



Village of Arlington Heights
Arlington Economic Alliance
Commissions Room, 2nd Floor
February 19, 2020
7:30 AM

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. ROLL CALL

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- A. Minutes - 1/15/20

IV. REPORTS

- A. Development Update

V. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Downtown Signage Update
- B. Buy Local Program Update
- C. Economic Alliance Work Plan for 2020

VI. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Alliance Breakfast Update

VII. OTHER BUSINESS

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

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Arlington Economic Alliance
2/19/2020

Item: Minutes - 1/15/20

Department: Planning & Community Development

ATTACHMENTS:

Description

Minutes - 1/15/20

Type

Minutes

DRAFT

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ARLINGTON ECONOMIC ALLIANCE HELD ON JANUARY 15, 2020 AT 7:30 A.M. AT THE VILLAGE HALL

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Scott Whisler – Chairman
Joyce Barabicho
Rich Casey
Matt Fink
Tony Guido
Lyndsay Holton-Crowe
Rex Paisley
Dave Parulo
Jon Ridler
Brian Roginski
Andi Ruhl
Andrew Stengren

MEMBERS ABSENT:

None

STAFF PRESENT:

Michael Mertes – Business Development Coordinator

ALSO PRESENT:

Melissa Cayer, Resident
Mike Driskel, Arlington Heights Memorial Library
Keith Moens, Resident
Patrick Mogge, High School District 214
Scott Rowader, Special Events Commission
Rick Star, Downtown Mediaworks

Call to Order

Chairman Whisler called the meeting to order at 7:31 AM.

Approval of Minutes – December 18, 2020

The meeting minutes of December 18, 2020 Arlington Economic Alliance meeting were reviewed.

DAVE PARULO MOVED AND TONY GUIDO SECONDED A MOTION TO APPROVE THE DRAFT DECEMBER 18, 2019 ARLINGTON ECONOMIC ALLIANCE MEETING MINUTES. ALL ALLIANCE MEMBERS VOTED IN FAVOR OF THE MOTION.

Development Update

The Annex of Arlington shopping center has several new businesses opening in the coming weeks. These include Which Wich, a fast casual sandwich restaurant; Bach to Rock, a commercial music school; and SPENGA, a commercial fitness studio. Planning & Community Development Staff is also working on recruitment of another youth commercial school for the site. In the Downtown, CoCo & Blu Café, a European-style coffeehouse, is now open. Build-out continues for Beer on the Wall, while the Barre Code is moving to 218 W. Campbell Street. A lease is out for the restaurant space at 5 W. Campbell, previously occupied by Passero.

The former Hillside Towing site at Palatine and Arlington Heights Roads is listed as available for a ground lease. Planning & Community Development Staff has reached out to the site's broker multiple times for assistance in recruiting potential development.

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Downtown Construction Update

Barring unforeseen circumstances, the Nicor portion of the Downtown construction project is complete. For the Village's portion, there are a few small items to wrap up including some additional crosswalk signage. A pedestrian crosswalk has been installed on Dunton between Campbell and Sigwalt. Village Staff is awaiting updates from IDOT about work on Northwest Highway. It is anticipated that this work will be undertaken in the spring.

Downtown Signage Update

The parking guidance system is anticipated to be installed in the Vail Garage in the next few weeks. Installation, from beginning to end, should take about 4-6 weeks. Permits for the parking lot pole signs, and the blade signs to be placed on the Vail and North garages, should be submitted soon. Installation is expected to occur in the spring. Interior signage in the garages has been put up as well.

Buy Local Program Update

A flyer/entry form for the "Buy Local, Win Local" program has been updated by Planning & Community Development Staff.

Economic Development Statistics Update

Mr. Mertes explained to the newer members of the Commission that he updates the Alliance two or three times a year on key economic statistics in the Community. The Illinois Department of Revenue (IDOR) has not yet provided final tax figures for 2019. Therefore, the retail sales figures and sales tax revenue charts that were provided in the attached report are only updated through 2018. In 2019, there were 59 new municipally licensed businesses in the Village. These businesses employ 328 workers, while reoccupying over 360,000 square feet of previously vacant space. Mr. Mertes added that although the numbers are down from previous years, there is not as much available tenant space as in previous years coming out of the Recession. Additionally, numerous business types that opened in Arlington Heights this past year are exempt from local business licenses by the State. So undoubtedly, the actual numbers are higher, but the Village does not necessarily have a means to track them.

