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DeKalb County Government
Sycamore, Illinois

**Economic Development Committee Minutes
September 1, 2015**

The DeKalb County Economic Development Committee met on Tuesday, September 1, 2015 @ 7:00p.m. in the Administration Building's Conference Room East. Chairman Brown called the meeting to order. Members present were Mr. Faivre, Ms. Leifheit, Mr. Pietrowski Jr., Ms. Polanco, and Mr. Whelan. Mr. Porterfield was absent. Others present were Ms. Christine Johnson, Mr. Gary Hanson, Mr. Paul Borek, Mr. Larry Lundgren, and Mr. Adam Poulisse.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

It was moved by Mr. Whelan, seconded by Mr. Pietrowski, Jr., and it was carried unanimously to approve the minutes from August 4, 2015.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

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

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

Chairman Brown informed the committee that the DeKalb County Economic Development Corporation would be holding an event on September 30, 2015 at the Convocation Center regarding the Arts and Entertainment Industry in DeKalb County.

IHSA REQUEST

Mr. Brad Hoey and Ms. Debbie Armstrong summarized for the committee what they did in 2013 for the IHSA Event during Thanksgiving weekend. He stated that it was a successful first venture for DeKalb County. He and Ms. Armstrong both agreed that there were over 30,000 people who attended this event in 2013 and that it generated \$200,000 in media coverage and approximately \$800,000 in revenue to the County. Mr. Hoey continued by stating that DeKalb County hosts this event every other year with Champaign, Illinois. Mr. Hoey said that in 2013 they had 200 volunteers and this year they will need 300 volunteers.

Ms. Armstrong stated that there were 475 hotel rooms booked in DeKalb County during that weekend, also. There were other hotel rooms booked elsewhere too. She said that they held 10 to 12 different caterings, which in turn, spread economic development throughout DeKalb. She also said that the site is live and that they are receiving lots of activity.

Mr. Hoey said that they are seeking sponsorships with the same sponsors from 2013 and that is why they are here tonight. In 2013 the County sponsored \$25,000 for the event which was the MVP Level. He said that 27 sponsors contributed \$1,000 or more back in 2013 out of 64 total sponsors. The funds are collected and housed through the DeKalb Community Foundation. He said that the event will begin in 87 days and he and Ms. Armstrong would appreciate the support again this year.

Mr. Pietrowski asked Mr. Hoey what the deadline was to collect our sponsorship.

Mr. Hoey said that it would be as soon as possible.

Chairman Brown said that there are four members on our committee that are new who may not know the history behind this event. He then proceeded to give a brief summary. He further stated that the concept was that you were looking for seed money to launch this endeavor. He did not think that the county would be looking at funding this endeavor continually until 2021 though. Others may evaluate this differently, but the economic environment has changed since that time two years ago. We can't all live on reserves when there is a rainy day without it looking like the rain is going to stop pretty soon. Two weeks ago the county board decided not to fund a request for the Egyptian Theatre for \$25,000, which is another worthy agency. Now it was mentioned that the Stage Coach Theater is looking for monetary support too.

Mr. Hoey said that he understands the fiscal challenges that everyone is facing currently and that they welcome whatever support the County can give them.

After a brief discussion it was agreed by the committee to bring this item back in October for further discussion after the county board looks at the proposed county budget.

ENTERPRISE ZONE – MR. PAUL BOREK

Mr. Paul Borek, Director of the DeKalb County Economic Development Corporation, first of all, thanked the committee and the county board for their support of his organization and help with the Enterprise Zone Application.

He then briefly summarized for the committee what the status is on the Enterprise Zone. He said the DeKalb County scored in the top half of the 67 applicants. Everyone is waiting for the budget to be passed before we can move forward. Mr. Borek said that his office will be the administrators of the Enterprise Zone.

The next step that we need to take is waiting for the Certification from the State, he said. The new enterprise zones will be formed as of January 1, 2016. In the meantime, his office will begin training with the Illinois Enterprise Zone in October in Rockford. They need to be ready to go once the legislation and certification is done. He said that the Enterprise Zone will help DeKalb County to be more competitive.

