



Village of Arlington Heights
Arlington Economic Alliance
Community Room, 3rd Floor

August 16, 2023
7:30 AM

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. ROLL CALL

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- A. Minutes 7/19/2023

IV. REPORTS

- A. Development Update
- B. Arlington Alfresco Report

V. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Promotion of Manufacturing

VI. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Small Business Assistance Opportunities

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
8/16/2023

Item: Minutes 7/19/2023

Department: Planning & Community Development

ATTACHMENTS:

Description

Minutes 7/19/2023

Type

Minutes

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MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ARLINGTON ECONOMIC ALLIANCE HELD ON JULY 19, 2023 AT 7:30 A.M. AT THE VILLAGE HALL

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Andrew Stengren – Chairman
Tony Guido
Heather Larson
Ellen Para
Michele Petrie
Brian Roginski
Andi Ruhl
John Toliopoulos

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Rich Casey
Tonia Etoh
Terry Iverson
Kerri Oots
Jon Ridler

STAFF PRESENT:

Michael Mertes – Business Development Manager

ALSO PRESENT:

Melissa Cayer, Resident
Mary Ellen Graf, Township High School District 214
Keith Moens, Resident

Call to Order

Chair Andrew Stengren called the meeting to order at 7:32 AM.

Approval of Minutes – April 19, 2023

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

MICHELE PETRIE AND BRIAN ROGINSKI SECONDED A MOTION TO APPROVE THE DRAFT APRIL 19, 2023 ARLINGTON ECONOMIC ALLIANCE MEETING MINUTES. ALL ALLIANCE MEMBERS VOTED IN FAVOR OF THE MOTION.

Development Update

Demolition of the grandstand has begun at Arlington Park. No formal plan has been submitted as of yet for redevelopment of the site. The proposed Arlington Gateway project was presented to the Village Board for early review in mid-June. Located at the southeast corner of Algonquin & Arlington Heights Roads, it would be a multi-phase project totaling 16.4 acres. The first phase would cover 3.65 acres and feature an eight-story building with 300 rental units and around 25,000 square feet of first-floor commercial space. The presentation to the Board was strictly conceptual, and the project still needs review from the Design, Housing, and Plan Commissions.

The 116-120 W. Eastman Street development was rejected by the Plan Commission. The developer is working with Staff on modifications to the plan in order to bring it back for formal consideration. The Southpoint shopping center has multiple outlots now built and occupied by Chipotle and Consumers Credit Union. An AT&T store and prospective quick service restaurant user are also planned for the outlots. At Home is also now open.

Ms. Para inquired about the demolition at Arlington Park. Mr. Mertes explained that this is being done to clear the land for future development. Ms. Larson inquired about inline tenancy at Southpoint and Mr. Mertes said that Staff is working with prospective tenants. Mr. Guido inquired about vacancy rates in Arlington Heights over the past few years. Retail is currently around 6-7% vacant, per Mr. Mertes. Industrial vacancy is down. Office space is over 20% vacant which is comparable to the surrounding region.

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Arlington Alfresco Discussion

Arlington Alfresco continues through the last week of September. Additional Police presence is being provided this year. Staff continues to provide assistance to business owners with any individual needs. Mr. Roginski said that Alfresco is going very well and patrons continue to enjoy it.

Zero Interest Loan Program Update

The changes recommended by the Economic Alliance at their April meeting were approved by unanimously by the Village Board on June 5. These modifications entailed:

- o An increase from a maximum loan amount of \$20,000 to \$25,000 (larger requests can be considered on individual basis – marketing materials and the application state this)
- o An increase in coverage from 50% to a maximum of 75% of eligible costs
- o A 20% forgivable provision for existing businesses that have been operating in Arlington Heights for at least three years

Prior to approval, the item was pulled from consent agenda for brief discussion regarding marketing of the program. Promotional efforts since the Board meeting have involved:

- o Updated application and marketing flyer
- o Updated information on VAH.com
- o Facebook post promoting the program
- o Information on the program sent to over 150 local commercial brokers
- o Information on the program sent via the Village's business e-newsletter

Interest has been received from over two dozen prospective or existing businesses. Two incomplete applications have been received. Staff is working with those applicants on putting together a complete submittal. Chairman Stengren suggested Facebook advertising as another opportunity to promote the program. Mr. Mertes said that such marketing is under consideration, but that Staff is waiting to see the initial response to the program's changes before moving forward on that. Based on the changes, Ms. Ruhl inquired if business interest is higher than in recent years. Mr. Mertes verified that there has been a wave of interest following promotion of the updated program.

