

**DRAFT**  
**Economic Development Committee**  
**Minutes**  
**January 9, 2013**

The DeKalb County Economic Development Committee met on Wednesday, January 9, 2013 @ 7:00p.m., in the Legislative Center's Freedom Room. Chairman Ken Andersen called the meeting to order. Members present were Russell Deverell, Jeffery Metzger, Mark Pietrowski, Stephen Reid and Jeff Whelan. Mr. Bob Brown was absent. Others present were Greg Millburg and Paul Borek.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

**Moved by Mr. Metzger, seconded by Mr. Whelan, and it was carried unanimously to approve the minutes from October 2012.**

**APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

Chairman Andersen stated that Ms. Brunschon could not make the meeting tonight so Mary Supple, DeKalb County Coordinator, will fill in the space with some background information on the committee and projects assigned to the committee.

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

**CHAIR'S COMMENTS**

Chairman Andersen welcomed everyone to the committee. He said that he looks forward to having a good committee. There are a lot of things that we can do on this committee. He will discuss this further under Item number 7 on the agenda.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION UPDATE - MR. PAUL BOREK**

Mr. Paul Borek, Executive Director for the DeKalb County Economic Development Corporation (DCEDC), highlighted various projects in the County. He informed the committee that he does provide an economic update each month to this committee.

Mr. Borek explained that the DeKalb County Economic Development Corporation budget is comprised of 60% private industry and 40% governmental entities. They have between 220 to 240 businesses as private

members. The County of DeKalb, City of Sycamore, City of DeKalb and 15 or 16 additional townships and municipalities make up the public entities. Their board consists of 40 members and they are a 501c3 organization. Over their 25 years of existence employment in DeKalb County has increased by 20,000 overall and approximately 10,000 new jobs were brought to DeKalb County through businesses and organizations with investments totaling \$1.6 billion. Five of the seven largest taxpayers in the County where DCEDC played an active role in recruiting or facilitating their expansion, include businesses like Target, 3M, and Goodyear. They collectively generate \$500,000 in property taxes each year to DeKalb County alone.

He said that they are working closely with the Village of Kirkland to attract an industrial user to a building in the Bull Run Industrial Park. The Village is working hard to encourage development.

The Economic Development Corporation (DCEDC) has started the Industrial Growth Initiative. The purpose of the Initiative is to increase prosperity in DeKalb County by increasing employment and incomes while reducing unemployment. They believe that a reasonable proxy for measuring progress will be increased Industrial Equalized Assess EAV as a percentage of total valuation.

DCEDC has begun to meet with communities throughout the county to update and catalogue industrial parks, development sites and buildings. They are gathering this information on the sites and their development potential, resulting in a detailed electronic inventory that will be easily accessible by staff and site selectors. To date, information has been gathered from Genoa and Cortland. This work will extend to all communities throughout DeKalb County through May of this year.

Mr. Borek stated that they will hold their Economic Outlook luncheon on January 17, 2013 at 11:00a.m. at the Farm Bureau.

He also informed the committee that NIU Technology Commercialization/ Venture Grant Program – Dr. Lisa Freeman, NIU Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies invited DCEDC to identify established business leaders to serve as mentors/coaches/team members to assist selected NIU inventors with bringing their innovative products or processes to market. The Team Formation event is scheduled for Friday, January 24, 2013.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE DUTIES AND PROJECTS, HISTORICAL BACKGROUND – MS. MARY SUPPLE**

Ms. Supple, DeKalb County Coordinator, passed out a folder of various documents explaining the history of the Economic Development Committee and projects that the committee is responsible for. She mentioned that this

committee created the Go Green Webpage along with the Small Business Initiative that is an ongoing project for this committee. She said that this committee will need two members to step up and help with the webpage for oversight and suggestions. Ms. Supple said that if anyone is interested in helping with this website to please let Chairman Andersen know.

Ms. Supple then stated that the Arts and Entertainment Project is an ongoing project for this committee. We have invited Ms. Jenny Johnson, Director, of the newly formed 501c3 organization called the DeKalb Area Arts Council to a meeting in September 2012 for an update. We are due again to ask Jenny to come back and give us an update since their filing in September, she further stated.

