

Highland, Illinois
Minutes of Regular Session
Industrial Development Commission
City Hall, 1115 Broadway
Wednesday, August 5, 2020
12:00PM

Call to Order:

The August 5, 2020, meeting of the Industrial Development Commission was called to order at 12:00PM by Chairman Meridith. The meeting was held in person with Angela Imming joining by phone.

Roll Call:

Members present (in-person) – Chairperson Jim Meridith, Vice-Chairman Diane Korte-Lindsey, Marshall Rinderer, City Manager Mark Latham, Director Breann Speraneo, and Economic Development Coordinator Mallord Hubbard

Members absent: Treasurer Jon Greve and Bill Napper

Also present via telephone: Angela Imming

Kim Kilcauski was in the city council chambers recording the meeting.

Approval of Minutes:

Diane Korte-Lindsey made a motion to approve the minutes of the July 1, 2020, Regular Session meeting of the Industrial Development Commission; seconded by Marshall Rinderer. All members voted aye; none voted no; the motion carried.

Reports:

Treasurer's Report

A treasurer's report was not available.

Updates on other job inquiries

City Manager Latham asked Mallord Hubbard to provide an update on Trouw Nutrition. Mallord Hubbard stated there had been a change in personnel and there was a new primary contact. He added that Trouw is currently in the design phase of the project and should be going out for bid soon. The City will be applying for an IDOT grant. Chairman Meridith asked if Trouw planned on making the Highland location the US headquarters. City Manager Latham responded that the current US headquarters are located in Indiana, but there is not a plant at that location. Breann Speraneo stated that Trouw has locations in seven countries.

City Manager Latham stated that there is a meeting planned with the Schlafly family on August 19, 2020. The City will provide a list of what the City is able to do at that time. The City is working with a landscape architect to create outdoor plans for space to be used as a public area. Diane Korte-Lindsey asked if the work had started on the project. Breann Speraneo responded that they are looking for the whole plan before moving forward. City Manager Latham mentioned that community service organizations may be interested in helping with the community space project.

Mark provided an update on the old Kidds Kountry Store. Mark said coffee, ice cream, liquor and gaming were proposed for the site.

Mark stated that DiMaggios is looking to move from a restaurant to a bar/tavern.

Mark reported that the plans for the old Cardinal Inn include a hair salon, spa and gaming area.

Mark said that the owners of the old Highland Pool and Spa building on Highland Road will be applying for annexation. Mark added that pending annexation the two businesses may split the parcel for ownership. He said one part would be a tavern and gaming facility and the other a terminal warehouse used for gaming machines. Mallord stated that this would create new jobs. Breann said that the special use permits pending annexation were going to the Combined Planning and Zoning Board on August 5, 2020.

Mark stated that there are three other annexations for residential housing coming together as well including the property at the end of Sunflower. The possible new subdivisions and existing subdivisions were discussed. Breann Speraneo provided information on current new homes. Mark noted that Breann has done a good job providing service to contractors and builders. Diane Lindsey-Korte said that affordable new housing is in the \$210,000 to \$240,000 range. Mark added that Mike Sutton had said that he had seven to ten calls last week with people looking to move into Highland. Breann stated that contractors that had once built in the area are coming back.

Mark mentioned that the Streetscape project is moving forward and the State Route 160 trail is finishing up.

Mark stated that a sidewalk is needed from Flax Drive to Troxler. IDOT would not agree to a student crossing on State Route 160. The City is applying for funds to assist with the project cost.

Mark said the public safety building will be going out for bid. Chairman Meridith asked what would be housed at that location. Mark responded that police and EMS would be at that location; City Hall will stay at the current location.

Update on Highland Communication Services

Angela Imming reported that HCS is adding customers. Fiber is being added to the new developments (Highland Villas and Flax) and those areas are inclusive. Angela added that Charter has not been invited in. She said that last month the router was upgraded after six years.

Angela also discussed the new television solution being bought from Mobitv. The solution will provide a cost savings to HCS.

Angela said that notes are made when customers are added or leave. New customers are stating they have seen advertisements featuring Highland, IL.

Update on Disaster Relief Initiatives

Mallord Hubbard reported that 39 businesses in Highland received a Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan. Our community did very good compared to other communities in the area. Mallord recognized Breann, Highland Chamber of Commerce and other staff members for the work put into reaching out to the Highland businesses with information on the loan program.

Mallord said that the deadline for the first business interruption grant applications through the State of Illinois has ended. Chairman Meredith asked what the criteria for the grant included. Mallord responded that the grants were for specific categories such as fitness centers, bars, restaurants, etc.

