

MINUTES

Community and Economic Development Commission
Village of La Grange

November 05, 2020

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL:

A meeting of the Community and Economic Development Commission was held on November 05, 2020 via GoToMeeting and was convened at 7:06 p.m. by Chairman Russ Riberto.

Present: Commissioners Buttron, Carlson, Cassidy, Hall, Hayes, Janevski, Matteucci, Sher, and Chairman Riberto.

Absent: Commissioners DiDomenico, Dillon, Dunne, Hanson, McGee, and Palmer.

Also Present: Community Development Director Charity Jones, LGBA Executive Director Nancy Cummings, and Jody Wise, @Properties.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

On motion by Commissioner Carlson, seconded by Commissioner Buttron, the minutes of the August 06, 2020 Community and Economic Development Commission meeting were approved.

III. NEW BUSINESS:

Community & Economic Development Activity Report

Director Jones gave a presentation of sales tax trends through the first half of 2020. She summarized the impact of COVID-19 on taxable retail sales. Overall, sales declined sharply at the onset of the stay-at-home order in March; in April and May 2020 sales were down 30% as compared to the same months in 2019. Total taxable retail sales rebounded in June and July, with 2020 sales comparable to the same months in 2019. Among restaurants, sales in the first half of 2020 were 20% lower than in 2019. Apparel stores' 2020 sales through June were approximately 43% lower than the same period in 2019.

Director Jones then reported on permit activity. Although permit activity had declined sharply in March and April, activity continued the rebound reported at the August CEDC meeting. Permits issued in August and September continued to be higher than average, representing 39% and 47% increases over La Grange's five year average, respectively.

Director Jones then provided an overview of the summer and fall promotions and

advertising efforts the Village and LGBA have provided to support the business community during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Commissioner Hall asked LGBA Executive Director Cummings how the Village and LGBA can spotlight those businesses that are particularly struggling. Ms. Cummings responded she thought the LGBA and Village were doing a good job of highlighting a variety of businesses and that they are all struggling.

LGBA “Mask Up” Campaign

Ms. Wise provided an overview of the LGBA’s Mask Up campaign, which promotes and sells branded face masks. The effort is intended to support local businesses, as well as sharing a positive message about mask wearing. The masks are available for sale for \$8 each at Horton’s or for pre-orders directly online through the LGBA. The LGBA would like to encourage the CEDC members to serve as models and ambassadors for their upcoming “Look Who’s Masking Up for La Grange” promotional effort, which will support the overall Mask Up campaign.

Holiday Promotions 2020

Director Jones provided an overview of the upcoming 2020 holiday promotions by the Village and LGBA, including a digital holiday wish book featuring products from local businesses, weekly Facebook Live events at various retailers, and enhanced holiday displays. She asked for the CEDC’s help in spreading the word about these promotions using their individual connections and social media platforms.

Commissioner Janevski asked if the Village does paid advertising for the promotions. Director Jones summarized the various paid print and digital advertising that the Village funds and the LGBA coordinates. Chairman Riberto asked if the lgdelivers website was capable of doing a weekly e-blast. Commissioner Matteucci suggested Constant Contact as a resource. Ms. Cummings noted that lgdelivers tweets out updates and that restaurants also have their own e-mail distribution lists to support the LGBA’s efforts. She also noted that people can follow the La Grange Restaurant Take Out and Delivery page on Facebook.

Commissioner Hayes suggested that print media, and direct mail in particular, is still an effective way to reach customers. Commissioner Matteucci noted that while he doesn’t use social media, email may be a more cost effective solution than direct mail. Chairman Riberto noted the difficulty in keeping up with social media algorithms so content continues to appear prominently in news feeds.

Director Jones noted some of the communication tools the Village uses, such as the newsletter, which is a direct mail piece, and the website newsflash, which can be sent by email and text. Ms. Wise noted that in advertising it is often said that a message must be delivered seven times, in seven different ways to reach a person. Discussion continued regarding various communications tools for advertising.

Chairman Riberto suggested that whatever each commissioner's preferred platform is, as a commission they should help to get the message out about the 2020 holiday promotions and work as advocates because local businesses can use everyone's help.

V. ADJOURNMENT:

There being nothing further to come before the Community and Economic Development Commission, a motion was made by Commissioner Janveski and seconded by Commissioner Hall that the meeting be adjourned at 8:08 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Charity Jones
Community Development Director