



Village of Arlington Heights
Arlington Economic Alliance
Community Room, 3rd Floor
Arlington Heights Village Hall, 33 S. Arlington Heights Rd.
January 10, 2024
7:30 AM

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. ROLL CALL

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- A. Economic Alliance Meeting Minutes (11-15-23) DRAFT

IV. REPORTS

- A. Development Update

V. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Economic Alliance Work Plan – 2024

VI. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Sounds of Summer Concert Series

VII. OTHER BUSINESS

VIII. 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
1/10/2024

Item: Minutes 11/15/2023

Department: Planning & Community Development

ATTACHMENTS:

Description	Type
Economic Alliance Meeting Minutes (11-15-23) DRAFT	Minutes

DRAFT

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ARLINGTON ECONOMIC ALLIANCE HELD ON NOVEMBER 15, 2023 AT 7:30 A.M. AT THE VILLAGE HALL

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Andrew Stengren – Chairman
Rich Casey
Tony Guido
Terry Iverson
Heather Larson
Michele Petrie
Brian Roginski

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Tonia Etoh
Kerri Oots
Ellen Para
Jon Ridler
Andi Ruhl
John Toliopoulos

STAFF PRESENT:

Michael Mertes – Business Development Manager

ALSO PRESENT:

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

Call to Order

Chair Andrew Stengren called the meeting to order at 7:33 AM.

Approval of Minutes – October 18, 2023

The meeting minutes of October 18, 2023 Arlington Economic Alliance meeting were reviewed.

MICHELE PETRIE MOVED AND HEATHER LARSON SECONDED A MOTION TO APPROVE THE DRAFT OCTOBER 18, 2023 ARLINGTON ECONOMIC ALLIANCE MEETING MINUTES. ALL ALLIANCE MEMBERS VOTED IN FAVOR OF THE MOTION.

Development Update

The proposed development at 116-120 W. Eastman Street was reviewed by the Village Board who voted for a continuation. The Board asked Village staff and the developer for revisions to the project. Phase I of the Arlington Gateway proposal at the southeast corner of Algonquin Road and Arlington Heights Road was received favorably by the Design Commission. The next step in the process is a public hearing before the Plan Commission. An update to the architecture of the proposed Arlington 425 project went to the Design Commission, but the changes were opposed by the Commission. The proposal was continued for a re-review.

Golf VX is a 12,000 SF golf simulator business proposed at the Southpoint shopping center. Their Special Use request was recommended for approval by the Plan Commission. The business will next go to Village Board for final approval. The Zero Interest Loan committee has approved two loan requests in the past few weeks. Village Staff has also received other applications for loans, which are currently under review. Chairman Stengren suggested promoting the businesses that have received interest-free loans as a way to further interest in the program. Agreeing, Ms. Petrie sees it as an opportunity to showcase the Village as business-friendly. Mr. Iverson concurred and suggested getting testimonials from the program recipients.

Ms. Petrie inquired about the status of International Plaza. Mr. Mertes shared that staff continues to work with the developer in hopes to bring plans to the Plan Commission. A demolition permit has been issued for the site.

DRAFT

Promotion of Manufacturing

The manufacturing education and advocacy program was held on November 1 at the Library Makerplace. Staff has reached out to its local industrial contacts about the program. Mr. Iverson presented, as did representatives of the High School District 214 Apprenticeship program. Representatives from IMEC (Illinois Manufacturing Excellence Center) also promoted a grant program for Cook County manufacturers. Informal feedback from the program was positive and IMEC has communicated with multiple prospective grant applicants who were in attendance.

Mr. Guido attended the event noted that many of the business owners in attendance did not previously know about the apprenticeship program. Mr. Iverson felt that several of the attendees also seemed to be interested in what the Makerplace offers, having not known about the facility prior, and he would like to see continued momentum garnered from the program. Ms. Petrie suggested sharing success stories from time-to-time, and that these testimonials can also serve as additional promotion for the various programs offered. Also, Mr. Iverson suggested that future Village interns can help promote the community's various industries via social media. Adding to that, Chairman Stengren can also reach out directly to businesses as well.

