

Village of La Grange Board of Trustees Special Meeting

Date: Monday, February 22, 2010

Time: 8:36 PM

Location: Village Hall Auditorium

Minutes of the Meeting

MINUTES

VILLAGE OF LA GRANGE

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE VILLAGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Village Hall Auditorium

53 South La Grange Road

La Grange, IL 60525

Monday, February 22, 2010

(immediately following the regular Village Board meeting)

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The Board of Trustees of the Village of La Grange special meeting was called to order at 8:36 p.m. by President Asperger. On roll call, as read by Administrative Secretary Ellie Elder, the following were:

PRESENT: Trustees Holder, Horvath, Kuchler, Langan, Livingston and Palermo with President Asperger presiding.

ABSENT: Clerk Milne

OTHERS: Village Manager Robert Pilipiszyn

Village Attorney Mark Burkland

Assistant Village Manager Andrianna Peterson

Finance Director Lou Cipparrone

Community Development Director Patrick Benjamin

Assistant Community Development Director Angela Mesaros

2. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP

President Asperger noted the Village's past economic development successes and indicated that this workshop has been scheduled as economic development was identified as one of the Village Board's strategic priorities at their recent planning session. A background summary was presented by President Asperger with guidance to the Board for discussion in determining the Village's role related to economic development in a post-TIF environment. President Asperger noted the objective of this evening's workshop was to provide direction to Village staff on several key policy questions and decision points. She requested Village Manager Pilipiszyn to give a brief overview.

Mr. Pilipiszyn briefly described the Village's current operational plan for economic development which consists of infrastructure improvements; maintenance; considerable dedication of the Community Development Director's time on economic development and project development; and limited marketing and promotional activities, often in conjunction with the LGBA. Extensive discussion regarding economic development took place at the planning session. Mr. Pilipiszyn listed nearly ten goals from the session which related to economic development. Mr. Pilipiszyn noted that many of the policy questions identified in the staff report are pending matters from the business district discussion last year.

President Asperger opened the discussion to the Board utilizing the topics outlined by staff. Considerable debate and discussion ensued amongst the Village Board of Trustees including: measurable goals to help define the Village's economic development policy (e.g. – raise EAV, increase sales tax); ability for the Village to move nimbly in response to changing market conditions; boundaries; façade loans; the YMCA as a redevelopment site; and review of the Village's existing development / redevelopment policy.

At this point of the meeting, President Asperger invited Community Development Director Patrick Benjamin to speak on business recruitment and retention activities. Various understanding questions were asked of Mr. Benjamin's knowledge and experience in this area. Mr. Benjamin explained the importance of having the Village maintain safe, clean and attractive business areas; targeted and leveraged advertising among many businesses is effective; the Village should not get beyond what it does well and should not do more to fill vacancies than its current supportive role.

Before proceeding to a discussion of special events, Mr. Benjamin introduced Ryan Williamson, the new President of the LGBA. Mr. Benjamin described the current challenges facing the LGBA as an all-volunteer organization. He also noted the Village's financial and in-kind contributions to LGBA activities. Mr. Benjamin commented that the current structure and division of labor between the LGBA and the Village is very unique as compared to other communities.

Mr. Williamson provided the Village Board with a briefing on his perspective during his short term as the LGBA's new president. While the economy is still difficult, there are many opportunities for continued success for businesses in La Grange. The issue is how to continue with the positive momentum. Business owners need assistance with things that they cannot do individually, such as advertising, marketing and promotions. The two most pressing needs of the LGBA are organizational support for special events and advertising support.

Discussion ensued. There were many compliments from the Village Board as to the work of the LGBA, and for Mr. Williamson's personal efforts as LGBA president thus far. There was general agreement by the Village Board to maintain, if not enhance the Village's working relationship with the LGBA.

Due to the lateness of the hour, a discussion concerning financial resources did not commence. However, President Asperger noted that as the Village Board provided direction on economic development priorities, staff should assume that the Village Board would be inclined to fund those priorities to some degree.

The consensus of the Village Board on the policy questions / decision points for which staff sought direction was as follows:

1. Façade loans do not appear to be a Village Board priority for the time being.
2. The business district concept was discussed as an economic development tool (in the context of development / redevelopment opportunities).
3. The Village Board concurred with the existing development / redevelopment policy as written (dated November 7, 2005).
4. Staff to continue with current efforts (and tailor methods as determined to be most effective) concerning business recruitment and retention.
5. Maintain, if not enhance, the Village's support of the LGBA.

President Asperger instructed staff to work towards providing the Village Board with its thoughts and recommendations on how to support the LGBA.

3. ADJOURNMENT

The Village Board Economic Development Workshop was adjourned at 10:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Robert J. Pilipiszyn
Village Manager

Approved: 03/08/10