



Economic Development Commission

**Wednesday, April 27, 2016
Council Chambers Room**

Minutes

Commissioners Present

James Persino, Chair
James Kucienski, Vice Chair
Myles D. Berman
Patrick Kaniff
Paul Levine
Pat McCoy
Terrence Strauch

Commissioners Absent

Genelle Iocca
James Berger

Staff Present

Tim Wiberg, Village Manager
Robert Merkel, Finance Director
Steve McNellis, Community Development Director
Aaron Cook, AICP, Community Development Manager
Caleb Miller, Community Development Intern

Others Present

Jacqueline Boland, Executive Director of the Lincolnwood Chamber of Commerce
Michael Klein, Airoom

1. Call to Order/ Quorum Declaration

Noting that a quorum of 7 members was present, the meeting was called by Chairman Persino at 8:05 AM.

2. Minutes Approval

Chairman Persino suggested two amendments to the minutes. The first was a misspelling of the word, "Powder-coated" on the fourth page of the minutes. He also noted that he had mentioned traffic issues with the left-turn restrictions on Kimball Avenue, next to Whistler's restaurant, and proposed including those comments in the minutes. He then asked Commissioners whether they had any additional amendments to the minutes.

Hearing no further discussion, Vice Chairman Kucienski moved to approve the minutes as amended. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Strauch. Minutes approved by voice vote 7-0.

3. PEP Grant Requests for 6825 Lincoln Avenue and 6829-49 Lincoln Avenue

Chairman Persino then moved discussion to the Property Enhancement Program (PEP) Grant being sought by Michael Klein, the owner of Airoom. He introduced Steve McNellis, the new Community Development Director, who then began his discussion. Director McNellis noted that two separate PEP Grants are being sought by the applicant for two properties, but both are part of the same overall project. He then explained the purpose of the PEP Grant, which is to assist businesses with façade improvements and other beautification projects. Additionally, the grant covers up to 50% of the project costs, with a maximum amount of \$25,000. Director McNellis then reviewed the three bids quoted by contractors for the Airoom projects, as well as the approvals required by the Village Board and IDOT to move forward with the project. After presenting the proposed site plan, Director McNellis turned conversation over to Michael Klein.

Mr. Klein briefly discussed the history of the site, mentioning that Airoom had been in the Village since 1961, and that he had purchased the property in the mid-1990s. He then discussed the specifics of the plan, which included the establishment of angled parking along the front of the Airoom building, the creation of a parkway along Lincoln Avenue separating the lot, and adding perpendicular parking along the north side of Keystone Avenue by vacating a portion of Village right-of-way. Manager Wiberg added that this project was similar to that which had been completed at the Touhy-Crawford business district, next to Wholly Frijoles. He continued, explaining that the plans put forth by Mr. Klein had been consistent with the Lincoln Avenue Task Force Plan, which intended to reduce traffic conflicts on Lincoln Avenue, since the parking alignment as proposed does not require backing into Lincoln Ave traffic. Manager Wiberg also noted that the Village had been working with Mr. Klein to negotiate the right-of-way vacation along Keystone Avenue, and discussing the need for additional parking on the site because of the new diagonal configuration of the spaces, which reduces the amount of on-site parking by 8-9 spaces.

Chairman Persino noted that the concept of the side-street right-of-way vacation had been used before and had been very effective in the Village. Commissioner Levine inquired whether the sidewalk along Keystone would remain. Manager Wiberg explained that a new sidewalk would be installed, but it would require an access easement agreement between the Village and Airoom. Discussion then moved on to the parking configuration. Manager Wiberg explained the traffic flow through the lot and pointed out the additional public street parking along Lincoln Avenue that would be created through the project. Director McNellis noted that, in all, the project would bring a net gain of parking both on

and off the property. Chairman Persino also pointed out that the exit of the parking lot would be right-turn only, and that the plan would reduce traffic conflicts at the site, particularly compared to the current situation. He then inquired whether the required amount of handicapped parking spaces was met, noting that only one had been marked on the plans. Mr. Klein replied saying that the plan had taken into account the required handicapped parking, and explained that one of the spaces along Keystone Avenue would be used as a handicapped space. Director McNellis stated staff would confirm handicapped parking requirements were met.

Commissioner McCoy then asked whether the Keystone parking would impact the sight line when exiting the alley to the rear of the Airoom building. He mentioned that parking at the corner of Keystone and the alley is currently restricted because it would negatively impact the sight line. He had heard complaints, however, and was concerned the parking proposal along the street would have a similar impact on the sight line. Mr. Klein responded by explaining that the new configuration would make the street wider by roughly 9 feet. Because of this, a car turning right out of the alley would still have the same sight line as it currently does.

Commissioner Berman mentioned that he was concerned with the means of egress from the parking lot due to the potential conflicts between cars entering and exiting. Manager Wiberg responded, explaining that this design was similar to that on the north side of Touhy and Crawford, which has seen no accidents since it opened. He noted that it was not the most ideal parking situation, but that it was one of the best possible options for that particular property due to the shape of the lot and the location of the building. Chairman Persino proposed erecting a sign at that particular location in the lot that restricted egress for cars coming from the angled spaces, so that they would be required to travel the length of the Airoom Plaza lot and exit onto Karlov Avenue. Discussion ensued. Finally, Director McNellis suggested leaving the plans as they are, and if problems arise, signage could be required at a later time. Commissioners concurred.

