

## Economic Development

February 1, 2023

**Attending:** Dave Behrens, Terry Anderson, Andy Clements, Angie Hibben, Kevin Leighty, Jennifer Jones Sinnott, Don Howard

### **Meeting was Called to order 5:58 pm**

Kevin said we need 3 more to fill the committee but thinking of making Angie a voting member so then only 2 more will be needed to fill the committee.

**There was no old business to discuss.**

### **New Business –**

**Intro of Newest EDC member:** Kevin introduced Andy Clements. Andy is faculty at Waubensee Community College and owns Weblinx Inc in Oswego. He noted that he also has a small real estate company called Clements holdings, has experience with private/public partnership when the EDC was standalone organization. He is a past member of the Yorkville chamber board and current Oswego Area chamber board member, Aurora University alumni and Waubensee alumni. Right now, he is mostly full-time teaching business, marketing, entrepreneurship at Waubensee but retains his President/CEO of Weblinx (started as Designs by Clements – started at 17 then incorporated as a senior in College).

**Village/Chamber Small Business Seminars** – Kevin noted that we used to do seminars would like to get them started again. Kevin will get together with Sarah Skilton and Angie and get topics from commissioners. Andy noted that he has some good connections for speakers. There are SCORE mentors, Someone from the State for Workers Comp, SBDC etc. Andy noted that marketing might be a good topic. Target first one for June.

### **2023 Business Retention & Expansion Priorities**

Matching EDC Commissioners with “Business types/Industries” Kevin was tasked to get the EDC more involved and get this going again with a more cohesive plan. He also asked if this is still important and an interest of the commission. Andy says it is important if we see a for lease space sign in front of a large manufacturer. Andy asked how much office space is in downtown. Kevin noted that there is very little (3<sup>rd</sup> floor 113 Main, 74 Van Buren, Tap House.) The elevator is at the back of 113 Main which is only accessed from the back of 113 Main or the back of the restaurant. Kevin asked if the commissioners would like to do retention visits – Terry said they were very good, informal and important. Dave said he was uncomfortable with financial questions. Kevin said he has done some and kept it light. Jen asked how he did it in Schaumburg. Kevin said he reached out to the industries they decided on and the questions were hiring, retention, recruiting, issues with permitting, growth protentional and significant bearers to growth. Kevin noted that he met with Hudson Design house for about an hour and a half today. Terry mentioned we discussed reaching out to Waubensee Community College, College of DuPage, Aurora University etc. and communicating with them on the needs (mentoring available,

internships paid and non-paid) in a business. Those 3 are good resources for us to reach out to to fill gaps. CAT used to be a legacy – entire families for decades worked there, we had met with them for ideas. Why do young people leave Oswego? If we have great people and great talent how do we keep them here?

Angie would like to start signing ceremonies for the trade schools. Asked Andy to help her make the connection at Waubensee to start this. Andy would like to invite the committee to the Business department meeting at WCC to exchange ideas. Andy will give Kevin's info to Alice for this Advisory meeting.

For the business retention visits is there a specific industry we should target or as it happens? Dave asked if we have a group we are concerned about losing? Kevin said the back bone is our small businesses especially retail/restaurant. That's why he is focusing in the downtown right now. Jen mentioned that people share with her as she is out and about in the community and she gages the info and shares it with Kevin. We hear a lot of complaints about Building and Zoning department and then when we research we find out there is a lot more to the story. Jen says there is a lot of do.... timeline of how long things take from when you fill out the paper. Kevin's priority is to put together an electronic newsletter for businesses with touchpoint of important information etc. Kevin will put together and list of businesses and industries and we can pick which ones we would like to meet with or have talked top and have some talking points. Dave asked if he could pull up the questions from the past visits? Park District mailed out a flyer saying how many people came downtown etc. during Prairiefest and asked how and where they got this information. Aurora Convention Bureau did this.

**Franchise Fair Fall 2023** – This would be a group of franchises that want to come to Oswego but don't have any people to run the franchise. This would be informational event for the community to learn more about what the different programs involved. Hope to have some money to do this in the fall. Kevin thinks we could get 10 franchises involved. How would the commission like to be involved? Terry said us to go out and talk to the community who may have employees looking to do the next thing.... Jen said we could send this out to other municipalities

**Spotlight Business of the Month Nominations** – Kevin noted that he did in Schaumburg. The Commission picks 3 businesses every quarter to spotlight (someone whose been in business for a while, etc.). Kevin reaches out and promotes them on social media/website. Terry said it may bring people out of their shell. Andy likes idea. Tell their story. Categories of business: Industrial, commercial Andy nominated Property Concepts Inc (50<sup>th</sup> year), HQC – 30 years, Locked in Photography, Holiday Light Décor, Look at our long-time businesses (All American Male/Bella-gia, NM Tripp, Kuhn Plumbing, Beery Heating & Cooling, Keith's Car Care),

## Reports

**Economic Development Director** – 1<sup>st</sup> cannabis dispensary approved - Cloud 9 will be in the old Home of the Hoagies. Another one being voted one end of month (Blounts & More). Dave asked once approved how long before they open. Kevin said Cloud 9 hopes to open by spring. Blounts is going into Mason Square hopefully in the summer time. Andy asked about the restrictions such as how close to

schools can they buy and Dave asked do we have a limit how many we can have? There is a restriction that will say they have to be at least a mile apart. Some sites on Orchard Rd are being looked at. Money from these goes to police, education drug programs. No money goes into the general fund. Freddie's is moving forward. Early spring opening. Oak & Bean is open now. Cube Smart Storage is now open on Weisbrook Dr. Primos Tacos should be opening soon. Pop Shelf which is like 5 below on Route 34 in one of the big spaces, Orange Theory Fitness and Stretch Club also on Route 34, Dave asked about the old Dominick's location – and Kevin noted that they promised that there is a fitness-based tenant for part of the place. Bell Tire is coming near Delta Sonic with a 10,000 sq. retail development. Jinxy's boutique is coming into the old Dusty Roads location. Sole Flow Yoga is going between Oak+Bean & game store. Whitetail Rige Golf Dome on Orchard coming and they hope to be in by October. It will have a restaurant and bar with Room for outdoor expansion (mini golf, outdoor dining).

**EDC members** – Angie mentioned candidate forum 1 week from tonight. Andy said there was a signature required from an ethics officer.

**Next meeting May 3<sup>rd</sup>**

Dave motioned to adjourn, Don motioned. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted  
Angie Hill