Ms. Larson inquired about the Village's business e-newsletters. Mr. Mertes explained that they go out approximately every six weeks to over 1,000 business-related contacts. The list continues to grow as new businesses open in Arlington Heights. Chairman Stengren felt that the manufacturing event was successful in reaching its target audience and could be a blueprint for future similar programming. Mr. Iverson added that the Makerplace is a good venue to hold such programming for various industries, helping draw more awareness to the makerspace. He added that such events are an opportunity to promote the Village's various industries as well.

The Village co-hosted a Small Business Resources Open House with the Arlington Heights Municipal Library on October 25 at Village Hall. An estimated 50 people came to the event. Several of the participating organizations, and many of the attendees, said that they found it valuable. The participating organizations were the Village government, Library, Chamber of Commerce, Meet Chicago Northwest, Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at Harper College, SCORE, Arlington Heights Park District, and School District 214. Attendees came from various industries, although several were home-based operations considering investment in a brick-and-mortar location.

Economic Alliance Work Plan – 2024

Mr. Mertes explained that past Alliance meetings have discussed small business programs and “thank you” notes to business owners, as potential work efforts in 2024. Ms. Larson inquired about welcome letters, and Mr. Mertes explained that newly approved business license recipients are sent a welcome packet with information regarding local business resources, as well as general demographic and development information. Ms. Larson considered the value of profiling new businesses, in order to introduce them to the community. In response, Mr. Mertes described a webpage that Village staff is working on to promote business diversity throughout Arlington Heights, which would house short profiles.

Ms. Petrie wondered if a mixer to allow new businesses to introduce themselves to the community and network with each other might be useful. These could be held every few months. Chairman Stengren liked the aforementioned ideas and added that social media can help expand the reach of these efforts. Based upon previous Village promotional efforts, Mr. Casey inquired if staff still has business profiles on file that could be updated. Mr. Mertes verified this.

Summarizing feedback from the Commission, Mr. Mertes said that the Alliance would like to see a business promotion effort in 2024 as a way to help retain existing businesses. Adding to this, Mr. Guido feels that residents and visitors are eager to learn about new businesses in the community. Mr. Casey emphasized the importance of highlighting the small businesses, as the larger enterprises should already have extensive marketing support behind them. Ms. Larson would like to be a part of planning business retention efforts for 2024 and will work with Village staff to bring a draft plan to the Alliance. Mr. Iverson would like to see more programs like the manufacturing event and encourages the Commissioners to lead the programs focused on their specific industries. Mr. Mertes invited the Alliance members to contact him if they would like to work on a program for 2024.

DRAFT

Other Business and Public Comment

Mr. Mertes introduced the new Village logo and new marketing logo/tagline approved by Village Board. The new Village logo replaces "horse head" logo, identifies year of incorporation, and updates from "City" to "Village" in the surrounding ribbon. Implementation will begin in March on official Village transmissions, such as letterhead and other official documentation. The new marketing logo and tagline, "Take It to The Heights!" replaces the "Discover Arlington" logo and tagline. It will begin to be used as part of the Village's holiday marketing campaign.

Mr. Moens, resident, suggested that the Economic Alliance support creation of a "Buy Local" program to incentivize demand to support local businesses, such as a coupon program.

Adjournment

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:16 AM.

Andrew Stengren, Chair
Arlington Economic Alliance

Prepared by Department of Planning & Community Development



Arlington Economic Alliance
1/10/2024

Item: Economic Alliance Work Plan – 2024

Department: Planning & Community Development

ATTACHMENTS:

Description	Type
Economic Alliance Work Plan – 2024	Report

Arlington Economic Alliance

2024 Work Plan – January 2024

Overview

Over the course of 2023, the Arlington Economic Alliance has discussed and implemented ways to assist existing businesses in Arlington Heights. There were two key outcomes from these meetings. Firstly, the Alliance recommended modifications to the Village's interest-free loan program for small businesses, which was approved by the Village Board in June. Interest in the incentive has grown noticeably since the modifications. Secondly, the Alliance supported a breakfast program aimed at assisting local manufacturers. This was held in early November, with approximately 35 people in attendance.

