

Note: These minutes are not official until approved by the Economic Development Committee at a subsequent meeting. Please refer to the meeting minutes when these minutes are approved to obtain any changes to these minutes.

DeKalb County Government
Sycamore, Illinois

**Economic Development Committee Minutes
May 5, 2015**

The DeKalb County Economic Development Committee met on Tuesday, May 5, 2015 @ 7:00p.m. in the Administration Building's Conference Room East. Chairman Brown called the meeting to order. Members present were Ms. Leifheit, Mr. Pietrowski Jr., Ms. Polanco, Mr. Porterfield and Mr. Whelan. Mr. Bassett was absent. Others present were Ms. Christine Johnson, Ms. Robin Brunschon, Ms. Karen Cribben, Mr. Pete Stefan and Mr. Ed Harvey.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

It was moved by Mr. Whelan, seconded by Ms. Polanco, and it was carried unanimously to approve the minutes from March 3, 2015.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

It was moved by Mr. Pietrowski, Jr., seconded by Mr. Porterfield, and it was carried unanimously to approve the agenda as presented.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

Chairman Brown informed the committee about a couple of articles that have appeared in the local newspaper. He mentioned that in the article written by Mr. Paul Borek, Executive Director of the DeKalb County Economic Development Corporation (DCEDC), he attended a Select USA Investment Summit in March of this year in Washington, D.C. The summit is an international business development conference and trade show that attracts investors from all over the world, together with U.S. economic development organizations and trade officials. The U.S. Department of Commerce organized this second summit to facilitate Foreign Direct Investment in the United States. DeKalb County DCEDC partnered with the Chicago and Northern Illinois economic development organizations to work a trade show booth together with the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity. Company executives from countries including China, United Kingdom, Japan, Taiwan, India, Canada, Germany, Norway, Italy and Brazil expressed serious interest. DeKalb County agriculture, manufacturing and distribution together with NIU was attractive to foreign investors. Also its central U.S. location and proximity to O'Hare International Airport make DeKalb County a productive and accessible location for foreign investment. The other article was about the county's population and housing market and NIU's contribution to the community.

FIBER OPTIC UPDATE – MR. ED HARVEY

Mr. Ed Harvey gave a PowerPoint presentation (attached to these minutes) to the committee regarding the status of the County's Fiber Optic Project. He said that everything is going very well for the project and handed out a map showing our Fiber network. Our network is called DATA. He said that the northwest region has built up and that now DeKalb County is part of it.

Mr. Harvey explained that the County built 113 miles of new fiber. The total amount equals 143 miles of fiber optics with ducts, and ducts for the future too. Their partners were DeKalb Fiber Optics and Snyder out of St. Charles, IL. The County is also partners with NIU Information Technology Services.

They are seeing a lot of library changes, especially in DeKalb and Sandwich. Mr. Harvey said that they are seeing more and more of public safety looking at fiber. The City of Sycamore and the City of DeKalb have already had fiber in the ground. They are meeting with them now. They are continuing to talk to all cities in the County.

Economic Development Fibers, through DeKalb Fiber Optics, shows that they currently service 6 banks, 2 additional banks, 4 cell towers, 4 small businesses and 2 telecom carriers. They project that they will have 14 total cell towers.

Mr. Harvey said that as far as sustainability and financially, they are doing very well. They have a reliable network with only 3 short outages that have occurred. Those three outages were: one splicing error, one fiber failure in Genoa and one unknown problem (LEADS circuit came back up on its own).

Financially, the fees that they charge are broken down into 5 items which are: administrative, LMR, NIU Help Desk, capital costs and equipment replacement.

Mr. Harvey said that education and government are big users of the fiber. He explained that smaller municipalities are starting to use the fiber and that healthcare is a significant user. He feels that the fiber optic is a great asset to the County. He said that we do not have a lot of competition in our market because we are smaller.

In the future, Mr. Harvey feels that impediments to use the fiber is build costs, which is the biggest one. It is trending down and they need more qualified contractors and technicians. There are fewer entities with which to share the costs. The size of the market is another impediment, that is, relatively few last mile providers looking for customers, especially in rural areas.

Future use locally of the fiber network they are seeing small municipalities in the county for fiber to wireless transmitter to end user. He also sees rural subdivisions and small and medium businesses who will need fiber.

SUPERVISOR OF ASSESSMENTS ANNUAL REPORT: MS. ROBIN BRUNSCHON

Ms. Robin Brunshon, Supervisor of Assessments for DeKalb County, gave her annual report to the committee (on file in her office). She gave a brief statement of her working career and her current staffing in her department. She said that she has made a lot of changes in her department since she started with the County in 2011. She has the staff doing a lot of cross training. She said that by doing this it has helped her department to roll to the new assessment year earlier than ever and has been an asset to the local taxing bodies.