Another initiative that this committee works on with Ms. Supple is the Annual Go Green Cost Savings Report. This report came about by Ms. Supple seeing a gap in information that needed to be met with questions that came from the public over the past few years. Also many County Board Members were stating that they would like to know what the County was saving taxpayers moneywise and they wanted to get that information out there to the public. Therefore, she created this cost savings report in 2010. The Directors of the County's various 22 departments help her with the initiative to comprise this report annually. This committee then reviews the report and approves it for her to place on the website.

## **DISCUSSION ON THE COMMITTEE'S ROLE AND FUNCTION TO THE COUNTY**

Chairman Andersen said that some of the board members that have been on the board previous to the election this past Fall, know where I have stood with this committee and the structure of the committee. For the new people, he never saw any benefits that he could see coming out of this committee. In different budget appeals he was on the record of stating, "why do we have to have an Economic Development Committee." What is their function, what are they doing for the County? So now the majority of the board felt that Economic Development committee was viable and they did not see any reason to get rid of it. The majority speaks and he will say that at this point he still wants to make this committee a more viable, active working committee. With that in mind he would like to see and hear from all of the committee members on how we can be more valuable to our electorate on how we can promote DeKalb County. That is what he sees as our function. He said that homework for next month's meeting, he would like to ask the committee to write a few words of what they think the role of what this committee should be, what should we be striving to attain as a goal, what is our job as a committee. Where should we be focusing all of our efforts? He would like to accomplish something here.

The map that he passed out to everyone tonight, he said, comprises all the

county board districts. He would like this committee to look at the areas that we represent and branch out to the other districts too, but to look at the businesses that are in our districts that lie in unincorporated areas of the County. For example, in District #3 there are a lot of businesses he feels that are vital to the economy of our County and we need to identify those businesses and then identify ways in which we can retain those businesses. Also, how we communicate with those businesses.

Today he attended the Ag Farm Show at NIU. Previous to this event today he has had numerous phone calls from businesses here in the County. He is concerned with what he is hearing. What he is hearing is that there are businesses in the County that are saying that if they knew that they were going to be treated the way that they have been treated by our County that they would never have come to DeKalb County. They also said that they would not recommend to any other businesses to come to DeKalb County. These businesses mean dealing with County Staff. This is serious and we need to address this and get a grasp on this. He has heard this from other government entities within DeKalb County, too

Mr. Metzger said that we need to find out, who is the problem, what the problem was, and how we can correct it. That would be helpful, he said.

Chairman Andersen said that it seems to be coming from the Agricultural community with some of the new businesses that have moved here recently. We are not talking about farmers here, he said.

Mr. Whelan said that being on both committees, Economic Development and Planning & Zoning; he has seen in the last few years, from the agricultural standpoint, the County has helped one firm celebrate their 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, a fertilizer plant with their expansion, and the development of the two farm equipment companies. The County has helped to establish businesses here, in the unincorporated areas of the County.

Mr. Millburg stated that he believes it is what the companies had to go through to get their projects approved. It is more the process that is the problem.

Chairman Andersen said that he has heard that too. He said that we need to look at our ordinances and make the process smoother. We need to help these companies go through the process.

Mr. Metzger suggested to the committee to go back and read the minutes from this committee. We assisted with the Fiber Optics Program, the Tourism program, Tax Abatements, there are many other great projects that this committee has assisted with in the past, so please read the minutes.

Chairman Andersen would like to see the committee send out letters of

introduction to the villages, cities and townships throughout the County and let them know that we are a hardworking group willing to help with economic development. He continued by asking the committee members to look at their districts and to see how many businesses are in their district. The committee members will also have to take maybe another district since there are more districts than members on the committee. We can let the villages, cities and townships know that we are here, tell them about the Small Business Webpage, etc., Chairmen Andersen said. So, please identify the businesses and bring those forward next month to the meeting, he said.

Mr. Metzger said that we need to have a person from this committee to be appointed to the DeKalb County Convention and Visitor's Bureau. Any volunteers please get in touch with County Board Chairman Metzger.

Before adjourning Chairman Andersen notified the committee that their next meeting will be on February 13, 2013 @ 5:30p.m. due to a holiday. He said that we will have County Clerk John Acardo on the agenda and we will try to invite Ms. Jennifer Johnson to give us an update on the DeKalb Area Arts Council.

**ADJOURNMENT**

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

Respectfully submitted,

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Kenneth Andersen, Chairman

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Mary C. Supple, Secretary

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