

**VILLAGE OF DOWNERS GROVE
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**
Village Hall, Committee Room
801 Burlington Avenue
Downers Grove, IL
July 9, 2003
8:00 a.m.

Commission Chair Riordan called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

PRESENT: Commission Chair Mike Riordan, Jeff Bilek, Liz Chalberg, Phil Cullen, Jan Kopis, John Luka, John Randall, Barb Wysocki, Gary Vlk

STAFF: Joe Skach, Director of Planning and Community Development
Steve Rockwell, Director of Economic Development
Cathy Schuster, Assistant Director of Economic Development
Lori Skotterud, Redevelopment Specialist/Planner
Ginny Mindo, Administrative Assistant for Economic Development

ABSENT: Ken Bohanon, Mary Henthorn, Mike Kelch, Mike Ryan

GUESTS: None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM MAY 14, 2003

Commission Chair Riordan motioned to APPROVE THE MINUTES from May 14, 2003, Mr. Luka seconded the motion.

Vote: Yay: Commission Chair Mike Riordan, Jeff Bilek, Liz Chalberg, Phil Cullen, Jan Kopis, John Luka, John Randall, Barb Wysocki, Gary Vlk

Nay: None

Motion carried 9:0

COMMITTEE REPORTS

MARKETING

Ms. Schuster reported that a group of approximately 20 people traveled to Springfield to attend the Governor's Home Town Award Banquet to accept our Award. The group included the Mayor, Mr. Rockwell, and Barb Wysocki, Phil Cullen, herself and many of the people who helped coordinate the Bone Marrow Drive. Winning the Governor's Home Town Award is a wonderful independent endorsement of the Village, which we can use when we promote the Village of Downers Grove to potential businesses, residents and visitors. She noted that the Village's graphics designer produced a very attractive banner that will be displayed throughout the Village to promote the Award. The Mayor will be recognizing the Kiwanis/Chamber members at the next Council meeting. A Cable 6 video will be made to document the award. Chamber/Kiwanis members will also carry the banner in the upcoming July 4th parade.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR RETENTION AND ATTRACTION

Mr. Rockwell reported that Volkswagen has agreed to give Pugi \$1million dollars if Pugi builds a freestanding Volkswagen building. Mr. Rockwell indicated that the Opportunities Committee would continue to review with Pugi any assistance if needed.

Mr. Skach noted that Jewel purchased the property their store occupies at Ogden and Saratoga and plans to proceed with the redevelopment of the site. Jewel provided the Village with a preliminary zoning package, which looked very good. This committee is currently reviewing the package and will provide Jewel with preliminary feedback. Mr. Rockwell noted that Jewel plans on commencing demolition of their store at Cass and Ogden first. The demolition of the Downers Grove Jewel should occur in November 2004. Mr. Skach indicated Jewel was very interested in discussing possible assistance for the Downers Grove redevelopment and TIF assistance may be more appropriate for Jewel's project subject to review. He noted that Jewel has not formally asked for assistance and that they purchased the property and completed much of the engineering work with their own funding. Jewel will submit a pro forma to this group for any additional expenses, which this committee would review. Ms. Chalberg suggested that the Incentive Committee could evaluate Jewel's request based on other criteria.

Mr. Rockwell stated that Aldi would like to be open by December 2004, adding that he, Mr. Skach, Mr. Ginex and others had a very good meeting regarding the redevelopment of the site.

Mr. Rockwell reported that this committee received a submission from Luxury Motors. Mr. Rockwell noted that they now want to use the land on the south side of Ogden as a site to display their cars. He added that the Incentive Committee would discuss this issue the week of the 22nd. Mr. Skach reminded the group of the concern that a business displayed its merchandise in the Village but established the point of sale elsewhere. Ms. Chalberg suggested that the Incentive Committee could develop guidelines that require the point of sale to be located in the Village.

STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

Mr. Skach informed the Commission that a packet for the next EDC/Plan Commission workshop would be mailed Friday and would include recommendations for the 13 strategic business districts and relevant discussion points. He noted that fairly straightforward zoning "housekeeping issues" that have been approved by both Commissions would be presented to the Council for a timely resolution. The more involved issues may require assistance from consultants and possibly a joint Plan Commission/EDC subcommittee. Mr. Skach added there are possible sources of funding could come from Brownfield grants and the US EPA.

OGDEN AVENUE

Mr. Rockwell informed the Commission that the Mayor, Village Manager and Plan Commission had an opportunity to view the Ogden Vision PowerPoint presentation. The Vision will be presented to the Council on August 22nd. Mr. Rockwell noted that since there will be other Ogden Avenue related issues, the presentation will be reduced to 10-12 minutes. He also asked that Commission members attend the meeting to show support for the Vision.

Mr. Rockwell reported that 15 RFP packages for the Ogden Signage had been distributed. The deadline for responses in July 11th.

He then stated that the EDC is involved in various stages of development with two grants. Staff is currently preparing the Scope of Work for the approved \$50,000 Illinois Tomorrow Grant. He also noted that this grant could be applied for again at the end of August for the next year's award. The second grant is the CMAQ Grant, which, if approved, would provide \$333,000 to pay for Ogden signage and curb cuts. Mr. Skach reported that the Village has also applied for CMAQ grant funds for the parking deck. Public Works also submitted a project concerning the eastern bicycle pathways for consideration. Mr. Skach stressed the importance of paying attention to what the Village needs to do to comply with approved grants.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Rockwell explained that The Gammonley Group is having their Station Crossing "Topping Off" event on August 18th. Invitations will be sent out shortly.

