

**HIGHLAND, ILLINOIS
MINUTES OF REGULAR SESSION
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
CITY HALL, 1115 BROADWAY
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 5, 2013
12:00 PM**

Call to Order

The meeting of the Industrial Development Commission was called to order at 12:01 PM by Chairman Bellm.

Roll Call

Members present: Darell Bellm, Eric Rehkemper, Ryan Goodwin, Jon Greve, and newly appointed member Diane Korte-Lindsey.

Members absent: Ex-Officio Member Jami Jansen.

Also present: City Manager Latham, Business Retention and Recruitment Coordinator Kathleen Mulcrone, Scott Kolbe of Kolbe Co., and Deputy Clerk Lana Hediger.

Approval of Minutes

Jon Greve made a motion to approve the minutes of the May 1, 2013, Regular Session meeting of the Industrial Development Commission; seconded by Ryan Goodwin. All members voted aye; none voted no; the motion carried.

Chairman Bellm welcomed new member Diane Korte-Lindsey. She introduced herself as a life-long resident of Highland and a realtor for Coldwell Banker Brown.

Reports:

Update on other job inquiries – Mark Latham

Mark reported that last week he met with a company out of Chicago called Fast-Right. The owner of the company toured Highland. His biggest supplier is B-Line. They are a warehouse company. He is looking for a contract with B-Line and that will be the trigger as to whether he will take an existing site or build a new facility. He needs 25,000 sq. ft. of warehouse. He also sells to Basler, Highland Machine, and EF Express.

Mark sent a letter to a proposed call center. He has received no reply yet.

Mark reported that negotiations for a lease are on-going for a possible new Kroger store at the Northtown Shopping Center.

RP Lumber has plans to put an addition on the Highland Crossing shopping strip.

Update on Highland Entrepreneurship Program – Kathleen Mulcrone

Kathleen reported that in terms of youth, we are waiting to reschedule a date for the kickoff. The kickoff was held on Wednesday but there was very low attendance. Kathleen sent e-mails to see if they wanted to reschedule, but only hear from four of them.

The Start-Up Seminar on Saturday was well-attended by thirteen participants. Lee Crockett believes 8 or 9 of them will enroll in the program. The others that were there admitted that the seminar gave them a lot to think about in terms of whether or not they want to start a business.

We have noticed trends with those in the Entrepreneurship Program. Participants are not able to articulate why their business is unique and therefore is of value. And they do not understand their costs. Those are the two key aspects of the seminar that are emphasized.

We are looking at conducting the seminar once each quarter but on a much smaller scale.

Update on Highland Communication Services – Mark Latham

Mark reported that we have seen an increase in revenue of \$6,000 over the last month. Our revenue per customer has increased a bit. And, we have added 60 customers for the month. Technology changes so quickly. The satellite farm that we built will be obsolete soon because the majority of our content will be coming from Chicago through a fiber link. Continuing to contact businesses that were interested early on. Going to do some marketing soon. Installs are now 10 days out.

Eric asked if there is any problem with customers still being under contract with competitors. Eric talked about a mushroom device that he is using at his dealership that allows him to combine bandwidth from Charter and HCS for super speed.

Mark is reporting that he is negotiating with the schools. He believes they will be signing up with HCS for their phone service which will save them some money. They already have HCS's internet.

Update on Micro-Loan Fund – Mark Latham

Mark reported that they had lunch with six banks and gave a presentation on the micro-loan fund idea. Two have indicated that they would like to be involved. Will start with them and see if one of them will take the lead and then see if any others would like to get involved after that. There is a need for the program now and Mark does not want to wait to get it started.

Mark gave a brief overview of the principal of the micro-loan program for Diane Lindsey.

Ryan and Jon have both had conversations with Rob Boyle. They are looking to start the fund with \$500,000.

Jon indicated that his bank is part of another micro-loan fund that covers all of Madison County.

Old Business:

Finalization of Strategic Plan -- Chapter 10 – Mark Latham

Ryan Goodwin made a motion to recommend approval by city council; seconded by Eric Rehkemper. All members voted aye; none voted no. Motion carried.

Kolbe Co. Marketing Proposal Presentation – Scott Kolbe

Scott Kolbe of Kolbe Company introduced himself. He was introduced to Highland by Lee Crockett. He has worked with one of Charter Communications' competitors and they had a lot of success. He was an alderman for eight years. His city did a lot of development planning and grew from 3500 to 12,000 in ten years. He has been working a lot with Mercy Healthcare on their expansion plans. His company has been around since 2000.

What does Highland need to do and how do we get people to become aware and find the development opportunities? At Kolbe Co. they brainstormed to identify three core messages of what the brand (Highland) is about...why Highland?

1. History of getting things done while being self-sufficient;
2. Meet one-on-one with potential business owners and developers; and
3. Developing the frame-work (via website) from a development perspective to answer the questions when someone is considering developing in Highland.

Hold an internal discovery session with key leaders here but also survey people that currently do business here or people who haven't done business here and may be considering another site to find out what things appealed and didn't appeal to them. The micro-loan story is a good one to get out there. It will appeal to a lot of folks who don't know where to go.

Ultimately they will attempt to discover why people would choose to come to Highland in terms of the emotional attachment. We would want to emphasize the good work ethic and make the self-reliance of the community a positive.

We will need to formalize/brand this program and know where to send them once they have their questions answered. The branding process is the key to put the frame-work, the message, and everything together for the overall program.

We will need to have an on-line development site that answers the questions of why do I care as a developer, a business owner, or a site surveyor. We need to know who the right fit for Highland is. Is it big box stores or smaller shops? We would build up a prospect list and start reaching out to those developers and site surveyors and help make those relationships happen. What we do is one-on-one meetings with the interested party and representatives of Highland. Kolbe Co. has a lot of relationships, especially with the healthcare industry.

Kolbe Co. will meet with people to determine what the branding will be then adjust the website accordingly, adding videos and stories. They will also use social media and speaking engagements to tell the stories. MO Venture Forum would be one example in addition to using radio and other news media.

Darell asked how they will be able to get someone who has never heard of Highland to look for Highland. Scott believes that search engine optimization is key to that. Creating a buzz is important and one-on-one meetings is another key. Kolbe Co's developer contacts is their main means of finding new businesses.

Members asked if this would be an expansion of the GrowHighland site? Scott believes that what the site is trying to accomplish is good but that the "Grow Highland" name gives a negative connotation.

Ryan also pointed out that Highland is not necessarily interested in targeting developers; more entrepreneurs and start ups.

Darell expressed concern about the follow-up legwork part of this program. Scott indicated that creating "buzz" is the best way to go about that. Tell stories. Darell expressed that we have been down this road before, and that the effort seems to always fall flat and no real results are realized. Scott reiterated that public relations is important to create excitement and get people interested. Darell asked how many other cities Kolbe Co. has worked with. Scott named the City of St. Charles, City of Augusta Tourism, and the City of St. Louis Police Officer's Association.

Diane Korte-Lindsey made the motion to recommend this to the City Council for approval; seconded by Eric Rehkemper. Ryan, Eric, Jon, and Diane voted aye by roll call. None voted no. Motion carried.

Next Meeting:

Next meeting of the Industrial Development Commission is scheduled for Wednesday, July 3, 2013.

Adjournment

Jon Greve made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Eric Rehkemper. All members voted aye; none voted no. The motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 1:03 PM.