

**Winnetka Village Council**  
**STUDY SESSION**  
**Village Hall**  
510 Green Bay Road  
February 11, 2020  
7:00 PM

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**AGENDA**

- 1) Call to Order
- 2) Public Comment
- 3) Celebrate Winnetka Marketing Platform .....2
- 4) Closed Session
- 5) Adjournment

**NOTICE**

All agenda materials are available at [villageofwinnetka.org](http://villageofwinnetka.org) (Government > Council Information > Agenda Packets & Minutes); the Reference Desk at the Winnetka Library; or in the Manager’s Office at Village Hall (2<sup>nd</sup> floor). Webcasts of the meeting may be viewed on the Internet via a link on the Village’s web site: <http://www.villageofwinnetka.org/government/village-videos/>.

The Village of Winnetka, in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, requests that all persons with disabilities who require certain accommodations to allow them to observe and/or participate in this meeting or have questions about the accessibility of the meeting or facilities, contact the Village ADA Coordinator at 510 Green Bay Road, Winnetka, Illinois 60093, 847-716-3546; T.D.D. 847-501-6041.



## Agenda Item Executive Summary

**Title:** Celebrate Winnetka Marketing Platform

**Presenter:** Liz Dechant, Economic Development Coordinator

**Agenda Date:** 02/11/2020

**Consent:**  YES  NO

- |                                     |                         |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | Ordinance               |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | Resolution              |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | Bid Authorization/Award |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | Policy Direction        |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Informational Only      |

### Item History:

None

### Executive Summary:

The Celebrate Winnetka Platform is a powerful and unique Village-wide marketing platform with many useful business marketing and communication functions. The Platform will be provided by the Village of Winnetka to continue our efforts to support local businesses, promote all commercial districts, and advance our economic development strategies within the Village. It also supports Winnetka's Economic Development objectives as set out in the 2016 Downtown Master Plan.

The Celebrate Winnetka Platform was developed and is managed by Chamber Nation, a 10 year-old database and membership management software company that hosts websites for 100+ Chambers of Commerce across the United States.

Economic Development Coordinator Liz DeChant will provide more information regarding the Platform's website and its related tools, such as the business directory, shared community calendar, texting system and advisory committee.

### Recommendation:

This matter is presented as information only; no action is requested.

### Attachments:

Memorandum from Liz Dechant, Economic Development Coordinator and Josie Clark, Communications Manager.

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**VILLAGE OF WINNETKA**  
**M E M O R A N D U M**

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**TO:** Rob Bahan, Village Manager

**CC:** John Kalmar, Interim Assistant Village Manager

**FROM:** Liz Dechant, Economic Development Coordinator  
Josie Clark, Communications Manager

**DATE:** February 7, 2020

**RE:** Celebrate Winnetka Marketing Platform – Review of Functionality and Operations

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

The Celebrate Winnetka Marketing Platform has many useful business marketing and communication functions that the Village of Winnetka can utilize to support local businesses, promote its commercial districts, and advance its economic development strategies.

**I. Functionality:** The Platform is a feature-rich website that includes:

- business directory,
- product and service catalogue,
- individual business landing pages,
- community calendar,
- communications platform for e-newsletters and marketing materials,
- marketing and branding tools,
- mobile web app, and
- promotional text messaging service, all of which are viewable from desktop and mobile devices.

**II. Structure & Strategy:** Winnetka will become one of the few North Shore communities to exclusively dedicate a website to market and promote itself and every local business. The Village will engage local business owners and the Winnetka-Northfield Chamber of Commerce to participate on a Village-led Steering Committee that will offer guidance to help shape the goals of Celebrate Winnetka while working within the parameters of the Platform.

**III. Expenses and Staff Time:** Fees are established by website host/manager Chamber Nation at a per-business rate. Expenses for Year One includes an approximate \$4,800 one-time set up fee plus monthly maintenance fees.

- The estimated total cost to operate the website that features Winnetka’s approximately 225 businesses is \$9,800 in Year One (assuming full participation, one-time set up and monthly maintenance), and \$5,300 for all subsequent years.
- Staff time will take approximately 30-40 hours to develop the Celebrate Winnetka website platform.
- Ongoing maintenance tasks will take an approximate average of 6 hours per week.