Retail vacancy rates have dropped a full percentage point in the past year, to 7.2%, and are still better than the rest of the overall submarket in which Arlington Heights is located. Additionally, first floor Downtown vacancy rates are under 6.0%. Office vacancy rates have gone up, but Arlington Heights still has a lower rate than its submarket. Industrial/Flex rates have gone up too, but a couple of large vacant properties on Dundee Road and Shure Drive explain the majority of the vacant space, as well as new spec industrial property at 703-709 W. Algonquin Road. Per Mr. Parulo's question, the CoStar real estate database does provide information on new inventory to the market.

In 2019, Planning & Community Development Staff made 401 unique business recruitment efforts, and assisted 237 different businesses via retention efforts. Mr. Stengren asked about proactive retention efforts being undertaken by Staff. Mr. Mertes pointed to additional outreach via phone and email with a goal to conduct more face-to-face meetings. Also, targeted retention efforts to businesses that have been open in Arlington Heights for the past 3-5 years, and learning from their experiences, is also planned by Staff. Per the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES), there are 2,878 private sector businesses in Arlington Heights, employing 42,282 workers. The figures have been modified in the past couple years based upon the State department's calculations, and should be taken with a grain of salt as a snapshot rather than as definitive figures. Mr. Parulo further explained that the data reflects full-time workers with employment insurance.

The most viewed pages on VAH.com are the home and search pages, as well as online payment information. Google and direct visits are the primary methods by which visitors come to the site. Chairman Whisler recommended that a copy of the entire bill be provided to customers who pay their water bills online. For DiscoverArlington.com, page views were down in 2019, but Village Staff is making concerted efforts to drive more traffic to the site. Mr. Stengren asked about the origin of the Discover Arlington site. Mr. Mertes and Chairman Whisler explained that a goal was to lure more consumers to Arlington Heights merchants and events, and the Discover site would provide a channel for that. Mr. Paisley sees the Discover website as a welcome center to the Village, while Mr. Guido added that the site was part of branding efforts, and making sure such information was not lost on VAH.com.

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Mr. Mogge referenced Squarespace as a way to manage sub-sites. Mr. Parulo added that in the years since the implementation of DiscoverArlington.com, websites such as Yelp have likely replaced some of the audience that the Discover site served. That said, the Discover site seems to be getting many organic hits, which means that people are using it as a reference tool that they go to directly. A reduction in visitors is probably more reflective of current online trends than a lack of site quality.

Besides the home page, "Food Scene" and "Fests & Events" were the most-visited pages. As with VAH.com, Google and direct entry are the primary methods by which visitors come to the site. There has been a marked increase in visitors via Facebook too. Mr. Parulo sees value in the site, because it is connected to VAH.com and has a built-in audience. Meanwhile, Mr. Ridler sees people knowing to go directly to the site as a sign that the "Discover Arlington" brand is working. The Discover Arlington Facebook page grew to 12,519 "Likes" by the end of 2019. The most-viewed posts primarily dealt with news about specific Arlington Heights businesses or upcoming events.

Economic Alliance Work Plan for 2020

Mr. Mertes summarized the Commission's efforts and achievements in 2019 and requested the Alliance's thoughts on potential work items for this year. A possibility is a small business informational event, which has been done by the Alliance in the past. Chairman Whisler likes the idea of holding such an event. He contemplated a panel to discuss the impact of commercial real estate taxes in 2020. Ms. Ruhl suggested a discussion on new small business legislation that has become law this year. Mandatory sexual harassment training for certain employees is one such example. Chairman Whisler expressed support of this idea.

Mr. Roginski asked if a late afternoon event would be possible. Mr. Stengren also expressed support for Ms. Ruhl's idea, and suggested the morning as a time for the event. A happy hour event might be more social, while a breakfast would capture attendees in a business mode. Mr. Driskell offered the Library as a potential location if needed. Mr. Parulo concurred with a business-focused theme. It is important to inform the attendees, but ensure that the speakers are not advocating a position. Mr. Paisley also felt that property taxes as a barrier to doing business could be a complementary topic.

