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DeKalb County Government
Sycamore, Illinois

**Economic Development Committee Minutes
October 9, 2013**

The DeKalb County Economic Development Committee met on Wednesday, October 9, 2013 at 7:15 p.m., in the Legislative Center's Gathertorium. Chairman Whelan called the meeting to order. Members present were Bob Brown, Riley Oncken, Mark Pietrowski, Jeff Metzger and Stephen Reid. Russ Deverell was absent. Others present were Gary Hanson, Christine Johnson, Anthony Cvek, Pete Stefan, Frank O'Barski, Misty Haji-Sheikh, Robin Brunschon, Karen Cribben, Sarah Lief, Dan Kenney, John Rey and Paul Borek.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

It was moved by Mr. Metzger, seconded by Mr. Reid, and it was carried unanimously to approve the minutes from September 11, 2013.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

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

NEW MAYOR PRESENTATION

DeKalb Mayor, Mr. John Rey, was invited by Christine Johnson and Chairman Whelan to speak to the committee about economic development in the City of DeKalb. He gave a brief description of his background which included being a long-time DeKalb resident and also shared various positions and boards he has been a part of in the community. He continued to explain that fiscal stability and providing core services to the residents of the City of DeKalb was a main concern of his. Northern Illinois University represents the economic engine for the City of DeKalb and the Mayor addressed the relationship he has formed with President Baker and the University. Jobs and housing is another focus that is of strong concern as well citizen involvement and public safety which the Mayor addressed in length. In terms of economic development, he thanked the County Board for their participation in the Tax Abatement Program for the City. The Mayor also suggested as a community and as a network of partnered communities to participate

in publicizing our assets. Lastly the Mayor spoke about the Community Gardens and also shovel ready sites for development along Peace Road and Chicago Road.

Mr. Hanson addressed the Mayor with his concern about University Village in the City of DeKalb and asked if he could see a partnership between the City, the University and the County to work together to find some solutions for that area. Mayor Rey absolutely agreed and shared that they have currently applied for a one to three year study grant and an implementation grant opportunity following that for the area that covers University Village, Greek Row and north of Amber Manor. The objective is to transform this neighborhood which would include lowering the density and providing them with better resources. He also reassured that the local police have tight sites on that neighborhood and that it was certainly well within their vision to work together on finding solutions for that area.

The committee thanked Mayor John Rey for coming and speaking with them and then recessed for a short reception.

FY2014 BUDGET APPEALS APPLICABLE TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

The first appeal was from Mr. Frieders who appealed the increase of hours for the Chief Deputy of Assessments with his reasoning being that new positions or increase of hours for existing positions should not be added when the County is having a difficulty with funding. A similar appeal by Mr. Cvek was withdrawn.

Mr. Oncken asked Robin Brunschon, Supervisor of Assessments, to let the committee know why she asked for these added hours and exactly how much money the additional hours would be. Ms. Brunschon answered that the dollar amount would be a little over \$6000 and that the main purpose she was asking for this increase of hours was because of a new implementation of a checks and balance system to ensure better operation in the Assessor's Office along with other duties and projects that her office is currently working on.

Mr. Metzger agreed with Robin and shared with the board that he can see the quantity of work going on in the Assessor's Office and understands the need of additional hours in the office.

Mr. Cvek shared in his support of these additional hours but also added that something that the Economic Development Committee may want to look into would be how to compel compliance from Township Assessors in order for the County Assessor's Office to run more smoothly.

Chairman Whelan asked for a motion on the appeal. Hearing none, the appeal failed.

The next appeal was for a project for a new program to create opportunities for entrepreneurs to start new businesses which satisfy a County-defined focus area. These funds would be allocated from the Opportunity Fund in the amount of \$100,000. Mr. Cvek appealed this plan but shared that his appeal has nothing to do with the actual proposals but the lack of a formal plan and feels that the County may be doing themselves a disadvantage by locking into a \$100,000 amount. He

continued that because it isn't a tax base fund and important for them to use the funds he felt that from a comfort standpoint he would not like to put an amount to the project at this time.

Mr. Oncken shared that the Opportunity Fund is used when they come upon opportunities and don't always budget for those funds and if an opportunity arises from this project where funds need to be allocated then it will brought to the board and dealt with at that time.

Mr. Oncken moved that the \$100,000 to start the Business Incubator Program not be allocated from the Opportunity Fund. Mr. Reid seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

BUDGET REVIEW OF DEPARTMENTS REPORTING TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

The committee had no other topics for discussion under the FY2014 Budget.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Mr. Oncken, seconded by Mr. Metzger, and it was carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Chairman Jeff Whelan

Tasha Stogsdill, Recording Secretary