



## **Economic Development Commission**

**Wednesday, May 25, 2016  
Council Chambers Room**

### **Minutes**

#### **Commissioners Present**

James Persino, Chair  
James Kucienski, Vice Chair  
Myles D. Berman  
Paul Levine  
Pat McCoy

#### **Commissioners Absent**

James Berger  
Genelle Iocca  
Patrick Kaniff  
Terrence Strauch

#### **Staff Present**

Tim Wiberg, Village Manager  
Charles Meyer, Assistant to the Village Manager  
Robert Merkel, Finance Director  
Steve McNellis, Community Development Director  
Caleb Miller, Community Development Intern

#### **Others Present**

Jacqueline Boland, Executive Director of the Lincolnwood Chamber of Commerce

#### **1. Call to Order/ Quorum Declaration**

Noting that a quorum of 5 members was present, the meeting was called by Chairman Persino at 8:04 AM.

#### **2. Minutes Approval**

Chairman Persino asked the Commission if any edits were to be made for the April 27, 2016 meeting minutes. Hearing no discussion, he then opened for a motion to approve. Vice Chairman Kucienski moved to approve the minutes as written. Commissioner Berman seconded. Minutes approved by voice vote 5-0.

#### **3. Discussion on Video Gaming**

Community Development Director McNellis, then began his presentation on video gaming. He discussed the history of video gaming in the state, beginning with the Video Gaming Act, which was passed by the Illinois legislature in 2009, that legalized video

gambling. He indicated that municipalities in the state were given the option to opt-out of the legalization, and that the Village opted out in 2010, meaning that this use is still prohibited in Lincolnwood. Chairman Persino inquired whether opting in retroactively would result in loss of benefits. Village Manager Wiberg indicated that the Village could opt back in and receive the full benefits, and that the Village could also pass its own regulations on video gaming if necessary. Commissioner Berman then asked whether the original opt-out led to any loss of benefits from the state. Manager Wiberg indicated that some penalties were proposed during the legislative debate for communities who opted out, but they ultimately did not pass in the final version of the bill.

Commissioner Berman then asked how many neighboring municipalities had opted out of the legislation. Director McNellis presented a map of Chicagoland communities that had opted-in, and then indicated that roughly 900 Illinois municipalities total did not opt-out of the regulations. He also pointed out that the map showed most communities in the North Shore had not opted in, meaning that only one nearby community – Morton Grove - permits video gaming.

Director McNellis continued his presentation, discussing the current status of video gaming in Lincolnwood. He noted that Laredo Hospitality, a video gambling establishment company, had approached the Village Board earlier in the year about a proposal for a video gaming establishment at the strip center on Crawford and Devon. The Board held two meetings with the matter on the Committee of the Whole agenda, and also held a highly-publicized meeting on May 19, 2016, at which only two residents were present, and only one of whom spoke in opposition to the establishment. He then discussed the research undertaken by staff regarding the matter. The Police Chief, as well as members of the Village Management office, had gone to various locations operated by Laredo in Franklin Park, Wheeling, Prospect Heights, and Waukegan. They found that all the locations were very clean and had friendly staff. Additionally, each municipality's Police Departments had indicated that there were no problems reported from these locations.

Director McNellis then mentioned that the average annual revenue per each facility was roughly \$24,000. Commissioner Levine asked whether that was the municipal revenue, to which Director McNellis responded it was, adding that it was a conservative estimate that did not include food or drink sales revenues. Manager Wiberg added that the food and alcohol uses at Laredo facilities were ancillary to the primary gaming uses, and indicated that state law requires food and alcohol sales at video gaming sites. He then moved on to discuss the design of the facilities, discussing the layout, and noting that the game monitors are generally located in the rear and screened from the front of the store. He emphasized that the overall appearance of the store was innocuous. Chairman Persino

added that he had previously seen some of the locations, and noted that there is no cash exchange involved in the process, and that each machine is monitored by the state so there is little to no potential for criminal activity.

Director McNellis then moved on to discuss potential regulations for video gaming uses, including limits on the number of terminals within the Village, limiting to certain zoning districts, and distance requirements from uses such as schools, churches, or parks. Chairman Persino added that, if the Village were to opt in, then existing restaurants with bars would be able to install video gaming terminals. Manager Wiberg confirmed this was the case, and then discussed the varying types of regulations, indicating that the Village Board could regulate these uses so that there would be very few, or easing restrictions to allow for more gaming facilities. He also indicated that many Village Trustees generally like the model put forward by Laredo, but they do not want a proliferation of these uses in the Village. Finally, he noted that no existing business has come forward to the Village Board asking for video gaming approval in any of the meetings that have already passed. Chairman Persino indicated that some communities have allowed for video gaming in standalone bars, while also limiting the Laredo-type establishments, in order for existing businesses to have a chance to adopt them.

Commissioner McCoy, while agreeing that the revenue generation is attractive, then noted that approval of these uses comes down to moral issues. Manager Wiberg discussed Trustee Jesal Patel's comments that, while there are moral issues, there would be many benefits for filling a vacancy in the Village. Chairman Persino added that if the Village were to continue the prohibition, the operators would simply seek out another community to open in. He also noted that the interior remodels of Laredo properties are roughly \$125,000, indicating that they would be high-quality, innocuous uses. Discussion ensued on the interior quality of Laredo properties.