Mallord stated that the Highland Chamber of Commerce is working on a campaign to support the local businesses by wearing a mask. Mallord added that the trending is not good right now and we do not want to go backwards. The best solution is to stay open and slow the spread of the virus. Mallord talked with Nancee Zobrist on August 4, 2020. She is currently looking at similar programs in the area. Chairman Meredith asked about the spike in COVID-19 cases in Highland specifically and asked how close we are to going backwards. Mark responded that we are very close.

Diane Lindsey-Korte asked if COVID-19 testing was going to take place at the Korte Recreational Center on Friday, August 14th. Breann confirmed. Mark said that there were 14 positive cases in Highland on July 8th and 81 on August 4th.

FEMA Map Update

Mark stated that the new culvert has been put in and the contractor is currently backfilling. The ditch work still needs to be completed. Once the work is done, then FEMA will update the map. Chairperson Meredith asked what would come out of the current flood plain. Mark responded that 76 acres would move out of the flood plain.

New Business

Mallord stated that the IDC packet included a Public Relations and Marketing Proposal from Harrison Edwards. Mark and Angela have experience with the company. Breann added that Mallord, Angela and her have partnered on this project. Breann explained that this presentation is just an introduction to the proposal and a vote is not expected today. Mallord reviewed the Steps to Maturity included in the presentation. Angela presented the advertising impact portion of the presentation. She noted that HCS is an individual product and utilizes advertising and the algorithms associated with social media ads. Angela stated in Commercializing Our Strategy that the City needs help to refocus energy and resources.

Breann provided an example of the City's current commercial investment in the website. She said the economic development tab is complete and included in Intersect Illinois which is a site selector within Illinois. Breann added that staff actively participates in membership organizations as well. She continued that now the City needs to increase their presence in a larger network and a professional review for site selectors is needed.

Angela said that they would like to see Highland promoted at a national level and Harrison Edwards can assist in that effort with strategic planning, collateral, national press coverage, coverage in industry

events and speaking engagements. Mallord added that they wanted to share the proposal with IDC because this could attract industry to Highland. Chairman Meredith added that there is a stigma that Illinois is not a great place, so he could see a need for a strategic partner.

Breann added that if Harrison Edwards could help Highland get on the map, then staff could keep it there. She asked that IDC consider funding the project. Chairman Meredith asked for verification that no certain industries were being targeted. Breann responded that was true and staff is aware of the City's strengths and weaknesses. Diane Korte-Lindsey stated that this was a much better idea than the bus tour. Angela added that Harrison Edwards can help the City leverage what we have including our location within the country, proximity to transportation, our downtown and our technology.

Discussion continued. Mark mentioned that LinkedIn had a listing by state where industries were looking to go and Illinois ranked tenth on that list. He continued by reiterating that one of the City's strengths is in our technology. Chairman Meredith asked if Janet Beth Parkway would be a likely area for new industry. Mark responded that Janet Beth Parkway was definitely one location. Mark added that Drake recently got a call from World Wide Technologies inquiring about the north side of his property. Chairman Meredith asked if that could potentially be an industrial area as well. Mark responded that it could. Chairman Meredith asked what the City would get if an industry such as World Wide Technology would build a facility. Breann replied that an industry would use power, real estate taxes, provide jobs, etc. Chairman Meredith asked what the City would get if an industry built outside of city limits. Mark responded that there would still be power usage in which most areas the City provides the power. Mark said years ago it was discussed that Highland preferred not to attract the smoke stack industries. He went on to say that professional jobs would mean the potential for additional new homes.

Diane Korte-Lindsey said that the proposal from Harrison Edwards included a dollar amount. Chairman Meredith stated the proposal cost totaled \$17,750. Mallord stated that the original scope of work and cost had been \$50,000. Diane Korte-Lindsey added that prior to Marshall and Chairman Meredith joining the commission the focus had been different. Mallord explained that the previous company the City had worked with did not receive any money because the work had not been completed.

Breann stated that the proposal is \$17,750 plus expenses. If IDC agrees to fund the project, then reimbursement will first be in February. Mallord added that the City will cover the additional expenses. Marshall asked for examples of Harrison Edwards' work to review. Breann discussed the fee update process that Building and Zoning went through which was done so Highland could continue growing. Mark said that Highland needed to grow by at least 2.5% per year. Mallord said that there should not be any surprises in the proposal. Breann confirmed.

Breann asked the IDC members if they wanted to leave the proposal as a discussion item. Diane Korte-Lindsey asked if a 30-day delay would create a problem. Mark responded that it would not and staff still needed to reach out to Madison County. Mallord acknowledged Marshall's request for reference work.

Next Meeting

The next regular meeting of the Industrial Development Commission is scheduled for Wednesday, September 2, 2020.

Adjournment

Diane Korte-Lindsey made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Marshall Rinderer. All members voted aye; none voted no. The motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 1:18 PM