## I. PLATFORM FUNCTIONALITY

- The Celebrate Winnetka Marketing Platform includes a business directory, product and service catalogue, and event calendar, which is accessible on desktop and mobile devices. It is managed by Chamber Nation, a 10-year-old database and membership management software company that hosts websites for 100+ Chambers of Commerce across the United States.
- The website interface provides the Village with updated merchant contact information.
- Highlights of the Platform include:
  - Business directory
    - The directory will contain contact information, images and links to a landing page and the businesses’ own website. Directory search sorts by product and services, or alphabetically.
    - End users (residents/shoppers) can request information from merchants through direct links in the business directory and landing pages. Merchants can follow up on these messages directly.
  - Individual business landing pages on website
    - Chamber Nation staff will build out individual landing pages on the website for each business with content and images gathered by Chamber Nation. Merchants can review, update and approve their landing page.
    - The website creates a platform for redeemable promotional offers (“golden ticket”) that links to the business’s website via the directory and home page.
  - Community calendar
    - A synchronized calendar will be linked to the Village’s new website. Calendar search sorts by events or category.
    - Merchant-submitted information and calendar information can also be fed into the Village’s website by Chamber Nation or Village staff to ensure seamless information sharing.
  - Communications platform
    - The platform’s functionality includes newsletter publishing capability and marketing support. The Village can send targeted communications to merchants within the Chamber Nation interface. If functionality allows, E-Developments can be distributed within this mechanism.

- Marketing and branding tools
  - Marketing templates and forms are available for the Village to use. Chamber Nation staff offer design assistance to Village staff to produce marketing materials.
- Robust data gathering and reporting
  - Monthly reports on the website's Return On Investment (ROI), click-through and open rates are produced by Chamber Nation staff. Merchants can view metrics, including increased engagements with end users, in the reporting tool.
  - The Village will have access to overall reporting, and be able to articulate value to merchants in a concise and straightforward manner.
- Promotional text messaging service
  - The text messaging service is designed as a mobile rewards card that subscribers opt into on their mobile devices. SMS text messages will be sent to subscribers from the Chamber Nation platform 1-2 times per month and share a link to a landing page on the Celebrate Winnetka website platform with offers from Winnetka businesses.
  - Businesses will submit content to the website platform. The Village will review and approve all content, and determines when texts will be sent. Chamber Nation staff designs and updates the landing page.
  - The text messaging service collects mobile numbers of subscribers which the Village can use to build its database for future outreach.
  - Merchants can purchase an additional texting interface from Chamber Nation for \$10/month to communicate with its subset of subscribers, manage their own database, and coordinate mobile coupons and loyalty program for their own business.

## **II. PLATFORM STRUCTURE & STRATEGY**

- The platform will be used to launch a marketing/branding campaign for the Winnetka business community.
- The Platform supports Winnetka's Economic Development objectives as stated in Winnetka's 2016 Downtown Master Plan including:
  - business retention
  - targeted business attraction
  - community and district marketing
  - coordinated retail and community events
  - ongoing public engagement
- The Winnetka-Northfield Chamber of Commerce supports this Platform. They have participated at the ground floor of the initial planning process and will play a role as a member of the Steering Committee.

