

HIGHLAND, ILLINOIS
MINUTES OF REGULAR SESSION
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
CITY HALL, 1115 BROADWAY
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2011
12:00 PM

Call to Order

The meeting of the Industrial Development Commission was called to order at **12:06** pm by Chairman Bellm.

Roll Call

Members present: Darell Bellm, Jon Greve, Rick Frey, and Ryan Goodwin.

Members absent: Eric Rehkemper and Ex-Officio Member Jami Jansen.

Also present: City Manager Mark Latham, Business Recruitment and Retention Coordinator Andrea Enright, Chief Building & Zoning Official Kevin Limestall, and Deputy Clerk Lana Hediger.

Approval of Minutes

Rick Frey made a motion to approve the minutes of the October 5, 2011 Industrial Development Commission meeting; seconded by Ryan Goodwin. All members voted in favor; the motion carried.

Reports

Business Inquiries Update:

Kevin Limestall reported that Huddle House is now open.

Clarkson Eye Care will be opening for business on Monday.

X-Factor Fitness a subsidiary of Phoenix Physical Therapy took possession of their building yesterday and should be open today. They are a spin-off of Apex Physical Therapy.

Yogi's is closed. He's moved. Kevin has heard that the building is for sale but that the owner is asking a lot for the property.

Kevin performed a pre-final walk-through of the Cabinet Gallery today. They are operating.

Spoke with the county health department. They have had inquiries from two different entities looking to open bakeries in Highland. One of them was Jim Gallatin and Jim Nickerson's location of the (TLC) The Learning Center. Their significant others are looking to open a bakery there.

Andrea learned in Chicago that there is a sporting goods store looking to locate in Highland. It is all very preliminary. She has been in contact with them. Hopefully they can work something out. They're not sure if they'll be able to make it work or not.

Andrea also knows of a fast food restaurant that's looking to locate in Highland but can't disclose the name due to its being very preliminary. They made a site visit, but we're not supposed to know that.

Andrea contacted some women's apparel stores and shoe stores. She heard back from one. They gave her their building specs and indicated that they want to co-tenant with a women's apparel store. They haven't committed to visit Highland yet. Andrea met with Dave Kunkel and Forbes Properties to see if we could offer their vacant sites to any businesses looking in the area and to see if they would be willing to build-to-suit if that's what was needed. They both indicated that they would.

Andrea also learned in Chicago that Highland meets a lot of the qualifications for stores or restaurants but what we don't have is the traffic count and the proximity to the interstate. Darell asked if the convention was mostly retailers. Andrea indicated that it was retail and some restaurants and fast food chains.

Kevin reported that Steve Schmitt, Inc. is getting ready to begin their remodeling in the next two weeks. They have scaled back their original plan for a big expansion and will be doing just a small addition to their shop area. That will be the second phase of that project. Mark Latham added that the project will cost about \$900,000.

Mark Latham reported that Jeff Forbes is talking to Applebee's again. He requested information from Mark about the new hospital. That information together with the recent peripheral route improvements may improve Highland's chances with Applebee's.

Darell observed that Oliver Anderson is expanding again or adding a huge facility right next to the hospital. Kevin confirmed that and indicated that The Korte Company is building it. Darell asked what it is. Kevin thinks it is part of the medical offices. Darell mentioned it noting that if the new SJH facility has the same kind of following in Highland, it will be great.

Mark reported that the City is working closely with the hospital regarding a Tax Increment Financing District that will be finalized by the end of this year. The City Council approved an Annexation Agreement with the hospital, annexed their property along with 10 acres owned by the City. We also authorized approximately \$3.7 million of General Obligation Bonds which will be paid back by the TIF development. They are ready to submit the application for their Certificate of Need. They are looking to break ground in April 2012 and move in sometime in 2013.

Mark pointed out that the whole landscape for retail is changing in Highland based on the road improvements, the proposed I-70 / SR 160 interchange, and the new hospital.

No new industries have expressed any interest in Highland at this point in time.

Venture Advisors Update:

Mark Latham reported we're all setup for our first meeting. It will be a networking and informational reception at The Korte Co. We had a meeting last Friday with Venture Advisors at which we started to pull some things together for that meeting on the 16th. This will be an information and idea meeting on the mentoring program. There will be an application and interview process as the first steps of the program. The first initial contact/interview will be with the City. If approved, then the party will move onto the application process. If the application is approved, they will be assigned a group of mentors. Mark asked the commission members to think of people that they think would be good to serve as a mentor. Rick Frey stated that he would serve as a mentor. Rick has great experience as an entrepreneur. The Korte Company has offered free office space to entrepreneurs in this program. The only stipulation is that it is only open from 7:00AM – 5:30PM, Monday through Friday. The program would likely restrict their use of this free space to several months.

New Business

SWOT Analysis:

Andrea outlined the goals that she put together based on the past goals and the recent SWOT analysis by the IDC members, as requested by City Manager Latham.

Goals:

- 1) Regularly (every six months) review and critique the "GrowHighland" website
- 2) Develop a business and employment retention plan
- 3) Increase the development of the Highland Entrepreneurship Program
- 4) Market Highland to businesses that will benefit specifically from Highland Communication Services
- 5) Promote pride in home ownership

Mark indicated that he would like to see some strategic action items attached to the goals. He assigned Andrea the task of creating a list of action items that the commission members could then prioritize.

Chairman Bellm asked if the commission members had anything they wanted to add to the SWOT Analysis from last meeting.

Mark Latham offered that one action item could be to develop relationships with our elected officials at the state level. Mark will invite both Kyle McCarter and Paul Evans to join us at our next IDC meeting.

Rick Frey asked if the City limits go out as far as the site of the future new I-70 and SR 160 interchange? Mark indicated that the limits go as far as Daiber Road.

Review of drafted letter for Madison County Business Retention Program:

While she was at a seminar in Naperville a couple of weeks ago and business retention was a big topic of discussion. Basically, what she learned was that the plan that Madison County gave us would need a lot of revamping. Specifically, if a letter is sent, it should come from the Mayor. There should only be about 10 questions. The questions should not be specific. You should have two people; one to ask the questions and one to record the answers. You should let the businesses do the talking. You should not ask specific questions about the business and how they are doing. It should be more of a "What can we do to help you?" Some of the questions that were provided by Madison County were, "How is your business weathering this downturn?" and "Do you have critical suppliers or vendors at risk?" Those questions should not be asked because they don't want to release that information and we are not trying to figure out the status of their business. We are trying to figure out how we can help them maintain their employment and their business in our community. The other piece of information that they presented in the seminar is if we have a business retention plan, it should not be housed within the City because then any documents would be subject to the IL Freedom of Information Act. If we would tell a business that the information they are sharing is confidential, it's not. Some communities are partnering with Ameren. Ameren would maintain their data on their Synchronis system and just provide the information when they need it. Andrea will talk to the city attorney to see exactly what effect the IL FOIA would have on this program.

Chairman Bellm stated that Goal #1 is a good one and important to maintain. He asked with regard to Goal #2, how we could develop a business retention plan if we are not able to talk to the businesses without the possibility of any findings being requested pursuant to the IL FOIA. City Manager Latham indicated that he and the Mayor have been meeting with the major employers over the years to see how the City can help them. Rick Frey offered to help Mark and the Mayor in that process if they wanted to expand it to meeting with the smaller businesses.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Industrial Development Commission is scheduled for Wednesday, December 7, 2011 at 12:00 pm at City Hall.

Adjournment

Jon Greve made a motion to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Rick Frey. All members voted aye, none nay; the meeting adjourned at 12:56 p.m.