He mentioned that he gave a presentation to the Regional Planning Committee the other evening about the Enterprise Zone. He said that 13 square miles have been designated out of a maximum of 15 miles.

Mr. Whelan asked Mr. Borek what was the total amount spent on the project? He thought that it was \$60,000 plus expenses.

Mr. Borek said that he did not know but that he will check with Mr. Gary Hanson and get back to him.

The committee thanked Mr. Borek for his update on the Enterprise Zone.

Mr. Whelan asked Ms. Supple if she knows anything about the Lincoln Highway Coalition on tourism on the old Route 66 highway.

Ms. Supple said that she did not know but that she would check with the Convention and Visitor's Bureau and get back to him.

DEKALB COUNTY CONVENTION AND VISITOR'S BUREAU MONTHLY REPORT

Ms. Supple, DeKalb County Board Coordinator, said that she sits on the board of the DeKalb County Convention and Visitor's Bureau (CVB) and gave an update on their last meeting. She said that a few of the agencies that are partners with the Convention and Visitor's Bureau, like the County, have mentioned that they are also having financial hardships this year and that they could not guarantee that they could fund the same amount as previous years to the CVB. Because of that they are trying to reduce more of their expenses. They have reduced the production of the Visitor's Guide from 40,000 to 30,000. They will continue to seek ways to reduce their budget even more.

On a brighter note, Ms. Armstrong reported that tourism has increased by 8.3% this past year in DeKalb. DeKalb County reported in at \$88.39 million generated from visitor spending in 2014.

She also mentioned that the DeKalb County Economic Development Corporation will be holding an event on 9/30/15 regarding the Arts and Culture in DeKalb County at the Convocation Center. Ms. Armstrong and Mr. Nerad from the Egyptian Theatre will be sitting on this panel.

She said that the hotel/motel tax numbers went up by 25% last year and that the Red Roof Inn alone went up by 21%.

Mr. Cory Jobs, Director of the Illinois Office of Tourism is coming to DeKalb on September 11, 2015 @ 11:00a.m. at Whisky Acres. The Convocation Center will be hosting Little Big Town on October 29, 2015 and the Egyptian Theater is presenting Mr. Richard Marks on September 25, 2015.

DEKALB AREA ARTS COUNCIL MONTHLY REPORT

Ms. Supple then updated the committee on the DeKalb Area Arts Council. She said that they now have an EIN Number and are finishing up the 501C3 paperwork. The website logo is done and that Mr. Nerad can now move forward with the next steps in getting the web site up and running.

The Arts, Culture and Education Corridor (ACE) is coming along. They are looking at applying for a National Arts grant for next year. Mr. Barrow suggested that the Council research and review other web sites and bring ideas back to the committee to consider.

The Fall timeline/plan is: to get the website up, launched and live; get the ACE Corridor approved, and Plan and Arts Summit.

The Arts Summit's goal is to start a conversation within the community and introduce the DeKalb Area Arts Council to the artists and community. They would like their input and feedback of what the artists want and their ideas before the ACE Corridor goes public. They would like to try and hold this summit in October on a weeknight at the Egyptian Theatre.

The committee thanked Ms. Supple for her informative reports.

NEW BUSINESS


Chairman Brown asked the committee for any ideas for upcoming meetings to place on the agenda. Some of the suggestions were: A Tour of Rochelle, Illinois, A tour in 2016 of the new 3M Building and their old space, Tour of the Public Library in DeKalb, invite the Extension Office, The Mayor of Maple Park, the Economic Development Office from the City of Sandwich, tour of the Illinois Worknet Center, Incubator Programs, Sterling Incubator for Manufacturing, Mim Evans who started the Genoa Incubator, Community Foundation and tour of the Waubensee College Small Business Development Center.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Respectfully submitted,


Chairman Robert Brown


Mary Supple, Recording Secretary