Arlington Economic Alliance Budget – 2024

For the current fiscal year (2023), which aligns with the calendar year, the Alliance was approved for a \$16,600 budget. The Commission is designated to have \$17,100 for fiscal year 2024. Staff proposed allocating the additional \$500 into "Marketing & Communications" for next year, but that the Commission has flexibility in how the money is spent within their budget. Ms. Larson inquired about business retention outreach, and Mr. Mertes shared that in 2022 the Alliance sponsored a breakfast program focusing on employee attraction and retention for small businesses. But there has not been such a program this year.

MICHELE PETRIE MOVED AND HEATHER LARSON SECONDED A MOTION TO APPROVE THE 2024 ARLINGTON ECONOMIC ALLIANCE BUDGET AS PROPOSED. ALL ALLIANCE MEMBERS VOTED IN FAVOR OF THE MOTION.

Promotion of Manufacturing

Mr. Mertes summarized the importance of manufacturing, and the industrial sector in general, to the Village's 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, especially those represented by the Commissioners.

Chairman Stengren sees social media as an opportunity to inform the public of the role that industry plays in the local economy, and could be part of a larger educational effort. Ms. Larson referenced Elk Grove's partnerships with School District 214, as well as an expo that they put on for their local industrial businesses. As part of the educational effort, Ms. Petrie feels that messaging should focus on overcoming of the stigma that these jobs are "dirty" and that there are opportunities to highlight the engineering aspects of such a profession. Chairman Stengren referenced Mr.

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Iverson's efforts to promote manufacturing and suggested that this discussion could serve as a future template for supporting for all the Alliance members' respective industries.

School District 214 has an apprenticeship program said Ms. Ruhl, and supporting that program could be a starting point. She inquired if a representative from the School District could speak at an upcoming Alliance meeting. Ms. Petrie asked if Arlington Heights is getting any spillover interest from neighboring communities with low industrial vacancies. Mr. Mertes responded that demand for industrial remains high in Arlington Heights, and the bulk of its vacancy is based upon a 500,000 square foot development underway at Dundee Road and IL-53. If that were to be completely occupied then the Village's industrial rate would drop significantly. Additionally, Arlington Heights' positioning in the Chicago region, with easy access to interstate highways and O'Hare International Airport, makes it a desirable location for industrial operations, especially warehousing and distribution.

Mr. Guido asked about Staff assistance in promoting vacant properties in the Village, and Mr. Mertes confirmed that Staff works with the developers and brokers to promote sites and provide information to prospective businesses. The Alliance agreed to continue discussion at their next meeting and Chairman Stengren agrees that working with School District could be beneficial. Ms. Ruhl expressed concerns with the affordability of retail space in the community and that any assistance available to small businesses could be helpful in retaining them.

Other Business and Public Comment

Ms. Petrie announced the grand reopening of Village Bank & Trust on September 27. Ms. Cayer mentioned that the School District 214 website highlights manufacturing as a career pathway. Mr. Guido inquired about the status of the Village website and Mr. Mertes replied that it is now live and being updated on an ongoing basis, and that a business directory is being added. Ms. Para asked the Commission to consider business retention uses for its budget funds. Also, finding ways to thank businesses, even if just a note, can make a business owner feel valued. She also inquired about any regulations that would allow or prohibit vegetal canopies between buildings. Ms. Petrie asked if outreach is done to new and existing businesses. Mr. Mertes said that a welcome packet with a listing of small business resources is sent to new businesses, while assistance to existing businesses is provided as needed.

Ms. Ruhl emphasized diversity of business ownership and providing a channel to promote individual businesses. It could be a good use of the Commission's resources to create a plan for a campaign that encourages people to visit small businesses and learn about their owners. Adding to that, Ms. Larson sees value in learning why specific owners chose to locate their business in Arlington Heights and then to promote those messages. Chairman Stengren suggested that the Alliance meet in August to consider possible uses for remaining 2023 funds. Ms. Ruhl suggested dividing the money among smaller programs, possibly hiring professionals to discuss issues of importance to business owners as needed. Ms. Para liked the idea and suggested partnering with the library as part of their "Coffee & Connect" program.

Mr. Guido said that 80 local auto dealerships are participating in the annual "BBQ for the Troops", with donations going to the USO. Ms. Larson discussed "Family Day" at Woodfield Mall. Around 300 children were in attendance. Thrown Elements also participated and gave a demonstration.

Adjournment

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 AM.

Andrew Stengren, Chair
Arlington Economic Alliance

Prepared by Department of Planning & Community Development