



Village of Arlington Heights
Arlington Economic Alliance
Commissions Room, 2nd Floor
Arlington Heights Village Hall
33 S. Arlington Heights Road
Arlington Heights, IL 60005

July 17, 2019
7:30 AM

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. ROLL CALL

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- A. Minutes 6/19/19

IV. REPORTS

- A. Development Update

V. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Downtown Construction Update
- B. Downtown Signage Update
- C. Buy Local Program Update

VI. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Summary of the Permitting Process

VII. OTHER BUSINESS

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

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Arlington Economic Alliance
7/17/2019

Item: Minutes 6/19/19

Department: Planning & Community Development

ATTACHMENTS:

Description

Minutes

Type

Minutes

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MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ARLINGTON ECONOMIC ALLIANCE HELD ON JUNE 19, 2019 AT 7:30 A.M. AT THE VILLAGE HALL

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Scott Whisler – Chairman
Rich Casey
Matt Fink
Rex Paisley
Dave Parulo
Andi Ruhl
Andrew Stengren

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Tony Guido
Jon Ridler
Brian Roginski

STAFF PRESENT:

Michael Mertes – Business Development Coordinator

ALSO PRESENT:

Mike Driskell, Arlington Heights Memorial Library
Scott Rowader, Special Events Commission
Melissa Cayer, Resident
Keith Moens, Resident

Development Update

Sigwalt 16, the southernmost of acre of Block 425, plans to go to the Plan Commission on June 26. The Design Commission previously approved recommended the project for approval. The proposed 16 three-bedroom rowhomes are going through the public process to re-zone from R-3 to R-7, and for variations on setbacks.

The Village Board unanimously approved an overlay district proposed at the southeast corner of Algonquin and Arlington Heights Road on June 17. The majority of the properties are owned by Bradford Allen, and this overlay district would enable mixed-use development within the area. Mr. Parulo asked if the area has been branded, and if there will be improvements to curb appeal. Mr. Mertes replied that there has not yet been a formal proposal submitted. Staff efforts for the South Arlington Heights Road corridor are to include beautification, among those being to try to set back sidewalks from the streets for visual appeal and greater pedestrian mobility.

Chairman Whisler asked for an update on the former Yanni's property, to which Mr. Mertes replied that he has been in touch with representatives of ownership, but that no formal plans have recently been proposed to Staff. Mr. Mertes also acknowledged the recent resignation of Jackie Lewis as Alliance Commissioner representing the Downtown.

Call to Order

Chairman Whisler called the meeting to order at 7:36 AM, upon the arrival of Ms. Ruhl for quorum.

Approval of Minutes – May 15, 2019

The meeting minutes of the May 15, 2019 Arlington Economic Alliance meeting were reviewed.

RICH CASEY MOVED AND ANDI RUHL SECONDED A MOTION TO APPROVE THE DRAFT MAY 15, 2019 ARLINGTON ECONOMIC ALLIANCE MEETING MINUTES. ALL ALLIANCE MEMBERS VOTED IN FAVOR OF THE MOTION.

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Downtown Construction Update

In regards to Nicor work, all new gas main is in. Now there is a need to disconnect properties from the old main and connect to the new main. Public Works estimates this to be about 25% complete. Some boring connections may require short-term closings of sidewalks. Ms. Ruhl stated that, thus far, construction has not been as overwhelming as anticipated. She did note that one evening in May, at a local restaurant, a customer came in stating that cars were being towed on the south side of Campbell Street. According to Ms. Ruhl, two or three vehicles were towed. Mr. Mertes said that he would look into it.

Mr. Rowader inquired how the Promenade of Art (mid-June) went with its relocation along Davis Street. Ms. Ruhl expressed her disappointment that she only noticed one Arlington Heights business with a booth, and that she would like to see more local businesses allowed to have them (as her business was in the past). Updates are being sent out to Downtown contacts, via e-mail, on approximately a weekly basis. Six updates have been sent out since last Alliance meeting, from May 15 through June 14. Sewer construction work began the first week of June, and there have been closures on Campbell, Highland, Wing, & Chestnut. Some sections continued to be closed last week.