If the topic is focused on business-related laws for 2020, Ms. Ruhl suggested that spring would be most appropriate. By the time summer and fall comes, the topic will otherwise become dated. Mr. Roginski added that some of the laws, especially regarding payroll, activate on July 1. Mr. Stengren likes the idea of holding the event at a business, rather than a government building. Chairman Whisler recommends aiming for April, and that another event could potentially be held later in the year at the Library. Ms. Barabicho and Ms. Holton-Crowe agreed to participate on a working group with Mr. Mertes to formalize the breakfast event.

Chairman Whisler recommends expanding the Alliance newsletter, but keeping it to one per year and sending it out in the fall. Mr. Stengren likes the idea of the Alliance Commissioners providing additional content to include in the newsletter, as initially suggested by Ms. Ruhl. Changes in the auto industry and updates in the real estate market, which were discussed at recent Alliance meetings, were topics Ms. Ruhl felt would make for interesting content. Multiple Commissioners expressed interest in the status of Arlington International Racecourse moving forward.

Mr. Ridler asked if the Alliance could get input to the Building Department and Planning & Community Development Department for their 2020 projects; it would be appreciated if Staff could look for opportunities for the Commission to offer additional support before a formal Village Board vote, in a way that will not slow down the process. He is looking for more global ideas that impact businesses in general, as opposed to regulations or approvals for specific businesses or properties. Mr. Casey acknowledged this as an advising and counseling opportunity.

Chairman Whisler understands this point, but also wants to make sure the Commission is not bringing back the same items that were discussed with the Village Board the previous year. However, perhaps things that are being considered by Staff for 2020 could be looked at. Mr. Parulo wants to make sure that this is Staff-embraced as well. Mr. Mertes referenced the "Buy Local, Win Local" program as an example of a Staff-created program that went before the Alliance for their feedback. The Commission encouraged him to get the program started up in 2020.

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Chairman Whisler recommended continued promotion of existing incentive programs. E-Blasts could be a good channel for that. In summary of Alliance feedback on their Work Plan, initial goals for 2020 are:

- A small business breakfast in the spring
- An expanded Alliance newsletter in the fall
- Looking for programs/regulations to which the Commission can provide additional input and/or support

Mr. Casey requested any feedback from the Village Board regarding the letter provided to them before their 2019 strategic planning meeting, in order to ensure that the Commission is conducting any needed follow-up efforts in 2020. Mr. Mertes said that aspects of the Alliance's feedback was also incorporated in the Village Board's latest business plan. Ms. Ruhl and Mr. Stengren discussed having Alliance members attend Village Board meetings to be better informed as to current topics. The Commission did that for a short time last year. Chairman Whisler asked for a calendar of upcoming Village Board meetings for the next Alliance meeting.

Other Business

Mr. Rowader noted that the annual Hearts of Gold ceremony would be held on February 15. The "Business Leader of the Year" is Joe Keefe from the Metropolis Performing Arts Centre. Also, the Special Events Commission is seeking a premium sponsor for the Mane Event / Taste of Arlington Heights in 2020. Mr. Mogge discussed an apprenticeship offered by School District 214 that helps young students gain exposure to the business world.

Mr. Driskell said that the Arlington Heights Memorial Library unveiled a new website in December. Additionally, there is a new newsletter with updated formatting and content. In terms of the planned makerspace, the Library is currently working with its architect and will be communicating with the Village regarding the permitting process. In addition, the Library has a Founder's Circle program for those who wish to support through donations, or simply offering expertise to help the makerspace reach fruition.

Ms. Cayer recommended YouTube tutorials to the Commission regarding Robert's Rules of Order. Additionally, when recently purchasing a vehicle sticker, she received three receipts for her purchase, and was curious if that is provided to everyone who buys a vehicle sticker, and if the Village could reduce the amount of paper used. In addition, she would appreciate if the Alliance could consider a "Homemaker" position on the Commission.

The next meeting of the Arlington Economic Alliance is scheduled for Wednesday, February 19.

Adjournment

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:59 AM.

