

Economic Development Committee minutes
February 12, 2014

Meeting started promptly at 5:30 PM

Present: Trustees, Brust, Kraus and Reid

Invited: Trustee Ruth

Chamber members: Hansen, Zwemke with Acker absent

County: Burkhout

There were no citizens comments

Motion to approve minutes, Kraus, Second Reid, all Ayes

Art Zwemke reported that he had contact with a representative from Aldis and reported that they were looking for a population of 30,000 in a 3 mile area or a traffic count of 20,000 vehicles per day. Art presented a picture of what their ideal location would be and the corner of Rt.72 and Schmidt would match the land requirements. Art will pursue further gathering of information.

A phone conference type call was placed to Peggy Friday, the Chamber/Economic Development person in Rochelle Illinois for information on their marketing success. The way Rochelle's EDC is set up is that she is actually paid by the City and the rest of the group is formed with business owners in the area. The initially contacted Buxton in 2005 but did not contract with them until 2006. She said that they did all of the market research but it was up to them to pursue the companies that Buxton showed would be a good fit for them. They also participated in the Las Vegas and other conventions with the aid of Buxton. The work load is broken up with the Mayor, the development group and the chamber that have a strong commitment to this project They have formed a corporation for this ongoing project. She said that they didn't realize what they all needed to make this happen at the time and suggested we should be well prepared to move quickly should a company want to locate. They put together a plan that would decrease the time spent on various hearings and permitting events to work with the newly acquired businesses. They also had the various utility providers sit in on most of the process. She stated that they also had to catch up on the City's infrastructure to accommodate the new business. They applied and received grant money for this. They also created a special TIF plan for Wal-Mart, Farm King and others. The one car dealership they set up a tax rebate program of 50% for a 3-5 year term..

Their population has remained close to the same level of 10,000 since 2005 and even with them adding 2,000 jobs 75% of the workers live outside of Rochelle. She stated that the stagnant population is now becoming an issue but did not give further information. When asked where they put the new business growth she stated that the downtown area was not a choice by any of the new companies and that the downtown area was dying out and most new business that attempted to locate there failed. The new companies all located on main highways.

They have a large truck stop, which is their largest sales tax provider and that a "sky diving operation" has now become a drawing card for the City. They have reached out to developers to build incubator buildings, strip centers and office space on speculation and are having some success in filling them. They used Buxton and their information for a couple of years after the initial contract expired but now they do most of the development, tourism and rail promotion within their own group that works with a budget of approximately \$150,000.00 per year. She stated that they started out with \$10,000.00 in Village seed money and raised the rest from local banks and businesses. They have currently hired an outside firm to establish "BRANDING" for the City.

We didn't ask and she didn't volunteer how they are currently funded but I am sure that she would share that information is asked.

She also invited us to visit her and she would share more on how all of this is working in their favor.

A copy of the survey recently used by Elgin was given to all of the committee members with a request for them to pick out the questions that we would use for the survey to be sent to the chamber members.

Population numbers were presented for our surrounding municipalities along with with the corresponding Township populations along with a request for the committee to respond with what set of numbers to be used on the business pamphlet.

New business: The Chamber Expo was discussed it seemed that we would participate if some of the time could be shared by other Board members and that the up-dated tri-fold pamphlet would be used as opposed to the new residents guide. We should also have maps and other pertinent Village visual material.

Call for adjournment at 6:44
Motion, Reid, Second Kraus, all Ayes.

George Brust
Chairman Economic Development Committee