

HIGHLAND, ILLINOIS
MINUTES OF REGULAR SESSION
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
CITY HALL, 1115 BROADWAY
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 2011
12:00 PM

Call to Order

The meeting of the Industrial Development Commission was called to order at 12:05 pm by Chairman Bellm.

Roll Call

Members present: Darell Bellm, Jon Greve, Rick Frey, Ryan Goodwin, Eric Rehkemper, and Ex-Officio Member Jami Jansen.

Members absent: None

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

Approval of Minutes

Jon Greve made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 3, 2011 Industrial Development Commission meeting; seconded by Rick Frey. All members voted in favor; the motion carried.

Reports

Business Inquiries Update:

Kevin Limestall reported that he had an existing business in Highland make an inquiry about expanding their current product line into another type of service. They want to add some kind of food service and wanted to know what steps they have to go through for that. Kevin gave them general information about that.

He also received an inquiry from someone about what our sign regulations are for putting up a sign for a new business in the downtown area. Kevin sent the information to their sign company but it didn't involve any of the owner information.

Chairman Bellm noted that Huddle House construction is proceeding rapidly and asked whether contact had been made with the owner of Bruegge Furniture. Kevin indicated that he had made a call and left a message but that they were not returning his call. Kevin has heard that they are interested in leasing the building but doesn't have any other information about that. He learned that the Bruegges are moving from their home in Breese to somewhere in the Peoria, IL area.

Venture Advisors Update:

Andrea reported that the first experience with establishing the mentoring program was with the party interested in purchasing the Lory Theatre. They will have their 5th meeting

tomorrow. She indicated that those meetings are going very well and that it is amazing to watch. She reported that she and Mark Latham had met with the Chamber of Commerce Executive Board and will be meeting with the full board next week. They are trying to develop a partnership with the Chamber of Commerce. They feel like there is some value there based on the existing members. There are a lot of businesses out there that are just stand-still and need some advice, but they could also bring in new members as we start to develop more entrepreneurs and businesses in the community. Eric Rehkemper added that it would be a good partnership due to the type of members that are already in the Chamber of Commerce (bankers, lawyers, etc.) Mark and Andrea will be meeting with the Venture Advisors this afternoon. Mark indicated that he feels that this fits with what Highland is all about. Mark indicated that before long he should have a contract with Venture Advisors together for Council consideration.

New Business

Discussion – City’s Comprehensive Plan: Mark reported that the current plan was approved by the Council in 2006. Of the goals that were established then, the majority have been accomplished. We need to take a fresh look at the plan as a whole. His suggestion is that at the next meeting of the IDC, a SWAT analysis be performed. There are a lot more threats present now that there was five years ago, especially from an economic perspective. Mark is asking all the department directors to do a SWAT analysis because a lot has changed in the last five years. Mark would like to see some video or commercials prepared to market Highland. Darell asked if the growhighland.com website is satisfying the marketing goal in some way. Mark indicated that it is. A video/commercial could be run to a specially selected viewing area on television. Eric Rehkemper confirmed that targeting a television market is possible as he know a business owner who only runs TV ads on the Illinois side of the Mississippi. Mark asked Andrea to add SWAT analysis to the next IDC agenda.

Discussion – Madison County Business Retention Program: Mark reported that he and Andrea attended a meeting with several county officials. They are trying to figure out where they are lacking in the area of job training. Currently the federal government is funding 42 national job training programs. Madison County participates in one of them and Mark believes that now they are in a position where they have to be accountable for how they are spending the funds. So now, they are trying to figure out what the training gap is for our manufacturers. They are asking the City to do the data collection for them in order to find where their training gap is. Mark indicated that meetings could be set up with the human resources directors of the major employers to get their thoughts and data on this.

Darell asked if the Chamber of Commerce could provide a program to our manufacturers. Jami indicated that all of the manufacturers are members of the Chamber but are not very involved. It was noted that the Highland Manufacturer’s Association had disbanded some years ago. Darell thought it could be a win/win to help the manufacturers by providing some sort of training programs through the Chamber of Commerce. Andrea indicated that Madison County warned her and

Mark that it might be difficult to get the big employers to sit down with them and share all the information they are looking for because of confidentiality issues. The county is asking that we send letters with a survey to the major businesses. Mark Latham thinks that such a letter should come from the IDC. Then follow up in a couple of weeks. For starters, Jami will provide a list of about 15 businesses that are struggling to keep good employees.

Other Business

Mark reported that during the meeting with Madison County officials, he learned that the biggest thing happening in Madison County in the next year is the St. Joseph's Hospital project. There isn't anything else on the drawing board in our county. Darell reiterated that things are not looking very positive and if we can retain business we are accomplishing a lot. Mark indicated that the hospital project is moving quickly. Darell asked if they had received their certificate of need. Eric Rehkemper had heard that they wouldn't get that until October. Mark indicated that they are applying for their Certificate of Need. He reported that the City is assisting them by establishing a TIF District. There are a lot of steps involved in this assistance, including the issuance of bonds, annexations, formation of the TIF District, etc. Mark thought the Certificate of Need might be issued sometime in February and that construction could start March 1, 2012.

Kevin discussed the ranking of Illinois from 11th in 2008 to 7th in 2010 with respect to entrepreneurship rates according to an article he found and distributed, entitled Business in Nebraska.

Chairman Bellm asked how Paul Ray Capelle is getting along with construction of his new business. Mark reported that he has some machinery in there that he is working with and should be open next month. There will be a Chamber of Commerce Business After Hours there in January.

City Manager Latham reported that the City Council approved incentives to Denny Knebel for construction of a storage building for large RV's. Eric Rehkemper indicated that Mr. Knebel has a competitor in St. Jacob doing the same thing...Auto Extreme building a new place and he is also wanting to get into heavy truck body and RV Repair. Previously Truck Centers was the only business in town for that type of work.

Kevin asked Mark if he had heard anything new on Smurfit-Stone or RockTenn. He had a friend that heard that they would be keeping the Highland facility open.

Mark reported that he and Andrea met with Scott Wick. He has a company in St. Louis that he would like to get over here that is possibly interested in the Wick's Organ facility. It is a Chinese steel company. They need a rail spur. Andrea contacted our local railroad retiree who worked with us when we were looking to upgrade the spur at Smurfit-Stone a few years ago. We are working with him but waiting for more information from Scott Wick regarding the volume of rail goods.

Eric Rehkemper did not get to attend the public meeting at the Knights of Columbus Hall a few weeks ago about the proposed I-70 / SR160 interchange. He asked if there were any changes to that effort. Mark indicated that they are compiling the comments and there will be one more public meeting in the Spring.

Mark reported that Andrea and Rebecca going to Chicago first week October. They will be at Navy Pier. Andrea stated that they will be going with the SWIL Economic Development group. The Economic Development Director from Columbia is putting it together. Fairview Heights and possibly Collinsville will also be going. The conference is for the ICSC (International Council for Shopping Centers). They will have a booth there and the City of Highland will be listed separately to market HCS to the businesses in attendance.

Mark reported that Highland was selected as one of the top 36 cities within the National League of Cities as one of their showcases which will be in Phoenix November 9 - 12. Highland will be nationally recognized for HCS. A representative from Highland has been asked speak there.

Mark added that he will be speaking at the Illinois Municipal League annual conference in Chicago next week about the benefits of broadband. The word is getting out.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Industrial Development Commission is scheduled for Wednesday, October 5, 2011 at 12:00 pm at City Hall.

Adjournment

Eric Rehkemper made a motion to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Ryan Goodwin. All members voted aye, none nay; the meeting adjourned at 12:50 p.m.