Scott Whisler, Chairman
Arlington Economic Alliance

Prepared by Department of Planning & Community Development



Arlington Economic Alliance
2/19/2020

Item: Economic Alliance Work Plan for 2020

Department: Planning & Community Development

ATTACHMENTS:

Description

Code Section 6-505

Type

Exhibits

Section 6-505 The Arlington Economic Alliance. There is hereby created the Arlington Economic Alliance.

- a. Intent and Purpose. To provide for an appointive, advisory body whose purpose shall be to promote existing businesses and attract new businesses to the Village and to support programs in order to foster and support a Village-wide initiative towards the promotion of quality economic development.
- b. Members. The Arlington Economic Alliance shall consist of 13 members, either residents of the Village or individuals working for a business located in the Village, appointed by the Village President, by and with the advice and consent of the Board of Trustees. There shall also be one member of the Village staff, appointed by the Village Manager, serving as liaison.
- c. Tenure. All members of the Arlington Economic Alliance shall serve terms of three years or until their successors are appointed and have qualified. The terms of members shall be staggered so that no more than five members shall be appointed or reappointed in any one year, unless a vacancy exists. Vacancies shall be filled only for unexpired terms. Annually, the Village President shall, with the advice and consent of the Board of Trustees, designate one of the members of the Arlington Economic Alliance to be chair. No person shall serve as chair more than three consecutive years, unless the Village President determines that continued service as chair is in the best interests of the Village.

In addition to the staff members serving as liaison, membership of the Arlington Economic Alliance shall consist of individuals representing the following organizations or types of business. Each organization or type of business shall have one representative on the Arlington Economic Alliance. For any of the categories of members, if a classification cannot be filled from the designated category, the appointee may be from any business within the community.

Organization or Type of Business

Automobile Dealer

Business Representative

Chamber of Commerce

Convention & Visitors Bureau

Downtown Business Owner

Financial Institution

Hospitality Industry

Industrialist

Real Estate, Developer or Property Manager – Commercial

Real Estate, Developer or Property Manager – Residential

Restaurateur

Retailer

Top Twenty Employer

- d. Compensation. Members of the Arlington Economic Alliance shall serve without compensation. Authorized travel expenses shall be reimbursed in accordance with Village Travel Regulations.
- e. Powers, Duties and Responsibilities. The Arlington Economic Alliance shall have such powers, duties and responsibilities as are assigned by the Village President and Board of Trustees, to include those enumerated below:
 - 1. The Arlington Economic Alliance shall prepare, adopt and maintain such rules and regulations as are necessary to conduct the business of the Arlington Economic Alliance.
 - 2. The Arlington Economic Alliance shall promote economic development by activities including, but not limited to, the following:
 - a) Advising the Village on the development and implementation of business retention/expansion programs;
 - b) Advising the Village on the implementation of a marketing program to attract new business and industry;
 - c) Monitoring business activity and trends on the local, state, and national levels;
 - d) Establishing a focal point for businesses to approach and discuss issues that affect them;
 - e) Engage representatives from the following communitywide entities at Arlington Economic Alliance meetings as appropriate: Arlington Heights Memorial Library, Arlington Heights Park District, Township High School District 214, the Special Events Commission, and other entities as appropriate.
 - f) Researching and advising the Board of Trustees, Village Manager and boards and commissions on matters relating to economic development.
 - g) Annually, not later than the beginning of the fiscal year, submit to the Village Board for approval, a statement of its goals and objectives and procedures for accomplishing them.
- f. Meetings, Quorum, Voting. Regular meetings of the Arlington Economic Alliance shall be scheduled on a quarterly basis at a date and time to be determined by the Arlington Economic Alliance and announced in the Village calendar and other appropriate media. Special meetings may be called by the Village President, the Board of Trustees, the Chair of the Arlington Economic Alliance or a quorum of the Arlington Economic Alliance.

Seven members shall constitute a quorum. The Chair shall vote with other members of the Arlington Economic Alliance.

- g. Records and Reports. The Arlington Economic Alliance shall keep written records of its proceedings, which records shall be open at all times to public inspection. An annual report shall be made to the Board of Trustees, to include matters before the Arlington Economic Alliance and their status.