



Village of Arlington Heights
Arlington Economic Alliance
Community Room, 3rd Floor
Arlington Heights Village Hall, 33 S. Arlington Heights Rd.
September 20, 2023
7:30 AM

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. ROLL CALL

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- A. Draft Minutes 8/16/2023

IV. REPORTS

- A. Development Update
- B. Arlington Alfresco Report

V. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Promotion of Manufacturing
- B. Small Business Assistance Opportunities

VI. NEW BUSINESS

VII. OTHER BUSINESS

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT

- A. Public Comment

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Persons with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services, such as an American Sign Language interpreter or written materials in accessible formats, should contact Erin Mercado, at 33 S. Arlington Heights Road, Arlington Heights, Illinois 60005, emercado@vah.com or (847)368-5793.



Arlington Economic Alliance
9/20/2023

Item: Approval of Minutes 8/16/2023

Department: Planning & Community Development

ATTACHMENTS:

Description

Draft of Minutes 8/16/23

Type

Minutes

DRAFT

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ARLINGTON ECONOMIC ALLIANCE HELD ON AUGUST 16, 2023 AT 7:30 A.M. AT THE VILLAGE HALL

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Andrew Stengren – Chairman
Rich Casey
Tony Guido
Terry Iverson
Heather Larson
Jon Ridler
Andi Ruhl

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Tonia Etoh
Kerri Oots
Ellen Para
Michele Petrie
Brian Roginski
John Toliopoulos

STAFF PRESENT:

Michael Mertes – Business Development Manager

ALSO PRESENT:

Keith Moens, Resident

Call to Order

Chair Andrew Stengren called the meeting to order at 7:30 AM.

Approval of Minutes – July 19, 2023

The meeting minutes of July 19, 2023 Arlington Economic Alliance meeting were reviewed.

HEATHER LARSON MOVED AND TONY GUIDO SECONDED A MOTION TO APPROVE THE DRAFT JULY 19, 2023 ARLINGTON ECONOMIC ALLIANCE MEETING MINUTES. ALL ALLIANCE MEMBERS VOTED IN FAVOR OF THE MOTION.

Development Update

Demolition of the grandstand is underway at Arlington Park. No formal redevelopment plan has yet to be submitted. The proposed Arlington Gateway project was presented to the Village Board as an “early review” concept in mid-June. The project also went to the Conceptual Plan Review Committee in July, and still requires review by the Design, Housing, and Plan Commissions. The developer of the proposed multi-family building at 116-120 W. Eastman Street continues to work with Staff on modifications to their plans, as the original proposal was rejected by the Plan Commission.

At Home is now open at the Southpoint shopping center with outlots built and occupied by Chipotle and Consumers Credit Union. An additional outlot has also been built for AT&T store, as well as BIBIBOP Asian Grill which was recently approved by the Village Board for a Special Use for a drive-thru. Staff is currently working with property ownership on prospective in-line tenants. Mr. Ridler asked if the former Ditka's restaurant building is included in the scope for demolition, and Mr. Mertes responded that he would follow up on that inquiry (note: demolition of the Ditka's building is not part of the scope of the existing demolition permit).

Arlington Alfresco Discussion

Arlington Alfresco continues through the last week of September. The streets will remain closed to accommodate Harmony Fest featuring Taste of Arlington Heights which takes place on September 29-30. Staff continues to work with business owners on any individual needs.

DRAFT

Promotion of Manufacturing

Mr. Mertes summarized the importance of manufacturing, and the industrial sector in general, as it relates to the Village's overall economy. He is seeking the Commission's feedback, based on their professional experience and expertise, to seek ways to provide resources and/or promote local industry and manufacturing. The discussion could also be a gateway into how to support other industries in Arlington Heights.

Mr. Iverson said that High School District 214 is a national leader in manufacturing apprenticeship programs. Nationwide there are not enough efforts to advocate for manufacturing as a career opportunity for younger generations. The Arlington Heights Memorial Library's makerspace (Makerplace) is another local resource that can engage youth towards careers in manufacturing. Few parents and students realize that many manufacturers will help pay for their education in that industry. Additionally, company owners are eager to mentor younger workers. Gaming and coding can both be pathways into writing code for Computer Numerical Control (CNC) machines.

Ms. Larson asked how the Alliance can support existing school district programs and Mr. Ridler suggested having representatives from District 214 come to a future meeting and discuss their apprenticeship program. Mr. Iverson feels that it is important to involve educators and residents alike in terms of learning about career opportunities in the manufacturing field. Agreeing with the educational aspect, Chairman Stengren believes that students should learn what is available across all industries, as well as internship/mentorship opportunities, and the potential quality of life to be earned from them.