- Identify nine (9) total steering committee members representing each of Winnetka’s four (4) business districts, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Village who’s representative will serve as Chair (as set forth below).
  - Village representative – Chair
  - Indian Hill – 1 member
  - East Elm – 2 members
  - West Elm – 2 members
  - Hubbard Woods – 2 members
  - Chamber of Commerce – 1 member
- Village staff will perform administrative duties to support the Committee. The committee should develop group goals, strategies, and work within the Platform’s available functions.
- Few North Shore municipalities host websites for the purpose of marketing and promoting their businesses and communities. Most rely on information found on their Community Development or Economic Development Department’s webpages or the local Chamber of Commerce website.
- However, other North Shore communities engage in a wide-variety of economic development activities such as:
  - Marketing/branding businesses: i.e. Create Master Marketing Plan, educate businesses and supply them with material/knowledge to brand their business (Wilmette, Lake Bluff)
  - Events-based marketing: i.e. Begin a 501(c)3 organization to host 12+ community-wide events that draw thousands of visitors a year (Highwood)
  - Texting & Loyalty Program: i.e. Partner with Chambers of Commerce to host a texting and loyalty platform to promote local businesses (Wilmette, Northbrook)
  - Business Incentives: No home rule sales tax (Winnetka), low interest loans (County, State services), TIFs (Wheeling, Highland Park, Kenilworth), Special Service Areas (Highland Park).
- The Village of Winnetka currently engages in a multi-pronged approach to economic development. The current economic development strategy includes:
  - Co-sponsoring business advertising in various media outlets (Lux Magazine, Writer’s Theater playbill, etc.) and social media platforms (Instagram, Facebook),
  - Offering hands-on technical assistance to Winnetka businesses for retention
  - Visiting targeted businesses to attract them to relocate or open a second location in Winnetka
  - Hosting events such as the Small Business Saturday Event in November in West Elm, and sponsoring various community events to attract new and returning customers (i.e. Music Fest, Art in the Village, the Farmer’s Market, etc.)

### **III. EXPENSES AND VILLAGE STAFF TIME**

- The FY 2020 Economic Development Budget has allocated funding for marketing, branding and advertising initiatives. The CW Marketing Platform, as proposed, can be supported with these funds.
- The Village will assume all one-time costs and annual fees on behalf of our business community.
- Chamber Nation charges a 1) one-time \$19.95 set-up fee, and 2) \$1.99 monthly maintenance fee for each business that participates.

- In Year One, the cost of the website is expected to be \$9,861.75. For all subsequent years, the cost will be \$5,373.00.
- Chamber Nation’s services are included in the fees: website maintenance/ design, customer service, website and domain hosting, search engine optimization, build out individual business landing pages, texting platform management, production of Return On Investment (ROI) reports, and more as additional website features are utilized.
- Every Winnetka business will be added to the Platform on an individual landing page as part of the business directory. This is a beneficial feature for businesses as it will boost their presence online and provide an additional promotional outlet.
- Fees are based on Chamber Nation’s proposal to the Village dated 1/3/2020.

<b>FEE PER BUSINESS</b>	<b>YEAR ONE</b>	<b>YEAR TWO</b>	<b>YEAR THREE</b>
\$19.95 one-time set up fee	\$19.95	\$0	\$0
\$1.99 per month maintenance fee (x 12 months)	\$23.88	\$23.88	\$23.88
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$43.83</b>	<b>\$23.88</b>	<b>\$23.88</b>

<b>NUMBER OF BUSINESSES</b>	<b>YEAR ONE</b>	<b>YEAR TWO</b>	<b>YEAR THREE</b>
50	\$2,191.59	\$1,194.00	\$1,194.00
100	\$4,383.00	\$2,388.00	\$2,388.00
200	\$8,766.00	\$4,776.00	\$4,776.00
225	\$9,861.75	\$5,373.00	\$5,373.00

**VILLAGE STAFF TIME:**

- Staff time will take approximately 30-40 hours to develop the website platform. Ongoing maintenance tasks will take an average of 6 hours per week or approximately 21-26 hours per month depending on the tasks.

- Staff from the Village Manager’s Office and Economic Development will collaborate to update and maintain the website.
- On an ongoing basis, staff will update the business directory and send monthly e-newsletters. Staff will share the tasks of updating the community calendar, managing website communications, coordinating the texting system, and sharing ROI reports with the Village Council and businesses.
- Some weeks will take more time than others depending on the communication cycle and partner engagement.
- The Village will establish evaluation criteria for platform ROI for local businesses and Village beyond current ROI of website hits translated into dollars.
- The Village will sync the Platform with our new website launching this spring to ensure consistent information and messaging.

#### **IV. NEXT STEPS:**

- Over the next several months, we will be working on the following:
  - Signing the agreement with Chamber Nation.
  - Establishing the Steering Committee.
  - Scheduling a series of meetings with the Committee to review the platform and develop goals and strategies for its use.
  - Begin work with Chamber Nation to develop website platform and start business data collection.
  - Initial target for roll out is mid-summer.