Chairman Persino then asked Mr. Klein whether he had sought a PEP Grant for the façade work that was done prior to this particular project. Mr. Klein stated that he did not seek the grant funds at the time. Commissioner Berman then asked whether the PEP Grant required bidders to be “arm’s length”, and if the bidders shown in the presentation were at “arm’s length” or “captive”. Mr. Klein responded, saying that the bidders were at arm’s-length, meaning they were separate subcontractors unrelated to his own business. Manager Wiberg noted that if the Village Board approves the PEP Grant at their May 3rd, 2016 meeting, the Village would already be in the following fiscal year. However, he explained that the funds may be taken out of the 2015-16 fiscal year, leaving the EDC

with funds to approve additional PEP Grants in fiscal year 2016-17, assuming the EDC acted on this matter at today's meeting.

Hearing no further discussion, Commissioner Berman made a motion to recommend approval of the PEP Grant for 6825 Lincoln Avenue in the maximum amount of \$25,000 and a PEP Grant for 6829-49 Lincoln Avenue in the amount of either \$25,000 or \$18,971.75 (depending on the bidder selected), subject to receipt of required approvals from IDOT and the Village Board. Motion seconded by Commissioner Strauch. Approved by voice vote 7-0.

4. Economic Development Work Plan

Chairman Persino then turned the discussion over to Director McNellis, who began his presentation on a proposed Economic Development Work Plan. He explained that the Village's primary objectives were both business attraction as well as business retention. Before moving on to the specific work plan, Manager Wiberg discussed Director McNellis' prior work history with the Village of Lincolnshire, indicating that he had a strong background in economic development.

Director McNellis began his presentation, proposing various items. He first discussed business site visits, which would involve Village employees going directly to businesses and asking about any needs they may have and their experience, both the positive and negative, as well as providing any additional information they may not have. Director McNellis also discussed broker meetings, which would be used to promote the community and provide additional information on new projects and businesses that may be helpful to commercial brokers and property owners. He then moved on to discuss improved marketing strategies, such as an updated promotional brochure, greater use of social media, and consideration of membership in the Chicago North Shore Visitor's Bureau.

He then continued discussion, proposing a new business-only website geared toward local businesses that would be linked to the Village government's website. Other strategies included an updated shop and dine guide (both print and digital); attendance at trade conferences and events; business roundtable meetings in concert with the Chamber of Commerce that meet with businesses of varying categories (i.e. light industrial, retail, restaurant, etc.); business-friendly zoning changes; a new (economic development only) branding strategy for the Village; and a monthly business e-newsletter. Additionally, Director McNellis discussed the need for improved signage that would help delineate where the Village boundaries are, which could also be a boost to civic pride and identity. He indicated that a typical driver may not necessarily know they are traveling through Lincolnwood depending on which road they are using. He also suggested directly

contacting targeted businesses, such as niche uses, restaurants, and entertainment uses, in order to gauge the industry's interest in the Village. He indicated that the International Council of Shopping Centers compiles a book of businesses looking to expand, along with the broker contact information; this book could be used to reach out to targeted industries.

Finally, Director McNellis discussed consideration of newspecial events that could attract people from outside the Village to Lincolnwood, and to promote the various food and retail establishments in the process. He suggested adding new events to existing ones, such as the Towers Christmas Lights event. Commissioner Levine noted that Lincolnwood Fest, which is held every summer, would be an excellent starting point to build on. Director McNellis agreed, and suggested adding new events within Lincolnwood Fest that would draw in larger crowds. He then proposed a commercial business landscape award, which he indicated could be awarded during Lincolnwood Fest. This in particular would provide an incentive to businesses to improve their façades and landscaping, as well as to recognize those that have made the best strides to do so.

Director McNellis ended his discussion by inviting feedback. Chairman Persino encouraged the Commissioners to read the Director's memorandum and provide him any thoughts or suggestions they may have. Jacqueline Boland of the Chamber of Commerce expressed her excitement about these proposals, and reiterated the Director's comments regarding the Village and Chamber of Commerce working together on many of them. Finally, Vice Chairman Kucienski proposed a recurring report on the state of each of these efforts that would indicate their potential success, as well as any additional information that may have been gathered from business site visits and broker meetings.

5. Reports

A. Development Updates

Manager Cook presented the Development Updates, including a summary of the recent public hearing on the updated Comprehensive Plan, which was held on April 13th, indicating that the subject was continued and will be held at 7:00 PM on May 25th, 2016. Chairman Persino indicated he would like Plan Commissioners' comments on the Comprehensive Plan to be sent to the Economic Development Commissioners.

Manager Cook then discussed the Village Board approval of the addition of Lou Malnati's located at 6649 North Lincoln Avenue. He described the extent of the project, which included the demolition of a residential structure – owned by Lou Malnati's – just north of the business, as well as the construction of a new parking lot and masonry wall in the rear and side of the property. Chairman Persino inquired about when the construction would begin. Manager Cook indicated that there is no specific timeline set,

but construction typically starts within the first 2 to 3 months depending on the demolition schedule. Discussion ensued on the Lou Malnati's project.

Manager Cook then summarized the establishment of a new Schools (S) zoning district that was approved by the Village Board. He indicated that prior to this change, the District 74 campus was located in an R3 residential zone, which posed several complications as the school performed exterior improvements. Chairman Persino asked if the Village received any direct benefit from this particular change. Manager Wiberg indicated that District 74 and the Village were able to renegotiate an intergovernmental agreement regarding residential units on the Purple Hotel site. Discussion ensued.

B. New Business Licenses

Commissioners reviewed the list of new business licenses issued during the months of February and March 2016.

6. Other Business

Commissioner McCoy inquired about the site of Long John Silver's, located on Touhy Avenue. Manager Cook indicated that the most recent information suggests the company intends to reopen. Discussion then moved to façade and parkway improvements along the south side of Touhy Avenue. Discussion ensued on potential site enhancements for that particular corridor.

7. Public Forum

No member of the public desired to address the Commission.

8. Adjournment

By consensus, the meeting was adjourned at 9:45AM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Caleb Miller
Community Development Intern