Looking toward 2024, the Economic Alliance would like to focus on business retention and has outlined three key initiatives to help support existing businesses in Arlington Heights.

➤ Small Business Seminars

The Arlington Economic Alliance would like to plan and execute a series of educational programs bringing our businesses together for networking and learning. Each session would focus on specific segments of the economy and illustrate the interconnectedness of our business community. A networking opportunity for new Arlington Heights businesses to connect is also being considered as part of one of these seminars, or as a separate program.

➤ Small Business Profiles

The Economic Alliance would like to profile small businesses in the community as a way to re-introduce the businesses, and their owners, to Arlington Heights residents and visitors. Village staff is currently working on a webpage that would promote diversity within the Village's business community. The goal of the page is to highlight the participating businesses on an interactive map.

The Commissioners could assist in outreach business owners, in order to provide content for staff to publish on the webpage. Establishment of such a page, coupled with promoting it via social media, will serve as a retention program that would offer free marketing to these businesses. Once this site is established with consistent content, the Alliance can explore potential programs to incentivize demand to local small businesses.

➤ Notes of Appreciation to Businesses

The Economic Alliance feels that directly acknowledging our individual businesses, and what they contribute to the community, is a way to help owners feel appreciated. A simple note card expressing gratitude for their investment in Arlington Heights would be a channel to accomplishing this, and can also educate the business community about the Alliance and its purpose in advocating for them.

The initial target audience would be businesses that are celebrating five-year and ten-year anniversaries of being located in Arlington Heights. The list of recipients would be provided by Village Staff based upon approved business licenses from 2014 and 2019.

Summary

The Arlington Economic Alliance is eager to continue supporting the small business community, and is willing to work with Village staff to accomplish these projects. In the interim, the Alliance is also willing to provide advisement and recommendations to the Village Board at their request, and discuss economic development matters as needed.



Arlington Economic Alliance
1/10/2024

Item: Sounds of Summer Concert Series

Department: Planning & Community Development

ATTACHMENTS:

Description	Type
Sounds of Summer Concert Series	Memorandum



MEMORANDUM

DATE: 1/10/2024
TO: Economic Alliance Commission
FROM: Avis Meade, Communications & Outreach Coordinator
SUBJECT: Sounds of Summer Options for 2024

History of the Village of Arlington Heights' Sounds of Summer Concerts

According to the Village Board Minutes from July 16, 2001, the first Sounds of Summer concert took place on Friday, July 13, 2001. The minutes stated, "Trustee Daday said that the Village, in conjunction with several business district merchants, embarked on a summer concert series last Friday night called the Sounds of Summer. It will run every Friday night in the little parkette next to Regina's."

Since this time, Sounds of Summer has been managed and funded by the Village of Arlington Heights. By 2003, the event had grown to Thursdays and Fridays, in June, July, and August, with Thursdays featuring an "unplugged" event and a band on Fridays. Over the years the event continued to evolve and recent years have included bands on Thursday & Friday evenings, with music from 7 – 8:30 p.m., beginning mid-June and running through July.

Success of Arlington Alfresco and Popularity of Sounds of Summer

The COVID-19 pandemic caused Sounds of Summer to go on a temporary hiatus during 2020. During this time, Arlington Heights staff worked together to create Arlington Alfresco to help boost local businesses by providing expanded outdoor eating and shopping opportunities. Alfresco gained regional popularity and downtown Arlington Heights was attracting even more guests and visitors than before the pandemic.

When Sounds of Summer returned in June 2021, it began to attract a record number of guests. Arlington Heights Police conducted an aerial visitor count at Sounds of Summer on Friday, July 7, 2023, showing approximately 1,700 people within Harmony Park, not including individuals dining at local restaurants, which was also full of patrons. Staff has identified that the majority of concerns occur on Friday nights, when the crowds from Sounds of Summer combine with the crowds of Arlington Alfresco. The Sounds of Summer zone, including Harmony Park and the streets adjacent to the park which are commonly used by event goers, averaged 1,700 guests on Thursday concert nights and 2,125 guests on Friday concert nights, through the 2023 season (placer.ai).

