



MINUTES

Geneva Economic Development Commission
Thursday, May 9, 8:00 AM
City Hall Council Chambers, 109 James Street

Present: Chairman Robert Mann and Commissioners David Gemellaro, Brian Kay, Scott Lebin, Patrick Neary, David Quillen, Staff present: City Administrator Mary McKittrick, Economic Development Director Ellen Divita, Business Development Specialist Paul Evans. Absent were Robert Friedberg, Thomas Burgess, and Paul Ruby. Also present: Alexa Aguliar of Chicago Tribune.

- I. CALL TO ORDER** – The meeting was called to order at 8:00 AM by Chairman Mann.
- II. AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA** – There were none.
- III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES** – Motion was made by Lebin, seconded by Commissioner Neary to approve the minutes of the February 14, 2013 meeting. The minutes were approved unanimously.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

Potential Downtown Business District Update

Nancy Hill was introduced. She is with Ehlers Financial Advisors and has initiated the evaluation of eligibility for a Downtown Business District. Business Districts and Tax Increment Finance Districts are the most widely used financial tools used to fund public improvements and help offset development costs; Special Service Areas are also common, but not as widely used.

Comparing the options, Ms. Hill stated that a Business District is the most flexible and is gaining in popularity since the State Statutes were revised 3 years ago. TIF Districts are still more widely used and have potential to create more assistance revenue through property tax increment than the Business Districts can create through sales or hotel tax revenues.

State law does require an existence of blight factors for both; the blight definition is more loosely defined in the Business District statute than in the TIF statutes. A joint review board is not convened for a Business District. Demonstration of economic malaise is required and could include existence of underperforming parcels, decreased valuation, building and parking lot disrepair, vacant parcels and buildings, traffic concerns, and life safety needs. The concentration of properties with issues is reviewed; not every parcel needs to have issues. A Public Hearing is held for creation of both a Business District and a TIF District. There is no legal process in the Business District process to file an objection.

Ehlers is about a month away from the first report which will document the existing conditions. Kane County is closing their books on property valuations and that has stalled data collection for a the moment; a review of equalized valuation for each property demonstrates empirically if there is a lag in EAV compared to the City as a whole.

Ms. Hill said the initial field work indicates that there does appear to be enough qualifications. She noted that Geneva really has some great things going and an objective of the District is to work so that malaise doesn't spread. A Business District Plan would include a list of potential improvements, prepared with input from all City Departments, a review of the Capital Improvement Project Plan, and in our case, the 2012 Downtown Master Plan. Asked what the vision for redevelopment might be as it relates to the geography of the City, Director Divita replied to strengthen the area of the downtown west of the River and develop opportunities on the East side. The Commission held consensus that there are real needs and the plan should be able to communicate – in advance - how assistance would be provided, if funded through sales tax. Asked what sales tax might be generated at a quarter (.25) percent, Director Divita estimated about \$225,000 a year.

Council Policy Discussion on First Floor B2 Zoning District Restriction of Office Use

City Administrator Mary McKittrick summarized the Council's discussion regarding use of City resources to continue review of this. The topic comes up regularly. At this time the Council has chosen to hold tight and not review further.

Council Policy Discussion on Temporary Outdoor Sales in B3 Zoning District

City zoning code does not allow for outdoor sales and business licensing for same requires Council approval. The Council directed the Community Development Department to bring a proposal to allow on private property within certain parameters. Business regulation code would allow outdoor sales; zoning code would regulate where on a land parcel it could occur. The Commission discussed a desire to protect brick and mortar businesses who have a year round investment in Geneva and the to monitor quality. There is no procedural process for public notification of business licenses, though applications could be posted. Zoning questions include a process for public notification. The Commission would like to have input on this topic as it continues back to Council.

- V. Motion by Commissioner Lebin, seconded by Commissioner Kay, the meeting adjourned at 9:04.

Respectfully submitted,

Ellen Divita