Vice Chairman Kucienski noted that there is a minimal difference between his own property taxes and the estimated revenue generated by video gaming uses. Manager Wiberg clarified that the \$24,000 figure did not include property or sales taxes, but instead just the revenues from the gaming itself. Chairman Persino added that there may be additional benefits, such as increased business for the neighboring stores, and therefore sales taxes. Discussion ensued.

Commissioner Levine indicated that he is not comfortable with this type of use in the community because of ethical and moral issues. However, he also indicated that he would be more open to allowing gaming terminals in existing restaurant/bars. Commissioner Berman then asked whether Chicago allowed these types of uses, to which Manager Wiberg responded that they do not. Commissioner Berman then indicated that he is

opposed to the use, and that he found nothing valuable to it. He discussed his opposition, saying that he found that the exterior finishes were, “Diaphanous,” (thinly-veiled disguises for an undesirable use). He added that he would be even less supportive of having video gaming in existing restaurants than in standalone parlors. Vice Chairman Kucienski noted that, in his interactions with Lincolnwood residents, he has found almost unanimous opposition. Finally, Commissioner Berman noted that these games tended to be designed for the user to lose. Discussion ensued on ethical concerns relating to gambling and video gaming.

Jacqueline Boland, Executive Director of the Lincolnwood Chamber of Commerce, began discussing her position on the issue. She noted that the particular Laredo brand appeared to be much different than the typical gaming facilities, and that they had an air of fun to them that may be attractive to people in the community. She also indicated that she is opposed to legislating morality. Finally, Ms. Boland said that this use, if it fails, will have improved the interior to such a degree that it would be easy to bring in a new tenant. Discussion continued on the type of environment found in Laredo.

Commissioner Berman, hearing no further discussion, made a motion that it is the consensus of the Economic Development Commission not to support the introduction of video gaming in the Village as it has been presented at this time. Motion seconded by Vice Chairman Kucienski. Roll call vote:

**AYE:** Commissioners Berman, Levine, and McCoy; Vice Chairman Kucienski

**NAY:** Chairman Persino

Motion approved 4-1.

#### **4. Reports**

##### **A. Development Updates**

Before discussing the development updates, Chairman Persino requested an update on the Purple Hotel site. Director McNellis indicated that North Capital Group had failed to meet the May 15 deadline to show proof of a loan that would indicate their ability to move forward with the project. This resulted in a termination of the Pre-Development Agreement. Additionally, this also set in motion a deadline of June 15 in order for North Capital Group to improve the property up to the standards and Code Regulations of the Village, which requires removing the original foundations, and creating a clean vacant site by planting grass and removing dead trees. Failure to meet this deadline will result in fines to be determined at a later time. Finally, he indicated that the Village is looking for new potential developers to build on the site. Manager Wiberg noted that the preliminary PUD that was approved by the Village Board has also expired because of these developments, and that some developers have come forward indicating interest in the site.

Chairman Persino also indicated that he has spoken with developers interested in the site. Discussion ensued on the Purple Hotel site.

Discussion then moved on to the Hyatt hotel chain's interest in a site on Cicero Avenue, north of the intersection at Touhy. Director McNellis indicated that the Village is in contact with their representatives, and that they are currently exploring financing options. Manager Wiberg indicated that Hyatt has expressed interest in purchasing the residential properties adjacent to the property along Cicero, which has generated some resistance. He noted that the Commission, if they are supportive, should indicate their support to the Village Board in order to have a stronger argument from the business community. Chairman Persino suggested an overlay zone for the residential zones in the area in order to phase out the current residential zoning. Discussion ensued on commercial sites in the northwestern corner of the Village.

Director McNellis then began discussion on the Development Updates Report. He began by discussing the public hearing for the Comprehensive Plan, set to be held later the same day, and invited Commissioners to attend the meeting. Additionally, he discussed issues being put before the Plan Commission at the upcoming June 1<sup>st</sup> meeting, which included a retail redevelopment proposal for 3701 Touhy, and an expansion of off-street parking at 3550 Pratt. Additionally, various text amendments will go before the Plan Commission, including consideration to eliminate the prohibition of drive-through facilities in the B3 district and residential fence regulations along the proposed public recreation paths set to be built in the Village.

He then moved on to discuss the various Village Board approvals that occurred in the previous month. First was the approval of the Property Enhancement Program (PEP) Grant for 6825 and 6829-49 North Lincoln Avenue, which the Commission had recommended at the April 27 meeting. Next, he mentioned the Board had approved an extension of zoning approval for both Begyle Brewery at 7005 Central Park and the South Bay senior housing facility at 3401-3501 Northeast Parkway. Finally, he discussed the approval of the off-street parking expansion for the dental office at 7370 Cicero. Discussion ensued on the development updates.

#### **B. New Business Licenses**

Commissioners viewed the list of new business licenses for the month of April 2016.

#### **6. Other Business**

Manager Wiberg inquired whether the Commission would be willing to no longer use paper copies of the packets. He indicated that the Village Board had stopped using them for nearly ten years, and that he was unaware that any other board or commissions were still using paper copies. Commissioners agreed that using electronic copies and bringing

tablets or laptop computers would be best. They agreed to a brief training session for using tablets for these purposes at the next meeting.

**7. Public Forum**

No member of the public desired to address the Commission.

**8. Adjournment**

By consensus, the meeting was adjourned at 9:34AM.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Caleb Miller  
Community Development Intern