Regarding sewer work over the next week, Campbell Street will be closed to through traffic from Mitchell to Highland, including overnight hours. Eastbound Campbell Street will be re-routed south on Mitchell, to east on Sigwalt, to north on Highland back to Campbell. Westbound Campbell Street will be re-routed south on Highland to west on Sigwalt to north on Mitchell back to Campbell. Chestnut Avenue from Sigwalt to Wing street will continue to be closed to through traffic, including overnight hours. Also, there will be upcoming work at intersection of Vail & Campbell in about a week or two. This will take a couple days, but mostly shut down intersection. Work will not go further east along Campbell.

Lastly, resurfacing is being conducted on Northwest Highway between Vail Avenue and State Street in Des Plaines. On June 17, the Village Board approved an agreement with IDOT to also resurface Dunton and Evergreen, between NW Hwy and the rail tracks. Regarding the construction, Mr. Parulo has noticed multiple negative comments on social media. He feels that putting a positive spin in social media, and improved communication with naysayers, could help alleviate this.

Downtown Signage Update

The Staff Parking Committee is reviewing two proposals for the garage parking system and will be sending its recommendation to VB in next couple of months. Staff also received one bid for Downtown parking signage. The bid came in over-budget, and the Village and sign company are discussing ways to lower the cost. The original proposal calls for six pole signs (five for above-ground lots and one for the underground garage), as well as two blade signs, one for the Vail Garage and one for the North Garage. Chairman Whisler was curious why only one bid came in, and wondered if the RFP may have been too extensive.

Update on Items Discussed at May Economic Alliance Meeting

The previous month, Mr. Roginski asked if the Village could put the temporary "Parking" banner back up on the Vail Avenue garage. Mr. Mertes looked into this but found out it was temporarily held in place by Public Works equipment, and that there are no brackets installed to affix a banner for the next few months. Since the last Alliance meeting, information on the SeeClickFix app will be posted on social media. The Village Manager's office also confirmed that information on this app has been promoted in the past as well. Also, per Mr. Rowader's suggestion, the annual Economic Alliance newsletter has been placed on DiscoverArlington.com.

In additional follow-ups, Mr. Mertes is currently exploring with fellow Staff:

- Placement of available sites listings back on VAH.com
- Adding an economic development data page to VAH.com or DiscoverArlington.com
- Links to hotel webpages on DiscoverArlington.com

Ms. Ruhl suggested looking into giving SeeClickFix its own page on VAH.com. Additionally, in terms of tracking how

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people are receiving the Alliance newsletter, MailChimp or Constant Contact can verify the percentage of recipients who opened the documents. In terms of what economic development data could be posted on a webpage, Mr. Paisley recommended pulling data from the bi-annual statistics report that Staff gives to the Alliance. Also, Chairman Whisler recommends posting vacancy data and resources available to local businesses.

Experience Arlington Heights Challenge

Mr. Mertes requested feedback from the Alliance regarding the proposed "Experience Arlington Heights Challenge" program to support Downtown businesses. The concept is based upon a similar program that he initiated in St. Charles prior to employment in Arlington Heights. The Planning & Community Development Department would fund the program through its budget. Potential participants would enter the program by filling out a form, and be eligible to have their name drawn. If selected, they would have 15 days to visit three Downtown businesses, spending a total of at least \$50 (minimum \$15 at each store). Of the three Downtown businesses they would visit, they must visit one from each of these categories:

- Retailer
- Service Provider
- Restaurant and/or Entertainment Business

Those selected for the program must take pictures from each merchant and write a short summary of their experiences. Village Staff would promote this information via DiscoverArlington.com and social media. The persons selected to participate in the program would then each be awarded a \$100 gift card to the Downtown business of their choice, funded via the Planning & Community Development budget for economic development. Selected participants cannot be chosen more than once.

Mr. Stengren asked how the program was received in St. Charles. Mr. Mertes responded that he began employment in Arlington Heights shortly after initiating the program in St. Charles. That being said, the program continued to be carried on for several months thereafter, and that promotional information from the program can still be found on that city's website. He did note that participants were selected once a month in St. Charles, instead of once a week as proposed for Arlington Heights.

Ms. Ruhl inquired about multiple selected persons visiting the same business. Mr. Mertes responded that, in order to spread out customer visits among the Downtown, once a business had been selected, then the next winner could not visit that same business under the terms of the program. He would provide a list of the eligible businesses to which the selected person could patronize. Chairman Whisler asked if selecting two people a week would be possible, and Mr. Mertes suggested starting with one a week and determining Staff's ability to manage the program before altering the frequency. Mr. Paisley also recommended avoiding oversaturation of people's social media feeds.