Mr. Rockwell also noted that several projects in progress, such as Cheeseburger in Paradise, who has submitted plans for their permits to begin work on their building.

Ms. Chalberg asked if there was still discussion of installing a traffic light at Ogden and Lacey to help traffic flow. Mr. Skach replied that IDOT is concerned that traffic lights could increase traffic incidents. There is a preference to put the light at Lee and have that as part of not only traffic light for the traffic issues for Ogden, but access to the larger development there off that corner.

PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Skach reported that there were several important petitions that went through the Plan Commission recently under the Council's restructuring of the Boards and Commissions. He added that through this restructuring, three land use bodies were reduced to two. This changes has already made a positive impact in the way management handles petitions and businesses. The goal is provide a more streamlined approval process for petitioners. Mr. Skach reported that on August 12th, a petition will be presented to the Council requesting adding a variation to request parking be allowed in required yards. There is a greater awareness of the zoning code and how it impacts the Village.

Mr. Skach discussed two recent petitions. The discussions to modify restaurant-parking requirements are a positive first step. The Council wants to review how parking requirements are determined, per seat, numbers of employees, food prep space, etc. The goal is to establish reasonable guidelines in this and other requirements. Ms. Chalberg asked where the provisions apply. Mr. Skach replied that restaurants Village wide would be included. Mr. Skach noted that parking in required yards may be allowed under certain conditions, in Commercial districts, and this group will take small but definitive steps. There were examples of desirable businesses that have explored locating in Downers Grove, but decided against it due to code issues. Mr. Skach added the next steps include reasonable means for a petitioner to make a request based on either practical difficulties or certain hardships. The term practical difficulties has often been omitted from discussions about current code language on variations, but there is a need to revisit this as indicated by this body and strategic planning discussions, especially on Ogden Avenue, where sites are narrow and small. Mr. Rockwell noted that petitioners could only request a 50% variance. Mr. Skach replied that the percentages could be confusing, and he explained that the petitioner must go through a list of variations in the zoning code, and if what they are requesting is not an authorized variation, a request cannot be made; this pertains to both business and residential. This issue was taken to the Plan Commission subsequent to these discussions who agreed that business districts should be able to request these types of variations. Mr. Skach noted that there are many issues similar to this that need to be addressed. The staff, under the guidance of the commissions and focused workshops, are moving in the right direction, taking definitive, incremental steps.

Mr. Skach informed everyone that they would be seeing an increased coordination of information and documentation to ensure issues are resolved in a timely manner. He added that Mr. Rockwell, Ms. Schuster and himself have begun moving forward with a Comprehensive Economic Development Plan. Mr. Skach added that he would send out a brief summary of the meeting.

Mr. Skach reported that Saab's petition is being formalized and that they are currently operating under a "Special Use" on the former Hostess facility site. Even though they still have several site issues to resolve, he expects their plan will be presented to the Village in September or October.

Commissioner Chair Riordan asked if there was a setback issue on 63rd and Main. Mr. Skach responded that the code required that the yard could not be reduced by more than half. If that were done, the cars would extend into what would be an unusable drive out and still require a variation. He noted that the way it is structured, a petitioner could not request a variation. If approved by Council, a variation could be requested if a reasonable argument can be made for the request. In this particular case, it was this group's feeling that this is a legitimate request to get that site productive.

Mr. Kopis inquired as to whether Saab had a 25-foot setback. Mr. Skach confirmed required yards are an issue. Mr. Rockwell stated that Saab may be able to request variations. Mr. Luka asked if this was in lieu of a text amendment. Mr. Skach replied this was one in the same and that amending the ordinance will be done now, but hopefully the ordinances will become fairly stable in the next year. Ms. Chalberg referenced the fact that some projects were not approved due to setback issues. She asked if there was any way to retrieve these businesses. Mr. Rockwell stated that they have been working to bring them back to the Village.

Mr. Skach brought up the importance of codes and the purpose they serve, how they need to protect public health, safety and welfare, but at the same time, provide reasonable means to live, work and play in the Village. Mr. Rockwell added that reducing the Commissions down to two would make the Village more competitive with other communities.

TOURISM AND EVENTS

Mr. Randall reported that Naperville is going forward with their plans to build a major hotel, which will include two large ballrooms. He also noted that what was more concerning was that Lombard is going to do the same thing, but on a more massive scale. Mr. Kopis asked about what feasibility studies have been done. Mr. Rockwell commented that Gruen Gruen + Associates did a study for the hotel group which concluded that the Village would have to heavily subsidize any new convention center built within its boundaries. He noted that if the hotel is built in Lombard, it appears that their Village would also have to dedicate substantial funding to that project. Mr. Randall reported that the DuPage GM Association opposes this project.

DOWNTOWN MANAGEMENT CORPORATION

Mr. Rockwell reported that the library would have their auction of the wheelbarrows on July 19th.

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Mr. Cullen announced that there would be a Business After Hours July 10th at Mesa Sabika. He noted that the Golf Outing Business After Hours with the Park District is July 15th. Mr. Cullen also requested that the EDC attend grand openings of new stores.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

COMMITMENT LIST

1. Mike Kelch will arrange an Incentive Committee meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Commission Chair Riordan motioned to adjourn the meeting; so motioned by Mr. Vlk and seconded by Mr. Cullen.

Respectfully submitted,

Ginny Mindo, Recording Secretary