Ms. Brunshon said that there was a slight increase in the County's 2014 parcel count from the 2013 year. There were 42,527 parcels in 2013 and 42,557 in 2014. She said that 69% of the parcels are considered residential, 18% commercial, 9% farm, and 4% industrial.

She said that Midwest Real Estate Data shows that from January 1, 2014 to January 1, 2015, the average residential residence sales price rose 3.73% (\$143,162 to \$148,507). The average residential attached single family residence sales price rose 20.32% (\$102,128 to \$122,885). The increase for all residential properties was 10.64%. New construction saw an increase of 0.71%.

The commercial and industrial markets still remain sluggish in the County. According to Roger Hopkins, a consultant, we have had some commercial stores leaving DeKalb County, looking to go to bigger established markets. Lack of residential growth has and continues to affect the commercial growth in DeKalb County. On a positive note, the Hampton Inn has been doing very well with high occupancy rates. The new Dunkin Donuts and Jersey Mikes are up and running and appear to be a success. Along with the new Culvers, West Lincoln Highway is starting to thrive. At the end of 2014 and the beginning of 2015, there have been multiple sales transactions of multi-family complexes selling very well near NIU's campus.

Compared to 2013, residential and farm new construction growth were up, commercial growth went down and industrial remained the same.

Ms. Brunshon said that her department is producing maps for people who are victims of the Fairdale Tornado for free.

The committee thanked Mr. Harvey and Ms. Brunshon for their very informative reports.

MONTHLY REPORT – MS. MARY SUPPLE

Ms. Supple gave a brief report to the committee regarding the DeKalb County Convention and Visitor's Bureau (DCCVB).

Ms. Supple cautioned the Convention and Visitor's Board that the County's budget is struggling and that we cannot go any deeper into our reserves this year. There were others that came forward and expressed

that they are also stressed with their budgets. This may affect their fundraising efforts for the IHSA Football event coming this Fall.

The IHSA Destination DeKalb Project for 2015 will be starting very soon. They have asked each board member to submit 10 names for volunteers for the event so if this committee knows of anyone that may be interested to let Ms. Supple know.

Ms. Armstrong said that she learned that the FY'16 budget would not include TAP grants or International grants. This means that the Visitor's Guide will be paid for by her regular grants. There could be a 20-30% cut in LCB Grants. She will keep the board posted.

The Convocation Center has secured 125 events so far. Mr. Alex Nerad said that he has met with the Convocation Center and that he is working with them to hold more shows at the Egyptian Theatre, which may be too small for the Convocation Center.

Ms. Armstrong said that the hotel/motel sales tax numbers for the past 9 months for the City of DeKalb are breaking records everywhere. They have broken all tax revenue records that have been recorded. All of the hotels are doing very well. The Hampton Inn is over 75% full.

The City of DeKalb will be advertising the City of DeKalb and the County for the International Shopping Center Convention that is held in Las Vegas every year. Ms. Diedrich, from the City of DeKalb, said that there will be 50,000 people in attendance which includes developers from all over the country.

Ms. Supple then talked about the DeKalb Area Arts Council meeting. She said that they are still working on their 501 c3 application and winding down.

They have appointed a new person to their board, Ms. Heather Priest, who is the Assistant Director of Marketing at the NIU Convocation Center.

They are brainstorming about holding workshops for the community. They are also discussing creating a designated area of the city called an Arts & Culture Corridor in the City of DeKalb. This area would consist of arts content/activity to engage the community and broaden arts events.

Ms. Supple then said that the ArtiGras Parade and event had a very good showing for their first year. The committee said that this will be an annual event for many years to come.

Mr. Alex Nerad said that a Time Arts Senior Showcase was held that same evening as the ArtiGras and that it was a fantastic showing. They had over 200 people attend the event, which was a lot more than in previous years. This was the first year that it was held at the Theatre.

The committee thanked Ms. Supple for her report.

FEES & REGULATIONS PERTAINING TO TORNADO RELIEF

Ms. Johnson, DeKalb County Deputy Administrator and Treasurer, said that the County will be waiving the penalties for late payments for taxes from their Master List of people affected by the tornado. The county board will be asked to pass a resolution for this issue in May. This will be through October 16, 2015. They have drafted a letter to send to the residents already. There is a statute that if the Governor declares a disaster area in your County then you can take this step, she said, which is what they are proposing.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Mr. Whelan, seconded by Mr. Pietrowski, Jr., and it was carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,


Chairman Robert Brown


Mary Supple, Recording Secretary