

**HIGHLAND, ILLINOIS
MINUTES OF REGULAR SESSION
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING, 12990 TROXLER AVENUE
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 6, 2024
12:00 PM**

Call to Order:

The March 6, 2024, meeting of the Industrial Development Commission was called to order at 12:02 PM by Chairman Jim Meridith. The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag was recited.

Roll Call:

Members present: Chairman Jim Meridith; Treasurer Jon Greve; Josh Kloss; and Marshall Rinderer was also present.

Members absent: Vice-Chairman Diane Korte-Lindsey and Ex-officio member, Highland Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Hillarie Holzinger.

Also present: City Manager Chris Conrad; Economic Development Coordinator Mallord Hubbard; Ben Eberwein, Business Education Alliance Representative; Recording Secretary Lana Hediger; and, one member of the public.

Approval of Minutes:

Josh Kloss made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 7, 2024, Regular Session meeting of the Industrial Development Commission; seconded by Jon Greve. All members voted aye; none voted no; the motion carried.

Reports:

Treasurer's Report – Jon Greve

Balance in IDC checking account \$51,520.11 at the beginning of February. Due to additional paperwork that was required and Jon's absence from work for a couple of weeks, the transaction (Purchase of the \$25,000 Certificate of Deposit at 1st Mid Illinois Bank) settled in February. The IDC checking account balance at the end of February was \$26,520.11. Total IDC assets at the end of February was \$51,520.11. No interest has been reported on the CD that matured in December.

Updates on Developments and other City Projects – Staff

Mallord updated the members on the items that would be addressed at the Combined Planning and Zoning Board meeting this evening:

- 1) Family Bible Church has applied for a special use permit to have a church in the former Police Department building at 820 Mulberry Street which is zoned I, Industrial District.
- 2) Charles Ken Keltner of Diversified Services is looking to relocate his business within the city limits at 904 Beech Street. To do so, he has requested to have that property rezoned from R-1-D, Single-Family Residence to I, Industrial District.

No applications were submitted by the deadline, therefore, there will be no meeting of the CPZB in April. Jared Crutcher, owner of Cedar Creek Dental, is still working on his application for rezoning to build condominiums next to his practice.

Mallord reported that there will be a presentation by Jarod Kanallakan of Moran Economic Development of the new TIF 3 Plan at the next city council meeting. We have also begun the process required to extend the life of TIFs 1 & 2. Those applications will proceed through the state legislature. We have acquired all letters of support required with the exception of the one from Southwestern IL College, which we expect to receive after their next board meeting.

Regarding activity on the city square...Gauchos is a bit closer to opening. Mr. Wells is closer to securing tenants for his properties. Highland Emporium has closed but there are some leads on tenants for that property. We are optimistic that will be filled soon, too.

As reported at the last meeting, Five Below has made public their intention to occupy the former Hibbets Sports in Northtown and the former Remax facility, which then brought up the question of the Heaterz Chicken location, as they were planning to move into that space. Mallord contacted the Heaterz Chicken developer who indicated he is still planning to open a store in Highland. Since then, others have confirmed that he is actively looking for a new site.

Update on Highland Communication Services – Staff

City Manager Conrad reported the total number of customers is at an all-time high of just under 2700, and is continuing to climb. HCS is picking up VTV customers and is at just under 800. Currently, the VTV product is tied in through a connection in Sacramento. We will be moving to a new connection point with a redundant feed through Kansas City, which will also save us about \$2,000 per month.

Conrad corrected a statement he made at the city banquet, Prestige Estates is the last subdivision to be built out. It was delayed over the winter to avoid making a mess of people's lawns. That will hopefully be completed this month. Once the build out is complete the costs to operate decline.

Jon Greve asked if we could maintain a connection for VTV through Sacramento as a redundant feed. Conrad indicated that it would be at a primary cost. Therefore, we will simply connect through Kansas City which already has redundancy built in.

Josh Kloss asked what happens when the build out is complete. Conrad indicated that from there on, it is a matter of maintenance. There will be new construction as we add new subdivisions. As we have \$250,000 in grant money from Madison County for additional build out of the fiber backbone south of the city along Bellm road.