School Districts 211 and 214 offer robust internship programs in manufacturing, according to Mr. Iverson. The Illinois Manufacturing Excellence Center (IMEC) provided a grant to East Leyden High School to develop a manufacturing camp for students. At the camp, they designed a tabletop CNC machine that cut personalized pen cases. Also, the upperclassmen mentored the younger students. Mr. Casey concurred with Mr. Iverson's points, stating from experience that there are numerous professions within the health industry that youths aren't aware even exist.

Successful economies usually have some manufacturing base, and Mr. Iverson added that jobs and work are returning to the U.S. following decades of being exported overseas. Such jobs require more skill than in the past, but attain higher wages. Chairman Stengren and Mr. Casey inquired about competition from nearby communities, and Mr. Iverson said that Arlington Heights isn't as well known for its industrial economy as some of its neighboring municipalities. The Village does offer benefits though, such as a positive aura. Mr. Ridler feels that having this conversation is valuable now, while industrial vacancy rates are relatively low. It's important to prevent vacancies from increasing and also creating a pipeline for future businesses.

Ms. Larson inquired about data centers and Mr. Mertes explained that the Village has researched them. Part of the issue is finding enough contiguous land to accommodate their development. Mr. Guido added that Buffalo Grove High School has automobile technology classes that get students involved and engaged with hands-on experience. Parents may not understand all the career opportunities available to their children. From personal experience, Ms. Ruhl has seen several job applicants who had started college, but either didn't finish or are unsure what to pursue with their education. It seems culturally ingrained that going to a big-name college is important and that the perception of manufacturing is being a dirty, difficult, and male-dominated industry. Manufacturing can be another path for college graduates unsure what to do for a career, especially with many finding that housing and desired lifestyles are often not affordable.

Advocating for more women and people of color, per Mr. Iverson, is crucial to manufacturing's ongoing growth. Ms. Larson would like to hear from School District 214 and Harper College about their manufacturing programs. Adding to that, Chairman Stengren wants to determine how the Economic Alliance can have an impact. Mr. Casey sees one of the Commission's purposes as creating public-private partnerships, and supporting its industrial businesses is one such way to do that. Mr. Iverson believes the Makerplace is one tool that can help. Making it clearer for students or job seekers, and highlighting the resources available, Ms. Ruhl said could benefit businesses looking to hire. Mr. Ridler added that the Chamber has a job board and is always looking for channels to get information to job seekers.

DRAFT

The Economic Alliance requested that staff invite School District 214 to the next meeting in order to learn more about their apprenticeship program. Mr. Iverson noted that October is Manufacturing Month in Illinois and Ms. Ruhl wondered if public tours of existing manufacturing facilities could be useful. Ms. Larson sees value in engaging the Village's manufacturers, and Mr. Ridler would like a clear message as part of the Alliance's efforts.

Small Business Assistance Opportunities

At the previous Alliance meeting, Ms. Para suggested writing "thank you" notes to businesses to make sure they feel acknowledged and appreciated. Mr. Mertes has begun discussing an outline with Ms. Para and intends to bring a plan to a future Commission meeting. Also suggested at the August meeting was hosting or sponsoring smaller programs for businesses, instead of a full breakfast event. Mr. Mertes is currently working with the Arlington Heights Memorial Library on an "open house" for small businesses in late October and asked if the Alliance would like to support that program.

Also from the August meeting, Ms. Ruhl suggested unique ideas for programs to promote existing businesses and their owners. Staff is working on an online map to highlight diversity in ownership and services of businesses around Arlington Heights. Mr. Mertes inquired if the Alliance would like to help survey owners for this project. In terms of helping the business community, Ms. Ruhl asked how the Alliance can help make Arlington Heights an even more attractive place. Knowing the opportunities and resources available would be useful, as well as helping ensure consistency among small programs.

Chairman Stengren wants to make sure that these efforts would not dilute the Chamber's efforts, and Mr. Ridler doesn't believe so feeling that different programs will reach different audiences. Mr. Iverson wondered about monthly programs in which each Alliance member could speak regarding their respective industry, or find another representative of that industry to speak. Ms. Ruhl believes a program like that could work if each Alliance member were designated a specific timeframe. Also, new laws impacting small businesses would be a valuable discussion topic for such events. Mr. Ridler feels that this could give the Commission exposure, and recommended that any programs be done early in the morning to get the best attendance possible.

Mr. Mertes will work with Mr. Iverson on a manufacturing program and Mr. Ridler offered the Chamber to help put together a flyer and get out the information.

Other Business and Public Comment

No other business was discussed. There was no public comment.

Adjournment

HEATHER LARSON MOVED AND RICH CASEY SECONDED A MOTION TO ADJOURN. ALL ALLIANCE MEMBERS VOTED IN FAVOR OF THE MOTION.

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 AM.

Andrew Stengren, Chair
Arlington Economic Alliance

Prepared by Department of Planning & Community Development