

**Economic Development Committee Meeting**  
**Wednesday, February 1, 2017, 9:00 AM**  
**Minutes**

**1. Called to Order:** At 9:00 A.M. by Chairman Addington.

**2. Present:** Mayor Ron Gunter, Chairman Jim Addington, Village Clerk Virginia Szymiski, Business/Resident Representative Frank Brady, Citizen Representative Corinne Beller, School Representative Kevin Carey, Business/Resident Representative Bill Kalafut, Director of Park District Bob Fleck, Community Development Director Jill Ziegler, Planner II Joe Hennerfeind, Chamber Executive Director Larry Forssberg, Village Manager Steve May, Deputy Fire Chief Steve Riley, Assistant Director of Fire Prevention Bureau Tom Schultz, Liquor Commissioner Tom Mulhearn, Building Division Manager Jason Vitell, Administrative Assistant Erica Perez

Guests: Ann Halyk (Resident), Anne Hill (K-Plus Engineering)

**3. Pledge of Allegiance**

**4. Approval of Minutes:** The minutes from January 4, 2017 were approved by Business/Resident Representative Frank Brady. Citizen Representative Corinne Beller seconded the approval.

**5. Special Projects**

**A. Economic Development Strategic Plan**

Larry Forssberg discussed how the Economic Development Strategic Plan was established as a subplan of the Village of Westmont Strategic Plan. This plan portrays the demographics of who represents the Village, what the population consists of, traffic counts, etc. This information is necessary and beneficial when discussing potential business opportunities with national franchises. The Economic Development Strategic Plan consists of key points that are specific to this community. The high priority items that need to be addressed by EDC will be led by the various department heads. This process has allowed all aspects of the strategic planning to come together. It is essential that the items within the Strategic Plan will need to become a part of the budget process, meaning they will have a price attached to it in order to ensure it meets the Village budget.

Chairman Jim Addington discussed how the items are prioritized for the Strategic Plan. The Implementation Committee has taken all 87 points of the Strategic Plan and narrowed it down to 15. These 15 items need to be addressed first. Once they are complete, the next set of “high” priority tasks will be addressed until all items have been completed by the year 2021. The Strategic Plan defines the future of the Village of Westmont. Marketing the tasks / activities that

are being worked on will help brand the community. Keeping the public involved is essential for the success of the Strategic Plan.

## **B. Sign Code Discussion**

Joe Hennerfeind presented a slideshow on the current sign ordinances and what changes need to be made in order to improve our current standards. It is a crucial time to revisit the sign ordinances since new types of advertising are evolving. Changes to the current code need to be implemented in order to make our sign code clearer, easier to interpret, and beneficial to permit applicants, along with the Village. Our current sign code requires numerous variances, making it challenging for applicants to be approved. Joe Hennerfeind and staff have already discussed what changes should be made in order to improve the sign codes. The next step in the process will be to present the idea of revising the code to a Business Community Discussion / Sub-Committee. This date has yet to be determined.

Hennerfeind asked for an open discussion regarding the sign code changes. Different concerns / questions were brought up, including classification of awning signs, number of variances brought to the Planning and Zoning Commission that are related to signage, off-premise signage, etc. Hennerfeind addressed all concerns that were brought up and how revising the code will help with clearing up those particular issues. Chairman Addington brought up his concern that certain businesses, such as gaming parlors, often use too much signage on their windows, making it difficult to see into the space. The sign code needs to have more restrictions in order to prevent businesses from closing off their windows. It was also mentioned that the number of signs allowed needs to be controlled in order to avoid distracting drivers. The Committee would like to improve the sign code for the Central Business District in order to promote the downtown area to be pedestrian friendly. The overall goal is to create an organized sign code that consists of a clearer and concise format.

## **C. Westmont Economic Development Partnership Marketing Opportunities & Projects Update**

Larry Forsberg made EDC aware that the restaurant group of Westmont now consists of 98 different restaurants. There will be a Westmont Restaurant week from March 9th, 2017 to March 19th, 2017. At least 20 restaurants will be recognized and will present a special menu showcasing their unique menus. The dining experience for these restaurants will range from \$10.00 - \$40.00 and will offer breakfast, brunch, lunch, or dinner, depending on the restaurant. A sneak preview will be held at Westmont Center on February 15th, 2017. There will be an open house between 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM.

The Village of Westmont is also working on recruiting more businesses to the local hotels. Unfortunately hotels may lose business due to a lack of transportation to and from places (i.e. shuttles, Uber, etc.). By incorporating a grant program to support the local hotels,

recruitment has been implemented, bringing in 1,700 additional hotel room reservations. This program will be open to all hotels within the area.

Tesla has officially opened and held their open house two weeks ago. In the near future there will be a ribbon cutting for Express Oil and for PPG. Aspired Living has stated that they have received a positive response to their Westmont location. They will be opening later this spring.

**D. Miscellaneous:** Nothing to discuss

**6. Adjourn:** Meeting motioned to adjourn at 10:25 a.m.: all in favor.