Update on Workforce Development Initiatives – Mallord Hubbard

Mallord deferred his report to Ben Eberwein's discussion regarding the Business Education Alliance further down on the meeting agenda.

New Business:

Report on Monthly Tax Revenues

City Manager Conrad reported on tax revenues received in January and February since he wasn't at the meeting last month. All general revenue taxes were flat both for month to month and year to year for January and February, continuing a six month trend. For March, Sales Tax, Non-Home Rule Sales Tax, and Business District Tax, have increased both month to month and for the same timeframe last year. As these taxes are reported three months in arrears, this would be revenue collected in December. No income has been received, yet, for March, for Income Tax, Use Tax, or Marijuana Tax.

Conrad reported that the Budget for FY 2024-2025 will be presented to the council at their meeting, on March 18. As reported during last year's audit, we were able to reserve funds to put toward large projects to be done in the upcoming fiscal year. Some large infrastructure projects were delayed due to significant increases in costs for materials from the impact of the recent inflation. Money has been set aside and several large projects will be done this year. Projects include, the parking lot at the Korte Recreation Center; reconstruction of Laurel, Pine, and Cypress Streets from 6th Street to Broadway.

Conrad briefly discussed the Governor's plan to eliminate the 1% tax on grocery items, which will impact the city of Highland by a loss of approximately \$280,000 per year. The mayor has sent letters to the Governor and our representatives in the legislature in opposition to it, as the only way to offset it would be through property taxes or a reduction in services.

Discussion: Workforce Development partnerships and potential sponsorships - Ben Eberwein - Business Education Alliance

Ben Eberwein reported that the IDC supported two of the BEA's programs last year. The first was the Job Shadow program, which the school organized for the first time. It was for students who were interested in learning about a particular field of work or who wanted to get hands-on experience, talking to employers/business owners. There was also a job fair for students who were looking for summer work or coop jobs for the following fall. 17 businesses participated and the students were very active and engaged. Any student that spoke to an employer at the job fair or who participated in the Job Shadow program had their names entered in the drawing that the IDC sponsored. There were about 50 students in the drawing.

This year they are not holding the Job Shadow program. They hosted another program last Friday for the seniors called a life program. There were four sessions set up including, a financial responsibility session; a Chamber of Commerce session that talked about businesses, how to network with businesses, and how to use the Chamber of Commerce as a resource when performing a job search; there was a civic involvement/civic duty session to promote the importance of being involved your local community with representatives from the Rotary, Jaycees, Optimists, Lions, and the Highland Area Community Foundation; and a session led by Derek Hacke to talk about life changes, such as how things are different when they move away from their parents' home. Each session was about 35 minutes and hopefully each student was able to take something away from it.

The other program they are going to do this year will be another job fair, which he is asking for the IDC's support of. It will be the same as last year. They are hoping to make it an annual event. They are hoping to help the students see that there are good job opportunities here in Highland. The request for today is \$500 for a raffle to entice the students to participate.

Mr. Eberwein also update the members on the CEO program activities. The Fish Tank (play on Shark Tank) date is coming up soon. The Trade Show Day is coming up in April. The Junior Selection process was just completed yesterday. He couldn't share the names of the students chosen, as they haven't been released yet. He did say that not only did HHS have the most applicants, but of the students chosen for the program, HHS has a large share of the class. The Banker Day was just held about two weeks ago. He and Ryan Goodwin were among the 16 bankers that participated from Collinsville, Maryville, Troy, and Highland. The students are showing great improvement and progress. Last year they hosted the Frost Fest as their group project. We will be looking to get more investors from the Highland area this year. The program is all privately funded.

Mallord had a chance to sit in on some of the sessions in the life program. He believes it serves to fill some gaps in the high school curriculum. Mallord served as a mentor this year and was impressed with the students' projects at the investor breakfast. He thinks every high school should have access to a program like this.

After a brief discussion, it was decided to put consideration of a \$500 donation to the BEA on the April 3 IDC agenda.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting of the Industrial Development Commission is scheduled for Wednesday, April 3, 2024.

Adjournment

Marshall Rinderer made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Josh Kloss. All members voted aye. The motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 12:32 PM.