

# APPROVED

## MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ARLINGTON ECONOMIC ALLIANCE HELD ON MARCH 19 AT 7:30 A.M. AT THE VILLAGE HALL

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### MEMBERS PRESENT:

Andrew Stengren – Chairman  
Tonia Etoh  
Terry Iverson  
Heather Larson  
Michael Mulder  
Kerri Oots  
Marc Poulos  
Brian Roginski

### MEMBERS ABSENT:

Tony Guido  
Ellen Para  
John Toliopoulos  
Andi Ruhl

### STAFF PRESENT:

Michael Mertes – Business Development Manager

### ALSO PRESENT:

Keith Moens, Resident  
Patrick Mogge, High School District 214  
Dr. Scott Rowe, High School District 214

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### Call to Order

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

### Approval of Minutes – January 15, 2025

The meeting minutes of January 15, 2025 Arlington Economic Alliance meeting were reviewed.

**MICHAEL MULDER MOVED AND MARC POULOS SECONDED A MOTION TO APPROVE THE DRAFT JANUARY 15, 2025 ARLINGTON ECONOMIC ALLIANCE MEETING MINUTES. ALL ALLIANCE MEMBERS VOTED IN FAVOR OF THE MOTION.**

### Development Update

Urban Air, a children’s entertainment center, was approved for a Special Use at Arlington Plaza. A \$25,000 small business zero interest loan was approved for Bitter & Sweet Cocktail Boutique to assist with their build-out and shelving. The Village Board approved a resolution in March authorizing commencement of engineering and traffic studies at Arlington Park. Additionally, Ellen Para will not be renewing her term on the Alliance when it expires in April. The Commission thanked her for her service.

### Economic Alliance Work Plan – 2025

The approved 2025 Economic Alliance work plan was submitted to the Village Manager following the Commission’s meeting in January. The “State of the Village” Alliance Breakfast program, with Mayor Hayes as keynote speaker, was held at the Metropolis Ballroom on March 13<sup>th</sup>. Approximately 80 people attended. Discussion of ideas for another Alliance-sponsored program is planned for the next regularly-scheduled Commission meeting. Mr. Mertes also plans to bring notecards to sign “Notes of Appreciation” at a future meeting.

Ms. Larson complimented the breakfast program and suggested a similar program once the new mayor has taken office, following the April election. Chair Stengren thanked the Commissioners who were in attendance, and acknowledged the Mayor’s service to the Village and support of local businesses. He would like to see the Alliance build on this particular event and do it on an annual basis. Mr. Mulder suggested “Vision of the Village” as a potential theme moving forward.

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## **High School District 214 Update**

Mr. Mertes introduced Dr. Scott Rowe, Superintendent of High School District 214, and Patrick Mogge, the District's Director of Community Outreach and Engagement. Dr. Rowe discussed implementation of the school district's strategic plan, it's first since 1987, that will be presented to the School Board in a few months for approval. Dr. Rowe provided an overview of District 214, including its facilities, staff, and student body. He also summarized programs that each of the six high schools puts on annually. Additionally, Dr. Rowe provided the Alliance with an outline of the goals of the strategic plan.

Chair Stengren is impressed with the school district's well-rounded focus and inquired about planned improvements to buildings. Dr. Rowe referenced the *Facilities Maintenance Plan* that identifies where these properties are in terms of their life cycle, and prioritizes which sites have the most immediate needs. Many of the improvements are limited to the summer months, when students are not in session. Mr. Iverson praised the school district regarding their footprint in terms of promoting the manufacturing sector, and is an advocate for their efforts.

Chair Stengren asked how the business community can further partner with the School District, and provide work experience opportunities to their students. Dr. Rowe's recommendation is to continue supporting economic development efforts. Many people move to the area for the schools, and the school district can custom-build a program for businesses looking to work with local students. Mr. Mogge also referenced District 214's apprenticeship program and asked how D214 can broaden and grow its outreach to the business community.

Mr. Mulder identified the value of STEM programming. He sees value in expanding STEM learning opportunities across the entire community while looking for ways to tie in other local resources such as the Library's Makerplace. Ms. Larson mentioned District 214's hospitality program, and offered to discuss career opportunities with students participating in that program.

## **Village Board Strategic Priorities**

The Village Manager has requested feedback from advisory commissions for the Village Board's upcoming biennial strategic planning meeting. This would involve issues that the Commission feels are important, and that the Board should consider as part of the strategic planning process. For reference, Mr. Mertes provided the letter sent from the Alliance to the Mayor and Trustees in 2023, and asked that the Commission meet in April to approve an updated letter based upon the discussion from this meeting.

Ms. Larson asked how real estate brokers are made aware of significant development sites in Arlington Heights. Mr. Mertes said that information is shared via CoStar data, direct discussions with brokers, and meetings at trade shows. Mr. Iverson suggested an event that brings in real estate representatives to learn about site opportunities in the Village. Mr. Poulos asked about business attraction efforts, and Mr. Mertes said that this is done by staff and often targets specific sites or areas in the Village, such as the Northwest Gateway Center for industrial development. Mr. Iverson asked if a business incubator has been contemplated, and referenced such a use in another community, on a property that was owned by the municipality. An incubator could support start-up businesses, such as manufacturers. The Library's Makerplace could be a synergistic use, and be greater utilized by the incubator's tenants.

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Chair Stengren asked if the Alliance could partner with other municipalities that are also within High School District 214's boundaries. The business communities could collaborate and set goals to fundraise for improvements to the schools' facilities. In short, how can the communities partner together, and how can the respective business communities support that endeavor? Ms. Larson suggested that the District 214 Education Foundation could be such a channel for that effort. Mr. Mulder sees this as a potential win-win by encouraging working with local contractors. Supporting local businesses will generate greater buy-in from the community. Ms. Larson also added encouraging development of the Arlington Park property as another priority for the Village Board to consider as part of the strategic planning process.

### **Other Business**

The Village is conducting a survey, and feedback will inform how the Village budgets its federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) allocations over the next several years. Mr. Mertes asked the Alliance members to consider taking the survey and forwarding it along to their local contacts.

### **Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

### **Adjournment**

**HEATHER LARSON MOVED AND KERRI OOTS SECONDED A MOTION TO ADJOURN.  
ALL ALLIANCE MEMBERS VOTED IN FAVOR OF THE MOTION.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:57 AM.

Andrew Stengren, Chair  
Arlington Economic Alliance

*Prepared by Department of Planning & Community Development*