Mr. Parulo noted that social media influence is a big aspect of this program. He likes the concept in general, but it needs some tweaking and adding a "fun factor" starting with looking for a different word than "challenge". There is a social media class offered at Forest View, and he suggests that Staff reach out to the instructor for thoughts on how to best utilize the medium to promote the program. Mr. Rowader asked if the program would be restricted to residents. Mr. Mertes said that he had considered this. However, he feels that encouraging visitors to come to the Downtown, and continue spending in the Village, would benefit the businesses as well and further promote the Downtown to a wider audience.

Ms. Ruhl inquired about how the dollar amounts (to spend and the reward) were determined, and wants to ensure that the program is enticing and is not bogged down by too many rules that might confuse or dissuade participants. Mr. Mertes explained that the \$50 amount required to be spent by selectees was based upon an idea from a non-profit called *The 3/50 Project*, which challenges people across the country to spend at least \$50 per month on three local independent merchants that they love having in their respective communities. The \$100 gift card reward was chosen as an amount that would be enticing for people to participate in the program. Also, the gift card would further encourage selectees to patronize Downtown, instead of just rebating them for the money they previously spent.

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Mr. Casey complimented the ideas behind the program. He asked if modifying the program during its implementation period would pose any potential problems. Mr. Mertes feels that there can be flexibility if the program is not as alluring as anticipated, but of course would still honor the agreed upon rules with previous selectees. Ms. Ruhl asked if there were equal numbers of retailers, restaurant/entertainment businesses, and service providers, and if businesses are required to opt-in. Mr. Mertes explained that there are about 30-35 each of retailers and restaurant/entertainment uses, and many more service type entities. Merchants are automatically entered since they have no participation requirements. However, if for any reason an owner does not wish to be eligible under the program, Mr. Mertes will remove them from the list of participating businesses.

Mr. Moens inquired about the \$100 gift card. Mr. Mertes explained that the gift card would be tied to a specific Downtown business, chosen by the selectee. It would not be a general gift card (e.g. Visa) that could be spent anywhere. Mr. Parulo asked about the possibility of a grand finale. Perhaps participating businesses could also help finance a grand prize. Mr. Paisley liked this idea and said that it could further help promote the program, to which Mr. Rowader agreed. He sees an opportunity to tie into an event later in the year, such as the Tree Lighting Ceremony. Mr. Mertes also felt that these were good ideas, and as the program moves forward, he can gauge interest in such enhancements.

DAVE PARULO MOVED AND ANDY STENGREN SECONDED A MOTION IN SUPPORT OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT OF THE EXPERIENCE ARLINGTON HEIGHTS CHALLENGE PROGRAM.

Ms. Ruhl wanted to confirm if only the only participating businesses at this point are those in the Downtown. Furthermore, if there is the option to expand the program Village-wide at some point. Mr. Mertes confirmed both of these points. She noted her support of the program and the importance of implementing it as soon as possible. Chairman Whisler inquired about the boundaries that will be considered "Downtown" under this program. Mr. Mertes explained that his proposed boundaries are Euclid to the north, Park to the south, Belmont to the east, and Ridge to the west. Chairman Whisler suggested slightly extending the western boundary, Euclid to Northwest Highway/Salem, and slightly east to Douglas.

ALL ALLIANCE MEMBERS VOTED IN FAVOR OF THE MOTION.

Ms. Ruhl added that if the program does decide to expand to have a grand prize, to take into consideration whether to include previous winners, or only new entries.

Other Business

Mr. Rowader mentioned that the Mane Event/Taste of Arlington Heights will be held from August 2-3. Mr. Driskell said that the Library's summer reading programs have kicked off, and plans are moving forward with closing on the former Teen Center building to house a future makerspace. Ms. Ruhl inquired about California Pizza Kitchen closing. Mr. Mertes responded that he was aware, but is working with the site's broker on another restaurant for the space. Also, @properties is filling the former Panera Bread space within the same shopping center.

Adjournment

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:36 AM.

Scott Whisler, Chairman
Arlington Economic Alliance

Prepared by Department of Planning & Community Development