way.

Mr. Borek and the committee discussed “green” industries and companies in the county.

Chairman Dubin suggested that Paul create a list of industries that have started up in the County recently or those that need help for the committee to see. Mr. Borek said that he does have a list of companies that have recently moved here to the County in the past year.

He then informed the committee on various cities and what is happening in their towns. He stated that Wendler Engineering is planning on creating, in an existing building in DeKalb, an office area for incubator companies and developing technology businesses. Genoa is trying to attract incubator companies dealing with the food processing industry. Hinckley has a new dealership that has opened that deals with alternative energy. They are selling small type wind turbines. They have been approved as a dealership and will sell them to the public and build them on site.

The committee thanked Mr. Borek for a very informative report.

TOURISM – DEKALB AREA CONVENTION AND VISITOR’S BUREAU

Ms. Debra Armstrong, Coordinator, for the DeKalb Area Convention and Visitor’s Bureau, approached the committee regarding a request to the County Board for a letter of support for their agency.

She mentioned that her agency is trying to get properly certified, through the State of Illinois, as a countywide convention and visitor’s bureau. She explained that the City of DeKalb has helped with the funding for their agency to be used for tourism. It first began through the DeKalb Chamber of Commerce who was directed by the City of DeKalb to build a visitor’s and convention center. The vision of the City of DeKalb is to build a countywide Visitor’s Bureau and build a tourism industry so that it would benefit everyone in the County. Since the majority of the hotels lie in the cities of DeKalb and Sycamore, they are her current partners. The City of DeKalb has funded her agency with \$50,000 a year through a hotel/motel tax. The City of Sycamore has helped with co-funding projects together. She then presented to the committee a folder highlighting various printing projects that she and the City of Sycamore have produced.

Ms. Armstrong explained that the creation of a convention and visitor’s bureau is to enhance to economic vitality of our County for the promotion of overnight stays, conferences as well as a tourist attraction. Marketing, advertising and promotion of the County is to be done 50 miles outside of the Bureau’s region, which is a State of Illinois requirement. Their goal is to bring people 50 miles outside of the county into our community to enhance the lives of the people who live in our communities.

Mr. Metzger, Sr., questioned Ms. Armstrong about whether or not her tourism books included all of the cities in the County, like Sandwich?

Ms. Armstrong said that the City of Sandwich has partnered with the Aurora Convention and Visitor's Bureau because they have a much bigger budget and they are already certified. She said that her office would still be representing the City of Sandwich.

Mr. Metzger, Sr., asked if you have all of these different bureaus, could they work together, why do they work separately?

Ms. Armstrong said the certified CVB is supposed to be about your county, per State regulations. She does not know what agreement that Sandwich signed with the Aurora CVB.

Mr. Metzger, Sr., said that if Sandwich is bringing in a good number of people at the south end of the county and the people coming into the north end of the county are missing a lot of the business from the south end of the county because the people are unaware of what kinds of businesses there are throughout the County. There's got to be a way to get a conduit between the north and south ends of the County because they are all losing a good amount of business.

The committee suggested various ways that Ms. Armstrong's agency could produce a one page (2-sided) brochure showing a map of all cities and towns in the County of DeKalb and then on the other side they could highlight various businesses to stop and visit in one weekend. They could also highlight various events that are being held in all of the cities throughout the year. These brochures could then be placed in all business establishments and stores throughout the County for visiting people and residents to pick up.

Ms. Fauci suggested a placemat to be produced showing a map and events like you see in other towns and cities throughout the country that could be placed in all of our restaurants in the County.

Right now all the funds that she has in her budget is to produce this book.

She then informed the committee about her costs and budget. She said that to publish and produce the book that she has handed out to the committee tonight and their advertising costs would cost her \$16,000 of her budget. She has letters of support for her agency from the Cities of DeKalb and Sycamore currently. She is seeking letters of support from other public entities and cities in the county now. She said that she also pays about \$4800 in rental costs a year.

Chairman Dubin asked what kind of support do you need? Beyond the letter of support are you looking for funding?

Ms. Armstrong said that the State told her that the quickest route for them to take to become the tourism bureau for the County would be to go to each municipality in the county and ask for their input on this issue and build it together. She said that it takes about six to twelve months for them to finish this process.

Ms. Armstrong said that she is seeking a letter of support first of all and if possible, funding in the future.

The committee discussed various ways for her to get support in funding and possibly the County looking at helping with the rental situation to see if there is any County space that they could move into which would, in turn, help with the rental costs annually.

After further discussion it was moved by Mr. Oncken, seconded by Ms. Vary, and it was carried to forward the DeKalb Area Convention and Visitor's Bureau Request for a Letter of Support to the Executive Committee for further discussion. Mr. Metzger abstained.

It was moved by Ms. Vary, seconded by Ms. DeFauw, and it was carried unanimously to forward the issue of discussing the office space issue of the DeKalb Area Convention and Visitor's Bureau to the Executive Committee for further discussion.

The committee thanked Ms. Armstrong for her report and visiting with the committee tonight.

GO GREEN DISCUSSION

Ms. Vary handed out a one-page sheet on the topic of the Go Green Initiative and where the committee could go on this issue in the near future and possible links to place on the County's website.

The committee discussed various ideas to possibly hold a seminar or workshop on green jobs and to be able to bring innovators and capitalists together. They would also look at current "green jobs" and how to bring more of them to the county.

Chairman Dubin asked the committee to review the handout from Ms. Vary and suggestions made here tonight on the Go Green Initiative and come back with ideas for it at next month's meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Respectively submitted,

Eileen Dubin, Chairman

ED:mcs

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