

BUSINESS COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Monday, March 23, 2015
7:00 P.M.

The Winnetka Business Community Development Commission will convene its regular meeting on **Monday, March 23, 2015** in the Village Council Chambers, 510 Green Bay, Winnetka, Illinois, at 7:00 PM.

Agenda

1. Adoption of February 23, 2015 Meeting Minutes
2. Presentation on Community Survey
3. Discussion of BCDC Activities in 2015
4. Staff Update on Economic Development Activities
5. Staff Update on Community Development Activities
6. Public Comment
7. Adjournment

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BUSINESS COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
FEBRUARY 23, 2015 MEETING MINUTES

Members Present:

Jon Talty
Paul Dunn
Terry Dason
Marilyn Prodromos
Jim Sayegh
Tom Eilers

Members Absent:

Katie Cory
Patrick O'Neil

Village Staff:

Michael D'Onofrio, Director Community Development
LoriAnne Weaver, Admin. Asst. Community Development
Denise Dahl, Economic Development Coordinator

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:25 pm, in Village Hall Council Chambers, 510 Green Bay Road, Winnetka, IL.

Discussion of BCDC Activities in 2015

Chair Talty asked the Board's for their thoughts on what activities the BCDC should address in 2015. He asked for thoughts on building height.

Terry Dason mentioned the need for synergy in Village where signage is concerned. She mentioned that the local businesses are concerned about signage and want things that make them stand out.

Chair Talty showed pictures of towns he thought addressed signage well.

Tom Eilers stated that, as a former trustee, it is not what we want Winnetka to be; it's what can Winnetka be. He said it starts with parking; have to know where to park the cars.

Paul Dunn asked what the limitations on signage are.

Michael D'Onofrio explained the Design Guidelines specifies a set of standards, sign request go to the Design Review Board for review and approval.

Chair Talty asked that the Design Guidelines be distributed to the BCDC.

Jim Sayegh noted that the DRB is big on precedence.

Chair Talty returned to the parking question stating that signage should be installed directing drivers to free parking.

Ms. Dason said it depends on where you are; there is frustration in East Elm with the perception that realtors take up all the parking.

Mr. Dunn stated that he was tired of the non-action where signage and wayfinding is concerned.

Mr. D'Onofrio explained that there is money (more than \$50,000) in the current budget for a pilot program for signage and that the Village is working with a sign company to develop signs that work well with the streetscaping. The signage will be reviewed by staff and then sent to the Village Council for approval.

Mr. Sayegh added that the parking problem is a misperception; parking studies have been done in connection with special use permits that show scientifically that there is not a parking problem.

Denise Dahl asked if it is more of a walking problem than a parking problem.

Tom Eilers mentioned that people will accept walking at the mall but not locally.

Staff Update on Economic Development Activities

Denise Dahl gave an update on economic developments – the website is up, the newsletter, *E-Developments*, has gone out. She talked about the first Quarterly Business meeting, “The Exchange” held at the Winnetka Community House which featured Melissa Lagowski, the head of the marketing firm Big Buzz Idea Group. The topic was marketing and how to generate buzz with minimum time and resources. It was attended by 20 people. Refreshments were provided by Peet’s Coffee & Tea and Café Fleurette.

Ms. Dahl stated she is trying to meet with 2-3 businesses per week. Also, she is trying to address the problem of undesirable vacant storefronts. She is actively recruiting businesses to locate in Winnetka, especially ones looking for a second location and ones that can sustain long-term.

Ms. Dahl mentioned that Winnetka might be able to host a “TEDx”, an independently organized local event with a range of different inspirational speakers. She is hoping to target a speaker who is local with national appeal. Tickets can be sold to raise no more than \$10,000 which is to be used for something in the community.

Mr. Sayegh noted that the “TED TALKS” are super prestigious.

Staff Update on Community Development Activities

Mr. D'Onofrio stated that the Village Council adopted the new building heights and parking regulations at their February 17, 2015 meeting. These new heights are 4 stories/45' and 3 stories/35' if adjoining a single family area. Previously, it was 2 ½ stories/35'. The Village

Council, also, approved changes in the number of parking spaces required per dwelling unit, approved changes in the GFA (no longer includes common areas, mechanical rooms, etc.). The Village Council is considering changes to the overlay district.

Mr. Dunn stated that these changes bubbled up from work that was done by the BCDC; he applauded staff for seeing it thru to ordinance changes. He said it sends an important message to the business community that they are going to see change and progress.

Mr. Sayegh noted that it is important for the BCDC to see the changes in the special use process thru and to advocate for the businesses. He stated that there are 11 criteria that must be addressed in a special use permit; why make the business go thru the entire process if they are just going to get approved anyway.

Chair Talty asked why there is opposition to the changes.

Mr. D'Onofrio explained that a very vocal group of people were opposed to the changes in the building heights and the parking as they felt it would change the feel of the community. He said the opponents felt that the proposed changes were "kept under the radar"; when in actuality, the proposed changes had been discussed at 21 meetings.

Ms. Dahl added that the opponents to the changes want to maintain the character of the village; they want to maintain the traditional appeal of Winnetka.

Chair Talty added that main street needs to be mixed bag of businesses to continue, can't be all the same.

Tom Eilers asked that previous committees' ideas not be disparaged; that there were reasons that things were done the way there were done. He stated that the attitude was not helpful.

Ms. Dason added that the vocal minority keeps stopping the changes from happening.

Mr. D'Onofrio continued with the update on properties. The owners of the Gap Building (925 Green Bay Road) applied for a demolition permit 929-931 Green Bay Road (Body & Sole and former Bedside Manor). He added that there are negotiations for a party to move into 925 Green Bay Road.

Mr. D'Onofrio stated that the proposed development for the former Fell property has been submitted. It is ONE WINNETKA. Village Council will see it first. Conney's Pharmacy is not part of the project. The former Baird & Warner office is now included.

Mr. D'Onofrio added that an RFP (request for proposal) has been issued for a downtown master plan.

Mr. D'Onofrio listed the following business openings/closings:

- Opening– Blo Out Bar – 895 ½ Green Bay Road
- Opening – Good Grapes – 821 Chestnut Court

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- Open – Greener Cleaner – 1065 Gage
- Closed –Baby Take A Bow – 805 Elm
- Closed – Orange Leaf Yogurt – 950 Green Bay Road

Marilyn Prodromos commented that the older residents of Winnetka would like to stay in the community and have input; the BCDC should look at their needs.

Mr. Sayegh commented that people ages 65-85 contribute to the tax base and want to live in active communities.

Mr. Dunn inquired about the specific sites addressed in the RFP for the downtown master plan.

Mr. D’Onofrio replied that there are 4 sites, including the Post Office site, in the RFP.

Public Comment

None

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 pm.