



LA GRANGE

Village of La Grange
53 S. La Grange Road, La Grange, IL 60525
lagrangeil.gov

AGENDA

COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Village Hall Auditorium

Thursday, August 5, 2021, 7:00 p.m.

1. Call to Order and Roll Call
2. Approval of Minutes – February 04, 2021
3. New Business
 - A. Community & Economic Development Activity Report (presentation)
 - B. Walgreens Alcove – Public Art Concepts
4. Chairman Comments
5. Adjournment

Individuals with disabilities and who require certain accommodations to participate at this meeting are requested to contact the ADA Coordinator at 579-2315, to allow the Village to make reasonable accommodations

MINUTES

Community and Economic Development Commission Village of La Grange

February 04, 2021

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL:

A meeting of the Community and Economic Development Commission was held on February 04, 2021 via GoToMeeting and was convened at 7:06 p.m. by Chairman Russ Riberto.

Present: Commissioners Buttron, Carlson, Cassidy, Dillon, Hanson, Hayes, Janevski, McGee, Sher, and Chairman Riberto.

Absent: Commissioners DiDomenico, Dunne, Hall, Matteucci, and Palmer.

Also Present: Community Development Director Charity Jones and LGBA Executive Director Nancy Cummings.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

On motion by Commissioner Carlson, seconded by Commissioner Dillon, the minutes of the November 05, 2020 Community and Economic Development Commission meeting were approved with Commissioner Cassidy abstaining.

III. NEW BUSINESS:

Community & Economic Development Activity Report

Director Jones gave a presentation of sales tax trends through the third quarter of 2020. She summarized the impact of COVID-19 on taxable retail sales. Through October 2020 overall retail sales were 10.25% lower as compared to 2019. January 2020 was very good (up 21% over 2019) followed by February, which was slightly down (5%) from 2019. March, April and May were significantly impacted by the pandemic; after the initial stay at home order went into effect, activity was down 30% as compared to 2019. Overall sales June through October 2020 are actually up 4.6% over 2019. Director Jones noted that several factors likely contributed to these trends: good weather, a population base whose employment still provided disposable income, limited travel opportunities for local customers, improved public health metrics, effective promotions, grass roots community support, and ingenuity of local businesses.

Director Jones provided an overview of taxable retail sales by industry category through the third quarter of 2020. La Grange's largest sales tax producing sector, restaurants, were

negatively impacted by the pandemic, with taxable sales down 11% from the same period in 2020. However, local restaurant activity outperformed County wide averages by a substantial margin. Local apparel stores were more significantly impacted, with taxable sales down 31% over the same period last year.

Director Jones then reported on permit activity through the end of 2020. Permit applications continued a higher than average trend, with last 4 months of the year up an average of 21% over La Grange's 5 yr. average for those months. The total number of permits issued in 2020 was 10% higher than the La Grange 5 year average. Permit activity was compressed into the second half of the year; permits issued in July through December averaged 31% higher than typical.

Director Jones then announced new businesses and businesses that have planned openings in the near future. Chairman Riberto noted how impressed he was with the recent reinvestment in the former Baker's Square, which is soon to be Original Pancake House.

2020 Year in Review and 2021 Look Ahead

Director Jones began a presentation of Village accomplishments over 2020 and an introduction of projects planned for the upcoming 2021/2022 fiscal year. In January and February 2020, following the completion of the branding initiative, the Village rolled out a new village website and began preparing for the 2020 Census. In addition to reflecting the new brand, the Village website features many economic development enhancements, such as an interactive map of available commercial properties. Chairman Riberto noted how the new website has fulfilling the recommendations of the La Grange 2020 Task Force.

Director Jones then highlighted various economic support efforts the Village undertook in response to the COVID-19 pandemic throughout 2020, in partnership with the La Grange Business Association and other economic development partners. These efforts included the establishment of the La Grange Delivers website and marketing platform, providing expanded outdoor dining opportunities, waiving of fees, assisting businesses in navigating changing public health requirements and grant opportunities, aggressive public relations efforts, and socially distanced and online holiday promotions. Director Jones noted that throughout the year, La Grange featured prominently in the news, including 30 on-air broadcasts to a combined audience of over 2.7 million people during the holiday shopping season. Commissioner Janevski noted how phenomenal he thought the Wish Book was and would like to see it continue next year. Chairman Riberto commented that the expanded holiday decorations were beautiful additions to the Village's annual display and he hopes we can continue them outside the pandemic.

Director Jones noted some planned initiatives for the upcoming Village fiscal year 2021/22 budget. In anticipation that COVID-19 will continue to have impacts on restaurants in 2021 and the parklet program is planned to continue.

Commissioner Janevski asked if the Village has given, or may give, consideration to a permanent parklet program. He felt the benefit of expanded outdoor dining opportunities outweighs the loss of on-street parking. Director Jones noted that the parking dynamics in the downtown have been upended by the pandemic, particularly by commuter dynamics. The Village is commissioning a parking study in the upcoming fiscal year, which will consider questions such as permanent parklet arrangements.

Given the projected continued COVID-19 pandemic impacts, Director Jones noted that staff is recommending not having Village-sponsored valet in fiscal year 2021/22 and instead adding those funds to other funding sources to support a refresh of the downtown streetscape. Commissioner Dillon asked about having residents help sponsor elements of the streetscape to help contribute to the project, such as trees or benches. Commissioner Carlson agreed that this could be a good way to cultivate community buy in.

Director Jones noted that the Village intends to move forward with the gateway sign project in fiscal year 2021/22. Commissioner McGee asked if the Village has considered the placement of our neighbors' gateway signs; Director Jones confirmed that staff had. Commissioner Janevski noted that COVID has helped us understand the highest and best use of our resources; in his opinion the physical improvements such as signage and streetscape is that highest and best use of economic development budget.

The Commission discussed special events and how they can be modified to be more socially distanced. Ms. Cummings noted how the LGBA and Village has arranged events in 2020 and how that same pattern could be used in 2021 if necessary.

Nancy Cummings provided a report on the LGBA Stands for Small Business Raffle.

V. ADJOURNMENT:

There being nothing further to come before the Community and Economic Development Commission, a motion was made by Chairman Riberto, and seconded by Commissioner Janveski that the meeting be adjourned at 8:23 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Charity Jones
Community Development Director