Some issues that have been noted in regards to Sounds of Summer taking place on Thursday & Friday nights include but are not limited to:

- Increased public safety concerns regarding large crowds on Friday nights
- Accessibility for all guests maintained
- Parking issues in Vail Street Garage
- Conflicts with local businesses hosting Friday events
- Assigning staff to the event to address growing needs
- Sounds of Summer visitors seeking bathrooms in local businesses
- Seating congestion in Harmony Park
- Overuse of grass at Harmony Park
- Stage unattended overnight from Thursday to Friday

2024 Sounds of Summer Options

Staff has assessed potential Sounds of Summer structure options for 2024 below. Options include (1) changing Sounds of Summer to Thursdays only and extend the lineup through August, (2) consider Wednesday nights as a concern night, and (3) to maintain status quo.

1. Concerts on Thursdays only, June through August. This option would:

- Alleviate back-to-back Thursday & Friday event staffing
- Allows restaurants to book their own entertainment or events on Fridays without conflicts
- Help to alleviate parking issues for an already busy Friday night at Arlington Alfresco
- Draw crowds to downtown Arlington Heights on Thursday nights through August
- Maintain 12 concerts in the lineup
- Allow Arlington Alfresco's Friday night success to continue.
 - Crowds were strong on Fridays, May 1st – June 10th (without Sounds of Summer), attracting 2,250 on Thursdays and 4,400 guests on Fridays in the Alfresco zone. Additionally, Saturdays averaged 4,560 guests, from mid-June through July, during the Sounds of Summer season but not during a concert night. Therefore, Arlington Alfresco is expected to continue to draw guests on Fridays, even without Sounds of Summer concerts.

This option has been positively received by Village event staff in all departments, as well as residents during a downtown resident zoom call, and local businesses at two separate Downtown Business Association Meetings.

Associated \$3,000 Cost Increase over 2 Years

The stage is currently loaded into Harmony Park on Thursdays and is removed on Fridays. Therefore, we are charged one load-in/load-out cost each week, for 12 concerts over 6 weeks. If we switched to one concert per week, over 12 weeks, then 6 additional load-in/load-out fees would be required.

The Village contracted the stage company through an RFP process for the 2023 season with the option to renew for up to 3 years. The stage company's 2023 cost was \$36,000, with baseline increases to \$39,000 in 2024, and \$42,000 in 2025, due to anticipated industry cost increases.

If we decide to switch to one concert per week, over 12 weeks, the stage company will increase our 2024 cost to \$42,000 to cover the additional load in/load out fees, but has stated they will **not** increase our 2025 cost above \$42,000.

2. Concerts on Wednesdays & Thursdays.

This option would:

- Allow restaurants and venues to book their own Friday entertainment or events
- Draw more people to downtown Arlington Heights on Wednesdays
- Help alleviate crowd issues for Friday nights at Arlington Alfresco

This option would **not**:

- Draw visitors to downtown Arlington Heights through August
- Alleviate the back-to-back nights of event staffing, or the resulting impact on Harmony Park grass
- Avoid the Park District's Wednesday night summer concerts, which occur monthly at North School Park, will be a focus of expansion for the Park District in 2024

This option could also upset residents, as Thursdays would remain busy with Sounds of Summer, and Fridays would continue to draw a large Alfresco crowd. Adding an additional event night concert would produce more outdoor noise during week night.

3. Maintain Status Quo: Concerts on Thursday & Friday

- This option provides stability for staff and the stage provider
- Remaining status quo does not address the increasing Friday night crowd size that a combination of Arlington Alfresco and Sounds of Summer has created

Staff Recommendation

After receiving positive feedback from department staff, businesses, and residents, staff recommends scenario 1, which would provide Thursday night concerts at Harmony Park, during June, July & August. This lineup would include 12 concerts on June 6, 13, 20, 27; July 11, 18, 25; and August 1, 8, 15, and 22.

Staff requests that the Economic Alliance Commission provide feedback on 2024 Sounds of Summer lineup options. This feedback will be shared with the Village Board, which will assess all options and will provide the final decision on the 2024 Sounds of Summer lineup schedule.