

MINUTES
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
March 3, 2021

CALL TO ORDER:

Mayor Gary Grasso called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m. The meeting was held in person and on zoom at the Village Hall.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Mayor Gary Grasso, Ramzi Hassan, Debbie Hamilton, Kristen Jepsen, Michael Simmons. Sam Odeh participated by phone.

Absent: Trustee Tony Schiappa Mark Stangle, Paul Stettin, Leslie Bowman, and Bhagwan Sharma

Also Present: Interim Village Administrator Evan Walter, Communications & Public Relations Coordinator Janet Kowal, Management Analyst Andrez Beltran, and Russell Smith

MINUTES:

A **MOTION** was made by Ms. Hamilton to approve the Minutes from the November 4, 2020 meeting. The **MOTION** was seconded by Mr. Simmons and approved by a vote of 6-0.

BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE 2021-2022 VILLAGE BUDGET

Mr. Walter gave a brief overview of the Village Budget for FY2022. He stated that revenues were higher than expected this time last year. Sales tax outperformed expectations due to strong online sales as well as sales taxes. Additional revenue would be coming in would be from the Business Licensing program; however, some revenues were still down as part of the trend such as telecommunications tax.

Mayor Grasso pointed out that the Committee's efforts with the tent program and balanced enforcement over the summer directly were responsible for stronger place of eating taxes. He gave thanks to the Committee on their hard work.

Ms. Jepsen asked about the cannabis income as the Village did not approve for retail sales. Mr. Walter explained that as part of State law legalizing cannabis, some of the tax revenue is directed to all municipalities that can only be spent on police training.

Mayor Grasso wanted to note that the Police Pension contribution for next year was up to \$910,000. It has been growing roughly \$70,000 per year but had risen by over \$130,000 in the most recent fiscal year. As such, bringing in new revenues is important.

DISCUSSION OF SOURCES OF REVENUE GROWTH

Mayor Grasso stated that with the Police Pension contribution growth, the Village was looking for ideas for revenue to balance it out. Cannabis had been one option, but the residents had disagreed with allowing retail in the Village. Perhaps that was something to look into now after its implementation has been observed over the last year. Mr. Walter stated that Naperville's stores were providing an average of \$130,000 in revenue to the City per year. However, even with a second round opening, most of the licenses have been spoke for, so even if the Village allowed cannabis sales, it would be several years before they would make an impact.

Mayor Grasso continued that another source of revenue growth was filling Village Center. With the changes that were first proposed at the EDC and eventually approved by the Plan Commission and Village Board, Village Center was beginning to fill up.

Mr. Hassan stated that with the changes there had been greater interest in Village Center, and several new stores were going in. Beach and Dill, a premiere custom home designer, would be having a showroom. Additionally, a dessert shop, several health and wellness businesses, and Yolk, a boutique breakfast place popular in Chicago, would also be opening up soon. Mr. Hassan concluded by saying there were several other announcements expected to be made soon, and Village Center was projected to be 80-90% full by the end of the year.

Mayor Grasso asked if there were any further suggestions.

Mr. Beltran stated that one option that was present was to revisit approving video gaming in the Village. Mayor Grasso stated that the Village residents, himself included, previously had concerns with the video gaming changing the family character of the restaurants of the Village. Additionally, he did not think it would fit in with most restaurants.

Mr. Hassan stated that when his hometown was putting it in he agreed with the Mayor one hundred percent. However, after its approval and implementation, he has reversed his position on the idea. Not every restaurant that can have it does so because it does not match their character or corporate image. Even those that have machines make them as unobtrusive as possible. It has really helped the businesses thrive.

Mayor Grasso stated he was still reluctant but asked the Committee to discuss it so he could hear their ideas. Mr. Hassan stated that not every restaurant would want machines as part of their décor or to add the video recording equipment as state law requires. Mayor Grasso asked the Committee to brainstorm what restaurants might have them. The Committee suggested Falco's as a natural place as well as possibly La Cabanita. Mr. Simmons pointed out that the hotels in the Village may also be interested as well.

Mayor Grasso stated that he was still reluctant to move forward on video gaming at this time but that it was perhaps something that could be revisited in the future. Mr. Walter said that staff would revisit the subject to be better prepared for any possible discussion in the future.

UPDATE ON BUSINESS DISTRICT STUDY

Mr. Beltran stated that a partial Draft Business District Study has been delivered to staff by SB Friedman. The initial analysis shows the Downtown Business District qualifying for adoption as well as having a strong base to perform well. Staff is in the process in providing the final information needed to complete the study with an expected delivery date in April.

Mayor Grasso stated that although the Business District would be a tax, it is a consumer tax for those who use the services in the downtown. With the needed investments and planning for the downtown, including the TCF parcel, it was too important to not have a tool for reinvestment. The Business District would be that tool. With the challenges faces the Chicagoland area and the State of Illinois, everything has to be on the table.

Mr. Walter added that since Burr Ridge announced the study he has gotten additional interest in the downtown. It shows developers and businesses that the Village is willing to invest and be a

partner. However, a big part of the Business District will be as Mayor Grasso said: planning. Knowing what the Village does not want downtown will be as valuable as what it does want. That way staff can know who to contact and who to turn down.

Mr. Smith asked if there was thought for placing electrical charging stations downtown. Mr. Hassan stated that he was speaking to a company that day to do just that at Village Center.

Mr. Odeh stated as part of the plan the Committee needed to create guidelines for projects, primarily looking at their return on investment. Mr. Hassan agreed, and it related to something he would bring up later under other considerations.

UPDATE ON BUSINESS LICENSING

Mr. Beltran stated that as of March 1, 2021, there are 151 Business Licenses and 41 Exempt Licenses issued. He provided a business list will be at the meeting. There are a number of businesses that are not on the list. Staff would request assistance with outreach to businesses to let them know they need a license. Licensing is open for the 2021-2022 year with a fee of \$100.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Mr. Hassan stated that as part of the Business District, one program could be for improvements to building exteriors such as facades or expanding outdoor seating space. He continued that he could see it as a match program with the Village matching up to a certain dollar amount. Mayor Grasso stated to Mr. Odeh's point that adding outdoor seats would be easy to see from a return standpoint, but others they would have to figure out how the improvement would increase revenues. Ms. Jepsen stated that they could also look at the zoning codes for permanent outdoor seating. Mayor Grasso agreed, and asked staff to put it on the next agenda for discussion.

Ms. Hamilton stated that the Chamber held restaurant week and it was a great success. She also stated that socially distanced after hour events were starting and invited the Committee members to attend.

Ms. Jepsen asked if there was some way they could do a restaurant week in tents for Burr Ridge. Mr. Walter stated that there is a plan for a "Taste of Burr Ridge" style event in the fall at Village Center with \$25,000 allocated in the budget. Mayor Grasso added it was something that the Village has wanted to do for some time and with the success of the tent program it seemed a natural fit.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Simmons made the **MOTION** to adjourn the meeting to April 7, 2021 at 5:00pm, **SECONDED** by Ms. Hamilton. **APPROVED 6-0**. The meeting was adjourned at 6:10pm.

Respectfully submitted:

Economic Development Committee
Minutes – March 3, 2021

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andres Beltran". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Andres" and last name "Beltran" clearly distinguishable.

Andrez Beltran
Management Analyst